

Water Resource Management, Extraverted Governmentality & Urban Citizenship in Contemporary Madagascar

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The issue of the appropriation and translation of democracy at a local level and in developmentist configuration can also be viewed as a long-term co-production - at a local/global interface - of a scale of government and a specific governmentality. And the study of delivery of public goods and services shows which kind of local governmentality is reinforced by external development intervention intertwined with endogenous political dynamics. Which aspect of the polity formation is at stake in these interactions -at distance or in co-presence - between rulers and ruled, developers and developed, whatever their nature (political institutions or parties, NGO's, aid agencies, social groups...), location, nationality and range.

To address these issues, I will use results of my current empirical PHD research on the extraverted municipal government of a provincial capital in the North of Madagascar (Diego-Suarez). Since the foundation of that colonial town, all sorts of local or extra local "trustees" have been involved in the solution of the problems faced by inhabitants. This communication will be focused on water supply. Classically water supply has generated programs of water distribution based on a dual system of private connections to the network and user managed community infrastructures. The results of the programs are necessarily far different from the initial objectives and various understandings of both -objectives and results - circulate locally.

By studying the water policies, programs and uses, I wish to describe local and extra local exchanges that participate in configuring the way decisions are collectively taken and implemented within - or in the name of - a Malagasy urban municipality. Which norms, understandings and practices of both municipal power and municipal belonging are projected, experimented or mobilized - and thus coproduced- by a wide spectrum of local and non-local actors? How do the uses of water take part in defining the group of municipal citizens, groups of rulers and ruled, their margins and boundaries in tension with ethnic, religious or national boundary works?

I will illustrate the interest of considering these current and political interactions in both historical and thematic relation with migration, commercial and geostrategic dynamics (utterly paradigmatic in Diego-Suarez), in a long term ethnographical study.