Sponsorship, neo-patrimonial logics and private/public blurred boundaries: The Senegalese rural water system reform as a process.

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1~~I~~. Introduction

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Since the 1980s, the Senegalese rural water sector has undergone several periods of reform. The most recent, the *Regefor*[1] proposed transferring water exploitation charges to the local level and a 'community-based' management of the resource within localities themselves.

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This reform falls within the ideological framework of 'good governance', such as it is professed by the Bretton Woods institutions. Transferring management of a natural resource from the State to its users is represented as a guaranteed path to cost reduction and to more 'democratic' access to the resource (Boone 1998 ; Dia 2002, ; Li 1996).

This paper will discuss the implementation of the reform in the Kaolack administrative region, in the centre of the country. On a more general level, it will examine the potential effectiveness of the new piece of law as an instrument of social engineering, by proposing that the 'communities' concerned by the reform might be seen as '*semi-autonomous social fields*[2]' (Moore 1978)~~.~~ The case of water sponsorship~~d~~ by state-functionaries and businessmen will serve to demonstrate that new laws are never implemented into a social, legal and political vacuum. Existing private and neo-patrimonial strategies and specific social and political dynamics – and not formal legislation alone - are decisive for rural populations' access to the water resource~~.~~

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[1] ~~(~~Reform in the management of rural motorised water-pumps~~)~~

[2] « *The semi-autonomous social field has rule-making capacities, and the means to induce or coerce compliance, but it is simultaneously set in a larger social matrix which can, and does, affect and invade it, sometimes at the invitation of persons inside it, sometimes at its own instance* » (Moore 1978 :55-56).

In Senegal, a series of governmental schemes and policies have endorsed this transfer, generally taking the form of projects for user 'empowerment'. The local level is understood as that of 'communities' - entities that, once formed, have the capacity to manage the resource harmoniously and democratically. Here, the implementation of the reform seems to depend solely upon the capacity of 'community' members to integrate and observe the reform[3].

If the success of the reform seemingly depends upon the users, the governance of water services, as is the case for many public services in Sub-Saharan Africa (Blundo et Le Meur 2009), nevertheless involves the actions of three other groups: state services, NGOs and private players, the latter including sponsors.

The sponsorship example highlights the capacity of a semi-autonomous social field to produce its own norms and methods of coercion. Water production thus involves dynamics and participants that, although not officially part of the reform framework, nevertheless help to ensure reliable access to the resource.

More particularly, the sponsorship phenomenon allows us to question two dichotomies found in the reform: public/private and local/national. The profiles of these '*sons of the soil*' (locally called '*fils de terroir'*) vary according to the context. However, all have three points in common: they were born in the village in question, now work in Dakar and are members of the party in power, the PDS (Senegalese Democratic Party).

This article will discuss three cases of water pump breakdowns resolved by the intervention of a sponsor. These actions are often portrayed as 'disinterested' and 'charitable': '*the son who comes to the rescue of his village*'. This is the rhetoric typically employed by sponsors and their kin. Sometimes, however, the actions are portrayed as 'interested' and a form of 'vote-catching'; '*the politician securing local support'*. This is typical of the rhetoric of various 'discontented' groups: development agents, political enemies of the sponsor, neighbouring villages harmed by their actions in a given locality, etc. These discourses, whether they qualify sponsors' actions as 'charitable' or 'interested', have in common their representation of sponsorship as the product of individual will alone.

[3]This is a recurring feature of development policies advocating the transfer of natural resource management to the local level. On this, Mosse notes that '*what is striking about this literature is the persisting search for conditions of water management within the characteristics of communities of users themselves, and of their resources, rather than in the wider contexts of government, law and policy*' (2003: 286).

However, although this problematic is seemingly a question of individual careers, the financial and material involvement of the sponsor in the local arena is governed by social norms. Therefore, it is also the residents of a given locality who not only go to 'find' the sponsor in Dakar, but who have worked together and contributed for years on end; from the child's early education in the village to the continuation of his studies or of his career outside of the local community, to 'make' this sponsor and to put him in a position to deliver in subsequent years. Sponsors are not, therefore, simply philanthropists, nor are they motivated solely by the desire to win local electoral support. They are also conforming to local social norms, which dictate that they must contribute to the improvement of their village.

Consequently, the sponsor's 'love' for his village incorporates a whole range of norms, reasons and interests, on both the local and national levels. These norms, although in conflict with the principle of good governance, particularly in the case of neo-patrimonial logics, are often what makes efficient and reliable water provision possible.

As a result, although motorised water pumps allow drinking water to be extracted locally, the sponsorship question shows that, paradoxically, the water also flows in from Dakar, its waves endlessly erasing the public/private and local/national boundaries that are supposedly marked out by the reform.

Representative 'relays' of national resources on the local scale, the sponsorship example throws doubt on the '*belief in the underlying capacities of communities to resolve problems and manage resources once they are freed from the burdens of external interference'* (Mosse 2003 :17). This belief is widely found in the policies advocated by good governance, for transferring resource management to the local level.

The sponsorship phenomenon also acts as a powerful reminder that management of natural resources is always a publicising agent in power relationships between men (Lavigne Delville, Bouju et Le Roy 2000). Discussions about water in a locality unavoidably broach questions about the legitimacy and the construction of public authority within the local arena. Any attempt to create the conditions for 'good governance' of water through the structures of the 'communities' in question, without taking into account the power relationships in which both local and national levels, and both official and informal rules come into play, is thus

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illusory. This considered, I will be more inclined to consider the water access problematic from the perspective of '*rule of water*' (Mosse 2003 : 22) than from that of water management[4].

Nevertheless, sponsorship is not the only recourse available when pumps break down. In the same localities, there is a coexistence of partial application of the reform and recourse to sponsorship. An examination of the trajectories of three Kaolack boreholes will demonstrate that the '*rule of water'* constitutes a never-ending process, governed by norms produced in the local arena in conjunction with national and global norms produced by governments and aid agencies.

2. The *Regefor* and the Kaolack example

2.1. 'Moins d'Etat, mieux d'Etat'[5] *: The Regefor*

1980 marked the start of a pivotal decade for rural water-sector. Before this, the State took full responsibility for water services, providing the necessary fuel and the replacement parts in cases of breakdown. From the 1970s onwards, the State was no longer managing to fulfil its responsibilities[6]. All over, informal management committees were set up and the residents pooled resources to pay for the fuel needed to power the installations.

From 1984 onwards, and following the introduction of Structural Adjustment policies, the State gave these management committees official status. Thus, in line with the '*Less State, better State*' formula endorsed by Abdou Diouf, during the decade which remodelled the national landscape, the State, formerly interventionist, attempted to confine itself to a regulatory role (Dia 2002 ; Diagne 2004; Repussard 2008).

The Regefor project was piloted and financed by the French Development Agency (AFD). It proposed that water management be transferred to a local level, via the creation of

[4] Following Mosse's approach "*The term « rule » of course implies a concern with power and political economy of water* » (2003 :22).

[5] '*Less State, better State*'

[6] After the installation of the first fourteen motorised water pumps in Ferlo in 1940, hydraulic equipment boomed between 1970 and 1990. In 1996, there were 772 motorised water pumps across the whole territory. Figures provided by the French Development Agency (AFD) quoted by Repussard 2008.

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'ASUFORs[7]', responsible for selling the water by meter cubed and making sufficient profits to replace the pump and engine. Yet power over water has not been handed over: the State still owns the installations and decides where new boreholes[8] will be situated on the territory. The Regefor therefore only represents a transfer of charges, and not a true transfer of responsibilities.

Officially, the ASUFORs are composed of a board and a salaried management limb[9]. The board members are 'democratically' elected by the 'users' of the borehole, or, in other words, the residents of the locality who hold subscriptions to that borehole. They must reside in the village and their work is voluntary. Each year, the board must give accounts to the borehole users at a General Assembly. The ASUFOR claims to be a democratic management model, based on the classic ideal of village community-based management. The transfer of management from national to local is founded on the premise that villagers have a better understanding of the problems inherent to their 'community' and are thus better equipped to manage 'the common interest' (Dia 2002 ; Mosse 2003).

The case of sponsorship calls into question this view of the situation, since it shows that the person called upon to 'solve village problems' is no longer a local resident.

2.2. In Kaolack, the water often flows in from Dakar

In the Kaolack region, the water is locally pumped thanks to a borehole. The water pump works using energy from a diesel oil engine, or electricity from the Senelec[10] (in villages with electricity). Both pump and engine are extremely expensive and require regular replacement. The Regefor stipulates that this will be funded using profits from water sales. Where profits are insufficient, the ASUFOR must seek solutions from the decentralised authorities, NGOs or devolved hydraulics services, present in Kaolack in the form of the '*Regional Hydraulics Subdivision*' and the '*Wells and Boreholes Brigade*'.

[7] Borehole Water Users' Associations (*Associations d'Usagers de Forages*)
[8] The term 'borehole', as employed throughout this article, designates as an ensemble both the borehole itself and the motorised pump used to extract water from it.
[9] The reform in Kaolack was carried out in several phases, each financed by different financial backers. It is consequently far from homogenous on the national level. In most ASUFORs, a salaried management arm has not yet been set up. The borehole is thus managed by volunteers alone.
[10] The National Electricity Company of Senegal (Société Nationale d'Electricité du Sénégal).

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The most common breakdowns are pump-related. When these occur[11], the 'son of the soil' is seen as the preferred solution, whatever the economic situation of the borehole in question[12]. The sponsor can invest his own funds or exploit his network of acquaintances within State administration to ensure that the locality gets a new pump. The pump is installed by devolved State services and the call-out of the team is paid for using ASUFOR money. Once again, it is common for a sponsor to take on these costs. Thus, when a short circuit is noticed on a pump, it is not rare for villagers to rapidly set in motion another short-circuit chain to reform, in order to resolve the problem.

The Kaolack situation is generally described as '*sensitive*'. Kaolack was one of the Regefor pilot zones and thus benefitted from support from numerous financial backers. The zone is also known for another particularity: several important executive positions in the ministry that governs rural water-sector are occupied by citizens from the region.

As a result, despite the significant measures put in place to ensure the success of the reform, Kaolack villagers are known for solving their problems in Dakar.

'Two water officials is too many for one village! I followed the introduction of the reform in the central area.But it's disheartening, we're disheartened. Every time, I see them going past, the villagers, they go past the brigade, quietly, without stopping, and travel 200km to go and get their problems sorted in Dakar.[13]'

If the Regefor attempts to establish ASUFOR financial autonomy regarding costs and daily maintenance, water, via the channel of sponsors, still regularly comes from Dakar.

A further characteristic concerns the period during which the research was carried out: the 2009 regional elections, which saw the PDS, the party in power, lose the majority of local government regions, and the upcoming 2012 presidential elections. In a pre-electoral context where the party in government is in a situation of opposition on the local level, water can be an influential electoral leverage tool.

[11] On average, a pump costs around 3 million West African CFA francs. Its life expectancy ranges from five to ten years. -In the case of electric-powered pumps, a new pump can burn out suddenly, due to the frequent drops in voltage from the Senelec power supply.

[12] Thus, recourse to sponsors was observed in areas where the ASUFOR had been installed relatively recently and still had little in the way of funds, but also where ASUFOR had been selling water for many years and so possessed the necessary funds for a replacement pump and motor.

[13] Employee of the 'Kaolack Wells and Boreholes Brigade'.

3. Boreholes and Sponsors

3.1.Penedaly, Diouf and Hane

The ASUFOR of *Penedaly*[14] was created in 2002 and received support from several projects. Since then, the board has seen regular renewal and the ASUFOR has several Million West African CFA francs at its disposal. But Penedaly has a problem, in that it is badly affected by the high salinity of its drinking water supply. This problem is not just recent. Inhabitants faced the same situation in 1998, and by exploiting their network, they quickly succeeded in securing the drilling of a new borehole. Obtaining a borehole is usually a long and difficult process for a locality. The funding for this type of project normally comes from financial backers and is subsequently allocated by the Ministry of Water. There is no official waiting list and each decision is examined on a case-by-case basis. As a consequence, it is common to see a borehole remain at a standstill for over six years, with no works on the agenda.

But Penedaly is a particularly fortunate village. Not only is it the village of *Diouf*, a high-level official in the Ministry of Water, it is also that of *Hane*, an entrepreneur specialising in water-sector.

Diouf studied as an engineer and currently holds an influential position in rural water-sectoradministration. Several of his relatives work in devolved services, such as the *Wells and Boreholes Brigades*. He is also a member of the PDS. As time and changes at the head of the Ministry have gone by, he has moved party three times.

Hane is related to Diouf. He too studied as an engineer and started his own business. At that time, he became indebted to several family members. Hane has been a member of the PDS for several years.

Diouf and Hane spend most of their lives in Dakar, because of their jobs and professional timetables. However, both regularly return to the village for a weekend, a religious festival or

[14] Italicised names are fictitious.

a political meeting. Their married lives reflect this duality, as both married once in Keur Saloum and a second time in Dakar.

Diouf is reputed for being 'shielded by magic'. Despite being in his fifties, his hair is not white, but pale yellow, a colour ascribed to the '*lotions*' that he applies to be 'popular' and 'protect himself'. Hane died a few months ago, upon being approached about taking on a very important role in the State. At his funeral, in Penedaly, one of his brothers accused Diouf of using his occult powers to kill him.

In 1998, Diouf and Hane had already played a part in the arrival of a new borehole. At this time, Hane had won the public market of a borehole in a relatively insecure area of Casamance. At the same time, he and Diouf were called upon by relatives back in the village. The situation was dramatic, the salt water undrinkable, they were being asked to intervene. But drilling a new borehole required a large sum of money that the two men did not have. Then, Hane had the idea of transferring the administrative credits allocated for the Casamance borehole to his native village, using the insecurity of the region as a pretext. Diouf obtained the required signatures. Hane kept the market, and the villagers could give thanks to their two 'sons'.

However, although the two men are seen as the village benefactors, nobody felt obliged to vote for them and the locality is today governed by a coalition composed of opposition party officials.

Today, this schema is being repeated. Although the ASUFOR has enough money, the machine is back in motion. Diouf, now alone, is once more being asked to contribute. The salty water having already caused the ASUFOR to lose many of its subscribers, he gives fuel tokens as a bail-out, thanks to his position. Equally, he is seeking more administrative credits to dig a new borehole. Penedaly will thus become, in record time, host to a third borehole, whilst other localities have been making do with the same installations since the 1980s.

But Diouf is the not the residents' only recourse. The projects that have followed on from the Regefor have allowed board members to benefit from several professional management training courses. Thanks to this, they have been able to save money and replace the pump that burned out due to voltage problems on the Senelec network.

Furthermore, the entire management system has been computerised. The ASUFOR board changes regularly and includes women. This borehole is therefore the ideal terrain for a financial backer wishing to invest in the locality. Thanks to this, numerous contacts have been made with certain international NGOs.

3.2. Koudourou and Diankhar

At the start of the 2000s, *Koudourou* had a small borehole, managed by an ASUFOR, but with insufficient capacity to cater for the growth of the village. A new borehole was needed. The village of Koudourou is used to calling upon *Diankhar*, a politician born on village soil and based in Dakar. Thanks to him, the village had already obtained a tarmac-surfaced road connecting it to the highway. It was therefore entirely natural to call upon Diankhar to resolve the water problem.

Diankhar is an '*Arabist*', educated in the village Quranic schools. During the 1980s, his family sent him to study in Egypt. On his return to Senegal, he started up various businesses and from the end of 1990, regularly travelled to do business in the Gulf countries. In the same period, he entered into politics, joining the Socialist Party, who were then in power. He founded a movement in support of the president at the time, Abdou Diouf, and began financing the pilgrimage of his '*party brothers*' to Mecca. It was thanks to his contacts, in the Gulf as well as on a national level, that he acquired the money and the public market needed for the construction of the road that links his village to the highway.

In 2006, he used that same strategy to bring water to his village. Except that he had been a member of the PDS since 2002. Close to President Wade, today Diankhar is influential in the government sphere. The greater part of the funds used for the new borehole came from the '*zakat*[15]' of a Saudi Arabian Sheikh. This was supplemented by the State and by Diankhar himself. The latter says that his '*political missio*n' has always been to '*improve*' the village of his birth. He says that this was his unique goal in *'entering politics*', because, '*if you're not in State politics, the State won't let you invest millions to build a road or a drill a borehole.'* In spite of all he has done for the village, the opposition won for a second time in 2009.

[15] Arab term designating the duty to give alms, which is the third pillar of Islam. Annual sum that a Muslim must calculate and give to the poor.

The Koudourou borehole regularly encounters water supply problems. Water is sold by meter cubed, as prescribed by the Regefor, but the borehole is managed by members of Diankhar's family. The residents claim that the money destined for fuel purchase is frequently misused. Many, therefore, want an ASUFOR to be established, as was done for the village's first borehole, in order to ensure greater '*transparency*'. They recognise that this is '*Diankhar's borehole*', because '*he is the one that bargained with the Arabs*', but they still deplore that he capitalises on it whilst the village suffers regular pump breakdowns, because of the lack of diesel oil. The villagers have embarked upon two types of negotiations. The first, formal, are with the administration, who they have asked to intervene to officially remove the sponsor or to acquire another borehole for them. The second, more informal, are with a politician from an opposing faction to that of Diankhar. To manage the water according to their own wishes, the villagers thus envisage either obtaining a new borehole of their own, or reclaiming that of Diankhar, either by the official route or by provoking his fall into political disgrace.

Inside the boring machine room, a photo-montage shows *Diankhar*, between the Saudi-Arabian Sheikh and President Wade. The poster's message is clear: *Diankhar* is a chosen intermediary between the governmental machine and the funds from the Gulf. The image also recalls the main points of the borehole's origin: a son of the soil who made a success of himself in the Gulf countries and who has climbed to the top within the State machine. But the discontented villagers are given no place in the frame. Thus, since 2006, a mixture of public and private funds, of philanthropy and monopoly, of satisfaction, discontent and political manoeuvring flows in Koudourou's water supply.

3.3. Samekoly and Fall

The water system in *Samekoly* functions relatively well: its ground water is fit to drink and its pump powerful enough to supply the entire village. However, like many places in the region, Samekoly has a problem with its pump, which recently burned out. Samekoly's ASUFOR has recently changed. Its board is mostly female and will be receiving new training, because this ASUFOR was chosen in 2010 to benefit from a new reform support project.

The residents seem enthusiastic and willingly comply with the meetings organised by financial backers. In spite of this, when the pump breaks down, the ASUFOR does not use its own funds, but decides to call upon *Fall*, a son of the soil.

Fall occupies a presidential position in urban water services. After his early education in the village, like Diouf, Hane and Diankhar, he left to study elsewhere. Thanks to support from numerous family members, he was able to study for a university degree and rapidly climb through the ranks of public administration. He is a board official in the PDS. He advanced his own funds for the pump. Because of his connections with Diouf, who is a '*friend*' and '*party brother*', the village did not have to pay for the installation of the pump by the devolved services. Thanks to his means and his network, Fall, in his own words, '*pulled the lever of a new pump*'. Therefore, the ASUFOR did not pay a single penny towards this venture. The position that Fall occupies in State administration means that the borehole regularly benefits from his fuel tokens. Like the first two localities, Samekoly has also been governed by an opposition coalition since 2007.

4. Behind the relationship connecting an individual to their home soil - the Senegalese rural water system as a process

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There are certain constants in these three examples. The villages are not reluctant where reform is concerned and most of the time, they play by its rules. However, in times of crisis, recourse to the sponsor is preferred to the official route. Reform is not the unique reference point here and consequently, beyond the question of everyday water management, the trajectories of sponsors tell us much about the processual dimension of the relationships that structure the rule of water in each of these localities.

These trajectories allow us to deconstruct two dichotomies found in the reform of the Senegalese water system and, more widely, in development policies advocating the transfer of natural resource management to the local level: public/private and local/national.

4.1. Figures of success and the obligation towards kin: the sponsor's debt.

'*What you call sponsorship is, for me, a sort of rebate that I pay to my community. Unlike my parents, I was lucky enough to study. I come from this village community, and if I return, if fortune smiles on me in my studies, I must be able to give something back to the village*[16]'

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The term '*sponsor*' is used here in an exploratory manner. In everyday life, sponsors are generally called '*sons of the soil'*. The term '*politician*' is also used, suggestive of the negative flip-side of sponsorship. This issue will be examined further.

The sponsor is portrayed firstly as someone who gives something back. He is the person for whom others have made sacrifices, who has had the fortune to study outside of the village. His success is seen as the fruit of a collective war effort, the work of a broad family - the village - towards the advancement of one of its own. Obviously, there are hierarchies in the redistribution. The sponsor does not give back to all in the same way. He will redistribute a great deal to his close family (nephews' school fees, medical costs, marriages, etc.) Nevertheless, the sponsor must also show his gratitude to the village as a whole by investing in the public sphere. These logics of investment and redistribution mean that the village appears as a '*mutual company insuring against present hazards and future uncertainties*' (a '*mutuelle assurant contre les aléas du présent et contre les incertitudes de l'avenir*') (Marie 2002 : 210)[17]. Sponsorship therefore no longer depends upon a specific individual trajectory, but upon a dynamic where, by indebting '*obligors - primarily one's own children whom one brings up and educates [...]; but also others' children – one insures oneself for the future [...] by investing in this way in the maintenance and accumulation of a 'social capital*'' ('*des obligés (au premier chef ses propres enfants qu'on élève, scolarise (…) ; mais aussi les enfants d'autres parents), l'on prend des assurances sur l'avenir (…) en investissant de la sorte dans l'entretien et l'accumulation d'un « capital social* ») (Marie 2002 : 210).

Most sponsors say that they are 'tired' of having to give. Diankhar, for example, devotes a monthly budget of 400'000 West African CFA francs to requests for occasional help from relatives. The boundary line between what must be given and what can be kept for oneself is never clearly determined. Here, a bitter negotiation between villagers and sponsor is played out. What means of retaliation, then, do the villagers have at their disposal to prevent the decision being to their disadvantage? Marie provides some enlightenment on this matter,

[16] Former territorial command officer. Financed a borehole and market gardening projects in his village.
[17] Where French-language sources are cited, translations into English have been carried out for the purposes of this article. For reference purposes, the original French citations are parenthesised.

noting that one gives back not only because one has received in the past, but also *'to avoid being accused of greed and so as not to fall prey to different retaliatory measures (banishment, curses, jinxes, attacks by witchcraft)'* (*'pour éviter l'accusation d'avarice et différentes mesures de rétorsion (proscription, malédiction, mauvais sorts, attaques en sorcellerie)'*) (Marie 2002 :10).

As already mentioned, Hane died during the research period. His sudden death was attributed to supernatural causes and to the jealousy of one of his relatives and party brothers. Several times during interview, his widow made a direct link between past instances of illness and the fact that Hane '*loved*' distributing money to his relatives who had remained in the village:.

'*When he had no money, he was ill. Not being able to give money, it made him ill'*.

Debt is potentially dangerous for the individual. Geschiere describes sorcery as the '*dark flip-side*' of kinship "versant noir de la parenté" (1995 ; 1996 ; 2000). This definition highlights the fact that '*in some ways the enduring influence of sorcery in Africa reflects the survival of kinship as a fundamental principle of social security*' (*'à certains égards, l'emprise persistante de la sorcellerie en Afrique reflète la pérennité de la parenté comme principe de base de la sécurité sociale*') (1996 : 93). In this sense, the discourse that surrounds kinship and the duty to give back that arises from it '*must always bridge the new distances between town and country, between elite and commoners'* ('*se doit toujours de combler les nouvelles distances entre ville et campagne, entre élite et gens du commun*') (1996 : 93). Fall, who received several calls on his mobile phone from ASUFOR members during our interview, stated that, '*since I was born in the village, the problems of the village are my problems too*'. In line with Geschiere's observations, these same problems, if the sponsor ignores them, can soon turn into a health hazard for him. On the subject of exchanges that appear to be disinterested acts of charity, Moore explains that, '*all these givings of gifts and doings of favors are done in the form of voluntary acts (...) none of them are legally enforceable obligations. One could not take a man to court who did not produce them, But there is no need for legal sanctions where there are such extralegal sanctions available'* (~~Moore~~ 1978 : 61-62).

Thus, the sponsor acts not out of 'charity', but in order to repay a debt. To ensure its efficacy, the obligation to give back is backed up by certain retaliatory measures, such as revenge by

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magic. More widely, the sponsor's respect for this obligation is also motivated by the desire to retain their place in the village, despite being physically absent. This desire is notably broadcast by the fact that natives are generally buried in the village.

The fear of supernatural reprisals thus constitutes one of the forms of coercion found in the semi-autonomous field that is the village. Before spending the money in the ASUFOR's bank account, saved by the village as a whole, it is judicious to draw upon another, symbolic, but no less lucrative 'bank account': that of the sponsor himself. Its contents are composed as much of capital stock as they are of the material, monetary and social resources derived from his functions outside of the village, and are considered to be, in part, the property of the village.

4.2 The sponsor as a relay between the local and the national

Sponsors are not entirely powerless faced with this obligation to give back. They can also take advantage of it. To these ends, all sponsors customise their actions politically. It is not, therefore, money alone that they 'give' or 'take'; they also make a political and symbolic 'investment' in a public infrastructure. Water, here, can provide electoral leverage.

A priori, sponsors always make a distinction between the '*social*' and the '*political*'. Giving to win political support is considered, by Fall in particular, to be '*sinful*', comparable to '*politicking*', which comes down to acting as a '*politician*' (in the pejorative sense of the word) rather than as a '*son of the soil'*. Investing in the village is therefore seen as a '*social*' venture, separate from '*political*' activities. However, all sponsors have political responsibilities on a local level. Equally, most explain that it is their '*son of the soil*' status that drove them to enter politics; just as their political career has had a positive influence on their professional one and has increased their redistributive capacity towards the village.

When talking about the pump that he had just obtained, Fall would state that, *'I am here to help the village, but also in preparation for the next election deadline*'. Close study of sponsors' life stories therefore reveals a substantial degree of confusion between the 'social' and 'political' fields.

The sponsor can be encouraged to 'enter politics' by villagers. Thus, *Diagne*, a water-official based in Dakar, was 'pushed towards the PDS' five years ago, just after receiving a promotion. He was directly influenced by village nobles, party members and politically active ASUFOR members. One of them oriented his actions by telling him: '*When you're in an isolated environment, to be able to say yes and get a yes in return, to get what you want, you need to find a leader first and push him to the top*[18]'.

Diankhar followed a different course. He saw a period of partisan political vacuum after the fall of the socialist regime. In his view, the reason for which PDS officials recruited him was because, as a recognised benefactor of his area, he potentially benefitted from a powerful electoral foundation. As for Diouf, he has switched party several times according to changes at the head of the Ministry of Water, and the Penedaly population has applauded him for these political transhumance, for '*knowing how to keep his position*[19]' and in doing so, protecting village interests.

The political responsibilities of a son of the soil are seen here as a way of securing the village access to State resources. Accordingly, all of the sponsors met in the course of this research were members of the party in government.

The figure of the '*politician*' who uses water for electoral leverage is particularly present in villages that have no-one to play this role for them. In this sense, sponsorship is both an access road to State resources and a form of exclusion for those situated outside the sponsor's field of activity. Sponsorship can also be used to promote the action of the governmental party within localities. Thus, when a team of workers was going out from the 'Wells and Boreholes Brigade' to install a motor obtained through a sponsor's negotiations, the brigade leader reminded them to '*be sure to tell them that they are being given this by the State. I don't want any political hijacking.*'

This figure also appears among actors in development. They often lament that residents do not embrace the reform and prefer to take the easy route, falling back on the '*village politician*'. However, in the villages, the emphasis is different :

[18] Head of the ASUFOR in the in the village where Diagne was born.
[19] Vice-treasurer of the Penedaly ~~Keur Saloum~~ ASUFOR.

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'*The difference is that, me, I don't have to give accounts to anyone for the money I give, I don't have to worry about what's profitable, if I give 100'000 CFA francs here and there*[20]'

'*Diankhar has done a lot for social causes, better than the NGOs we get here. He understands that there are immediate needs to be met. All the African scholars said it: empty stomach, deaf ear. You have to fill people's stomachs before they can listen. That's the sticking point from which development must begin*[21]*.'*

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Although there is a significant NGO presence in the region, it is often emphasised, as in the above comments, that the sponsor is quicker and, unlike these projects, doesn't require any preliminary 'participation'.

The figure of the 'politician' sponsor is widespread in Kaolack. However, it is difficult to establish a direct link between the sponsor's activities and the political tendencies of the area. Certain sponsors have invested a lot in their locality, without elections necessarily going in their favour. Nevertheless, the development of certain political patronage relationships can be noticed between some ASUFOR members and sponsors. In such situations, the boards become launch pads for PDS members. Managing an ASUFOR that brings in money or obtaining a new pump from a village-born politician can act as a real political springboard. Thus, one ASUFOR president, party sister of the village sponsor, and mayoral candidate, stated that, '*The ASUFOR made me popular. The people have water, a new office has been built and I succeeded in obtaining a new pump from my brother party. Me, I'm popular, I bring supporters to the party.'*

In the period of political opposition to the governmental party that the villages examined above are currently experiencing, the sponsor's role as a relay between local and national levels is reinforced. As one former ASUFOR secretary laconically commented, concerning the breakdown that has left his village dry for years, '*If I'm the head of the household, anyone who's against me won't be too comfortable there'.* He was thus drawing a direct connection between the state's failure to repair the pump and the political tendencies of the rural community to which his village belongs.

[20] Former territorial command officer. Financed a borehole and market gardening projects in his village.
[21] Resident of Koudourou and close friend of Diankhar.

The reform stipulates that the ASUFOR should turn to local authorities, among other sources of support, in cases of serious breakdown and insufficient financial resources. These authorities are chronically lacking in funds, and, for water, over which power has not been transferred, all donations come from the State. In a period of political opposition, many ASUFORs see their chances of securing funds through the official route as slim.

To give one example, 2011 saw one of the first donations of water equipment since the last presidential elections. New pumps and engines arrived en masse in the Kaolack region. Allocations were decided in Dakar. The enquiry followed the first installations. A large proportion of the new equipment went to localities won by the PDS or was negotiated directly by PDS politicians from the villages in question.

The sponsor is, therefore, a broker who acts as an intermediary between two worlds (Bako-Arifari 2000; Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2000; Blundo 1998). In this case, the village and Senegalese administration. He 'personifies' the village's interests and problems at the national level and constitutes, by means of his own political positioning, the access route to those resources controlled by a State machine often seen as being too partisan.

4.3. Neo-patrimonial logics within the State: deconstructing the public/private dichotomy

The example of the sponsor-public official highlights neo-patrimonial logics. Diouf and Fall do not hesitate to give away the fuel tokens attached to their position in public service to serve private interests. Fall uses his authority to give social water connections to relatives in the town.

Generally, in discourse, the distinction between the sponsor's private resources and those granted to him in connection with his role in public service remains blurred.

Let us take Diouf as an example:

'Everything I do at home is administrative and I do it for all the boreholes in Senegal.'

'I don't deny it, personally, Penedaly borehole, each time it wasn't working, I had to give fuel tokens, or money for fuel. These things, I did them as a son of the soil, as a man with the responsibility to help.'

'*Yes, Diouf made personal contributions. As a native from the village, he gave his personal financial contribution. Then, despite this, he still used his actions in state service to help*[22]*.*' Formatted: Font: Not Italic

Diankhar's case is different. As a private entrepreneur, he took on public offices to enhance his connections within State administration and to '*improve his village*'. His example enlightens us as to the connections between the party in government and the allocation of public markets. Diankhar no longer has unanimous support in his village. He too mixes public and private resources when he uses diesel oil bought with village funds to run his four-by-four for political meetings in the region. Here, however, the villagers are trying to sanction him.

Sponsors' patronage generally exceeds their own financial capacity. As a result, the confusion of public and private is inherent to their activity. Similarly, when a sponsor has the choice, he will pull strings to obtain a pump or an engine through contacts, rather than pay for it himself. He is in constant negotiation between what he must give and what he can give, between his public and private resources; the latter are built more upon contacts within the State administration than upon financial accumulations. This confusion is not a taboo, but relatively well accepted. In those villages that have a reliable access route to State resources, it is considered normal, if not desirable, that a person's relatives be the first to benefit from the advantages he possesses. In those villages that do not have recourse to such an individual, discourse is bitter. The figure of the '*politician*' once more comes into play here. However, it is not uncommon to see these same ASUFORs make arrangements with sponsors from neighbouring villages in the name of the 'kinship' connecting several villages to each other. Many sponsors are thus active in several villages, whilst affirming that their primary '*emotional*' connection is to the village of their birth.

4.4. Someday, the sponsor must retire: the villagers invest their efforts in the ASUFORs.

[22] Director of the ~~Keur Saloum~~ Penedaly ASUFOR.

Sponsorship, therefore, when possible, appears as a relatively quick route out of the crisis. However, at the same time, villagers also invest in an ASUFOR and apply its terms.

In a neighbouring village to Samekoly, on the same day, certain ASUFOR members had gone to '*cut off*' the taps of bad debtors, whilst the board president was talking to Fall on the telephone about a new pump (the proximity of the two villages meaning that Fall had many relatives there). On the subject of Penedaly, the board president continued to tell us that, '*Diouf might well retire, it's not safe for the people to count on him alone*[23]*'*.

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Many villages, like the one in this last example, are engaging in reform. They embrace the ASUFORs, follow training courses, make requests to NGOs and often still use the devolved State services for the installation of new equipment. Consequently, the villagers' strategies show that when it comes to securing regular access to water, no normative register is neglected. A sponsor can retire, be disgraced or die. These are the hazards of life. To protect themselves against such eventualities, it is better also to develop and use the ASUFORs, save funds and set them aside for periods of drought. Sponsorship goes some way towards effective government of water, but it does not alone define it. It is only one of several registers. It is not in itself an obstacle to the successful embedding of reform, but it remains an emergency relief valve in times of crisis. Official and unofficial logics are not mutually exclusive here. Instead, they complement each other, according to circumstances and needs.

By transferring its costs to users, the Regefor has attempted to make water management in rural areas profitable. Thanks to profits made from water sales, it is intended that the ASUFORs will become entirely autonomous, both from a national and a global point of view (NGOs and cooperation agencies). Nevertheless, the examples presented above show that the local/national dichotomy is flawed. The parties who intervene in times of crisis regularly bring State resources into the local arena.

5. Conclusion

'*People do not wait for the legislators to make up their minds before they act'* (Lund and Juul 2002 : 3). The inhabitants of the ~~three~~ villages described here did not wait for the Regefor to

[23] ASUFOR president in a village neighbouring Penedaly.

find solutions to their water problems. Recourse to sponsorship was not born with reform, nor is it restricted to the realm of water. In these villages, as in others, many other infrastructures (health posts, schools, mosques) are often 'brought' by an individual. The Regefor has not changed this, allowing us to join Moore in his observation that, '*social arrangements are effectively stronger than the laws*' (1978: p.58).

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The aim of this article has been to explain, in a specific manner, the debt relationship between a sponsor and his village – a connection that works in the favour of effective everyday water management. Whose duty is it to solve the water problem? What legitimacy does the sponsor have within the local arena? What resources does this private player use to solve a public problem?

The water that the sponsor brings to his village blurs the boundaries between public and private, between national and local. The public/private dichotomy '*stands out as one of the grand dichotomies of the Western thought'* (Lund 2006 : 678). Inherent to the Regefor, this distinction does not always make sense. The sponsor's funds, although officially private, are seen in reality as community property that must be redistributed. State resources, although public, are conveyed via the sponsor according to private logics. However they are, in the end, destined for public projects, since they are used to ensure water provision. Here, attempting to establish a clear distinction between public and private spheres is like trying to separate salt from sea water.

The '*rule of water*' (Mosse 2003 : 22) that governs the resolution of the borehole crisis invites us to think of local and national not as two separate spheres, but as fields connected by a continuous stream of individuals, resources, networks and norms (Blundo et Le Meur 2009). The village is, therefore, a semi-autonomous field not because its way of governing water has been affected by a reform from above, but more because the villagers prove themselves capable of mobilising outside forces and resources. On this point, Moore observed that '*the social field is semi-autonomous not only because it can be affected by the direction of outside forces impinging upon it, but because persons inside the social field can mobilize those outside forces or threaten to do so, in their bargaining with one another'* (1978 :64)

Koudourou is an exemplary case. When the management of its borehole does not comply with the villagers' own criteria for good governance of water, they will seek a way sanctioning and

bypassing the sponsor, by turning both to the state and to his political adversaries. These strategies are reminiscent of Li's words, in which '*identifying sources of power and leverage is an exercise in which relatively powerless peoples are, of necessity, particularly adept. It is part of their daily work'* (1996 : 503).

The cases examined show that recourse to sponsorship also draws upon a 'bottom-up dynamic'. The villagers invite sponsors to support the village and negotiate their participation, whilst at the same time seeking other ways of protecting their interests. This is classical of political patronage relationships. When the clients are not satisfied, they feel free to search for alternatives. So on, faced with the water problem, the villagers take a dynamic perspective and do not content themselves simply with 'receiving' a reform. To take a wider view, it could be said that '*however, rights (…) are not merely granted to people through political reform by a benevolent state as a result of reasoned deliberation, possibly with the backing of a donor. People also acquire, entrench and conquer rights in practice through confrontations and alliances with other people, institutions, and the state'*(Lund and Juul 2002 :2).

The reform comprises a technical and managerial constituent (the transfer of charges as a way of reducing costs), as well as an ideological constituent (community-based management as a guarantee of healthy and democratic organisation). However, the sponsorship question shows that the water access problematic should no longer been seen in terms of management of water, but in terms of 'rule of water'. Only by taking this perspective can we understand the sponsor not as a remnant or a deviation, a matter to be corrected by empowerment projects, but as a figure who has a place in their own right within the rural water scene.

As Mosse pointed out, '*prospects for positive change in water systems depend not upon recovery of the past of a painted landscape or devolving responsabilities onto its imagined communities, but a reassessment of the relations of state and society which produce landscapes as socio-political processes* (2003:302). In this way~~Consequently~~, the rural water system does not just come down to a technical problem that can be rationalised by means of a reform or by empowerment programs. Rather, it is a process by which actors negotiate everyday access to water, through both official and unofficial norms.

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