

# **Foucault Hardly Came to Africa: Some Notes on Colonial and Post- Colonial Governmentality**

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## **RESÜMEE**

Michel Foucault widmete in seiner Analyse von Machtbeziehungen der kolonialen Situation keinerlei Aufmerksamkeit. Nichtsdestoweniger eröffnete sich für eine neue Generation von Afrikahistorikern in den 1980ern mit Foucaults Konzepten von Gouvernamentalität und Disziplinarmacht neue Perspektiven auf koloniale Machtverhältnisse. Sie ermöglichten vor allem, den bis dahin vorherrschenden Fokus auf den kolonialen Staat als zentralen Akteur kolonialer Herrschaft zu hinterfragen. Darüber hinaus rückten kulturelle Aspekte kolonialer Herrschaft stärker in den Vordergrund. Doch Foucaults Konzepten waren an europäischer Geschichte geschult. Die Herausbildung der politischen Rationalität, die Foucault mit Gouvernamentalität beschrieben sowie der Karriere von Disziplinartechniken im Reservoir der Mächtigen fußten auf historischen Prozessen, die wenig mit kolonialer Herrschaft gemein hatten. Der Artikel fragt nach den Konsequenzen dieser Differenzen für das Konzept einer kolonialen Gouvernamentalität. Dabei geht es vor allem um die räumlichen und zeitlichen Dimensionen kolonialer Herrschaft.

## **1. Foucault in Tunis**

In 1965, at the age of thirty, Michel Foucault moved to Tunisia to teach at the University of Tunis. It was his first appointment as professor and his last stopover before he returned to France after years of travel through Europe and Latin America. When Foucault arrived in Tunisia in search for the mystic picture of the Orient and for personal freedom, as he wrote in his diary, Tunisia was in-midst of turmoil.<sup>1</sup> The country was among the

1 R. Ruffing, Michel Foucault, Paderborn 2008.

first French colonies in Africa to become independent in 1956. During the following years it struggled with the birth pangs of post-colonial societies: with political factionalism, experiments in social engineering and with various political ideologies from socialism to Pan-Africanism and Pan-Arabism. It struggled with its national identity and for the demarcation of its national boundaries and in particular against its former colonial power France. Surprisingly, Foucault, who could hardly neglect the social and political struggles within Tunisian post-colonial society, did not elaborate much on colonial and post-colonial societies in his main oeuvre, although he sometimes referred to his Tunisian experiences in interviews and in his diaries. Whilst in Tunisia Foucault worked on his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, a tour de force through several hundred years of European history of ideas.<sup>2</sup>

Although Foucault did not take note of colonialism in his main works, his ideas made it into African studies. I will follow some of the traces of Foucault's work in the history of colonial, post-colonial and post-post-colonial Africa.<sup>3</sup> There are several limitations towards what this paper aims to do and what it can not do. The main discussion will be based on the concept of governmentality, as it was developed by Foucault in his later works. Foucault developed this concept of governmentality on the basis of European history, notably the history of France. When it was adapted by Africanist scholars, they often did so to overcome concepts that, due to their origin in European history, were regarded as "iron cages" of Western concepts.<sup>4</sup> The question therefore is to which extent governmentality helped to escape these "iron cages" and at which costs?

## 2. African Historians and Foucault

This paper will not follow the footsteps of Edward Said, who with his work *Orientalism* introduced Foucault into post-colonial studies, or Valentin Yves Mudimbe, who did this for Africa.<sup>5</sup> Although I am aware that Foucault's analysis of power and governance and his discourse analysis are somehow two sides of the same coin, his reception by post-colonial studies on the one side and by historians and political scientists on the other seem to be based on different readings of Foucault's oeuvre. I argue that most authors who are inspired by Foucault's discourse analysis are more interested in what happened

2 M. Foucault, *Die Ordnung der Dinge. Eine Archäologie der Humanwissenschaften*, Frankfurt am Main 1989. For a general overview on Foucault's silence on colonialism, see: R. J. C. Young, *Foucault on Race and Colonialism*, <http://www.robertjyoung.com/Foucault.pdf>.

3 For a postulation of the end of the post-colonial era in Africa, see: C. Clapham, *Discerning the New Africa*, in: *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), (1998), pp. 263-269, here p. 263; C. Young, *The End of the Post-Colonial state in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics*, in: *African Affairs*, 410 (2004), pp. 23-49, here p. 24.

4 M. Foucault, *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, New York 2003; M. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*, Basingstoke/New York 2007.

5 E. W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York 1978; V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*, Bloomington, 1988.

in the colonial metropolis than in Africa. Only a few authors have traced the production and impact of European discourses to colonial encounters in Africa.<sup>6</sup> Within this indifference towards the impact of discourse on social reality they might have been closer to Foucault than other historians. Callewaert notes that Foucault was not a sociologist or a social historian:

*He wrote only very marginally about forms of exercise of power, or about power as an aspect of discourse. He always wrote about how the exercise of power is thought of, conceptualized and expressed, placed on stage and thousand-fold turned around in many different types of discourses, from scientific analysis to handouts for practical implementation, from discursive practices to non-discursive procedures. He never claimed that you can, from these discourses, conclude what people, professions, social classes, governments do, what is put into action, what materializes in the real world. Even when he is speaking of bio-power, of the techniques of disciplining the body, of governmentality, he is not describing and explaining social history, but the history of knowledge.<sup>7</sup>*

Nevertheless did this not prevent social historians and anthropologists like Jean and John Comaroff or Megan Vaughan to regard Foucault more as a historian than he perhaps had actually been. The inspiration these historians derived from Foucault was rather one of perspective than of theory. Foucault himself occasionally denied to see his work as theory and tended to see it more as a tool-kit.<sup>8</sup> Foucault's denial to have formulated a coherent body of theory and the often sketchy nature of his later work makes it not easier to discuss Foucault's impact on African Studies.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless one may follow Bruce Berman in his observation that such an ostentatious refusal was something that met with a growing dislike among historians and political scientist for universalising theories in the 1980s. Foucault came with the soft appeal of post-modernist theory-making.<sup>10</sup> The first generation of African historians as well as sociologists and political scientists had widely used models and theories that they derived from their parent disciplines. Historians usually adapted the model of the nation state transferred from European history to their research in Africa. They wrote national histories for the emerging nation states of post-colonial Africa. Political scientists described the political change of Africa in terms of modernisation.<sup>11</sup> The 1980s saw an increasing uneasiness with this situation. Already in 1976, the doyen of African history, Terence Ranger, spoke of a "state of crisis" of African history.<sup>12</sup> In his programmatic article on a "new agenda" of history in South Africa,

6 Among them C. Crais, M. Vaughan, Jean and John Comaroff.

7 S. Callewaert, Bourdieu, Critic of Foucault: The Case of Empirical Social Science against Double-Game-Philosophy, in: *Theory, Culture & Society* (2006), pp. 73-98, here p. 91.

8 R. Deacon, An analytics of Power Relations: Foucault on the History of Discipline, in: *History of the Human Sciences* (2002), pp. 89-117, here p. 91.

9 G. Ó Tuathail, Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space, 1996, p. 8.

10 B. J. Berman, A Palimpsest of Contradictions: Ethnicity, Class, and Politics in Africa, in: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* (2004), pp. 13-31, here p. 14.

11 J. Miller, History and Africa/Africa and History, in: *American Historical Review* (1999), pp. 1-32, here p. 9.

12 Ranger cited in A. Hopkins, Africa's Age of Improvement, in: *History in Africa* (1980), pp. 141-160, here p. 142.

Ran Greenstein thus promoted Foucault as a way to heal the tensions between history and theory. Instead of looking for the applicability of universalising theories, historians should “focus [more] on the concrete ways in which social forces interact under specific circumstances”.<sup>13</sup> Foucault’s importance for African studies therefore lies to some extent in the fact that he marks a generation gap and alternation that took place in the 1980s. South Africa was and remains until today a major case study for historians inspired by Foucault’s concept of governmentality. There was a strong French influence on South African historians even before Foucault, notably the French Annales School. This “French connection” has probably contributed to an early reception of Foucault.<sup>14</sup> In 1985 Jean Comaroff published her history of Christian missionaries in southern Africa.<sup>15</sup> It became one of the first major works in African history that explicitly used Foucaultian concepts and terms for its analysis. The introduction illustrates the change in paradigm from Marxist and Weberian understandings of hegemonic ideology and colonial rule towards post-structuralist notions of discourse and disciplinary power. Her main question is how to locate missionaries into the orbit of colonialism. In contrast to earlier studies missionaries neither easily sided with the colonial state nor were positioned outside the colonial project. Foucault surely introduced her to a new way of puzzling together the many different agents of colonial rule and, as she later noted, to deconstruct “the master narrative of European imperial expansion – or, rather, its narrative of mastery – [that] would place the state at the centre of the story”.<sup>16</sup> In the case of the Tswana, who lived along the Molopo River at the very periphery of the colony, the colonial state was only second to arrive at the scene. Long before the Tswana formally became part of British Bechuanaland in 1885 the Tswana encountered protestant missionaries and Boer settlers. Underlying this history was a spatial argument. What she describes is the establishment of a colonial order at the very periphery that was co-authored by many agencies. Colonial rule here could not be taken as something that was initiated, exclusively maintained and controlled by the state agency because the state was lately and then rarely present. But what connected all these different agencies with each other? In *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance* it was a common ideology rooted in the doctrines of 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestantism and Victorian culture. Some years later, in *Of Revelation and Revolution*, which Jean Comaroff published together with her husband John, the nearly absent colonial state at the very periphery of colonial territory had finally given way to an analysis of power in terms of culture. The Tswana were not so much conquered by Europeans, but converted to their civilising mission. If one looks at the political rationality of colonial governance,

13 R. Greenstein, *The Study of South African Society: Towards a New Agenda for Comparative Historical Inquiry*, in: *Journal of Southern African Studies* (1994), pp. 641-661, here p. 643.

14 W. Clarence-Smith, *For Braudel: A Note on the Ecole des Annales and the Historiography of Africa*, in: *History in Africa* (1977), pp. 275-281, here p. 278.

15 J. Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People*, London / Chicago, 1985.

16 J. L. Comaroff, *Governmentality, Materiality, Legality, Modernity*, in: J.-G. Deutsch/P. Probst/H. Schmidt (eds.), *African Modernities: Entangled Meanings in Current Debate*, Oxford 2002, pp. 107-134, here p. 109.

the civilising mission would certainly be a first-class candidate because it helped the Comaroffs to connect different agents and different spheres of colonial rule. Nevertheless, behind the palimpsests of Tswana's complicity they assume a local authorship in these processes that authors in the 1990s described as localisation of modernity.<sup>17</sup>

Timothy Mitchell was not looking at the periphery but at the very centre of a colonial project in his work *Colonizing Egypt* published in 1988. The main discussion in the book is based on Cairo, which was not only the administrative centre but also the model for the future transformation of the whole of Egypt. Mitchell started his study on Egypt with the argument that techniques of disciplinary power originated not in central Europe but in colonial possessions. The first panoptic spaces of power were created in colonial India.<sup>18</sup> For Mitchell this seems to have been more than merely an accident, because the disciplining of a society is a profoundly colonial project. In contrast to the Comaroffs, Mitchell does not attribute the emergence of particular techniques of disciplinary power to a hybrid authorship at the periphery, but to the (nearly) uncontested ability of colonial rulers to enforce new schemes. To colonise Cairo meant to infiltrate, reorder and transform existing spaces and to create new social spaces from the drawing board. It was an attempt to remodel Egypt as a barracks square and to gain extensive control over economic production. It was a project that reached from the creation of a new educational system to the town-planning of Cairo and to the statistical survey of Egypt. The territory, which the colonial state claimed as his sovereignty space, was constructed as a spatial framework for colonial knowledge production and policing.

Mitchell's rewriting of the colonial project in Egypt as a steady process in which patterns of colonial governmentality covered the whole territory, was not easily reproducible in other parts of the African continent. Notably in Sub-Saharan Africa (with the exception of South Africa) colonial rulers lacked the resources and often the intention to develop the institutional prerequisites for modern governmentality. Most authors therefore turned to describe fragments of such a governmentality. Megan Vaughan's work on colonial politics of disease control and lunatic asylums gave way to a new field of inquiry into colonial governmentality.<sup>19</sup> What looks at first as a classical topic for a Foucaultian analysis results in a balanced view on the limits of governmentality in colonial contexts. While Vaughan finds similar patterns in medical metropolitan and colonial discourses, she remains sceptical with regard to the second aspect of the "medical knowledge/ power

17 J. Comaroff/J. L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, Chicago 1991.

18 T. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, Berkeley 1988, p. 35. For a similar argument, see: P. Pels, *The Anthropology of Colonialism: Culture, History and the Emergence of Western Governmentality*, in: *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1997), pp. 163-183, here p. 174.

19 M. Vaughan, *Idioms of Madness: Zomba Lunatic Asylum, Nyasaland, in the Colonial Period*, in: *Journal of Southern African Studies* (1983), pp. 218-238; M. Vaughan, *Famine Analysis and Family Relations: 1949 in Nyasaland*, in: *Past & Present*, 1 (1985), p. 177; M. Vaughan, *The Story of an African Famine: Gender and Famine in Twentieth-Century Malawi*, Cambridge 1987; M. Vaughan, *Syphilis in Colonial East and Central Africa: The Social Construction of an Epidemic*, in: T. O. Ranger/P. Slack (eds.), *Epidemics and Ideas: Essays on the Historical Perception of Pestilence*, Cambridge 1992, pp. 269-302.

complex". Many of the biomedical theories and interventions failed in southern Africa, because they did not fit into the political and social context of either colonial order or local African societies. The impact of colonial health control was limited by the colonial state's meagre resources and knowledge about the African population. Due to this they were hardly "modern states" as they relied much more on occasional displays of repressive power than on everyday techniques of surveillance and control. Moreover did the colonial discourse on health not play such a central role for the colonial administration as it did in Europe, which only in times of crisis, such as famine and epidemics, went back to schemes that can be described as politics of population. Further did colonial health discourses not easily acquire dominance over local knowledge; its *dispositifs* were based on quite different understandings and cultures of the body than they were common in local cultures.<sup>20</sup> What differentiates metropolitan governmentality from its colonial counterpart was, according to Vaughan, the inability of the later to create "total worlds" that bound most Africans into an everyday regime of governmentality and disciplinary power.<sup>21</sup> Frederick Cooper thus doubted in 1994 the Foucaultian paradigm of "capillary power" in the case of colonial order. Power in colonial societies, he wrote, "was more arterial than capillary-concentrated spatially and socially, not very nourishing beyond such domains, and in need of a pump to push it from moment to moment and place to place".<sup>22</sup>

If the colonial rulers achieved to create a "new, self-regulating field of the social", they succeeded only in certain places or in certain situations.<sup>23</sup> Certainly colonial rule was thought by its proponents and agents in ways that were influenced by European models, although, as Scott mentioned, there were significant differences how these "European models" were perceived.<sup>24</sup> The history of colonial governmentality should be written as the history of transfer, which up until now has only been approached by a few authors. Neither political development in Europe nor in Africa occurred along straight lines. "There are significant alterations and discontinuities in European conceptions and practices of political power", Scott wrote.<sup>25</sup> So it was with the colonies. As one author has rightfully noted, colonial rule was characterised by a "simultaneity of the non-simultaneous".<sup>26</sup> Different stages of colonial penetration in different places resulted in different political rationalities. The politics of conquest existed next door to the establishment of centres of administration and "islands of cash-crop production".<sup>27</sup> In contrast to this heterogeneous mix of political rationality it seems to me that Foucault is rather assum-

20 M. Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, Cambridge 1991, p. 10.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

22 F. Cooper, *Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History*, in: *The American Historical Review* (1994), pp. 1516-1545, here p. 1533.

23 D. Scott, *Colonial Governmentality*, in: *Social Text*, 43 (1995), pp. 191-220, p. 203.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 198.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

26 A. Wirz, *Körper, Raum und Zeit der Herrschaft*, in: A. Wirz / A. Eckert / K. Bromber (eds.), *Alles unter Kontrolle – Disziplinierungsverfahren im kolonialen Tanzania (1850–1960)*, Köln 2003, pp. 5-34.

27 Cooper, *Conflict and Connection* (footnote 22), p. 1533.

ing that governmentality is characterised by the accomplishment of single or at least a dominant political rationality.

Nevertheless, was this not only a question of different political traditions and experiences of colonial politics, but also of different agents of colonial rule. I have argued elsewhere that the ability of the colonial state to maintain its prerogative of interpretation over its politics and agency was quite limited.<sup>28</sup> Metropolitan discourses on modern political rationality certainly reached the colonies. But they did so in meticulous ways. The transfer occurred through many channels, not all of them were in the hand of colonial bureaucracies. Missionaries usually had an important share, but an often different agenda from colonial bureaucrats. Their involvement in colonial rule was complex. In German colonies missionaries were often seen by the colonial administration as rivals for the prerogative of sovereignty in the colonial project. Many agents of the colonial state, especially the colonial military, showed little interest in the civilising mission of colonialism, while missionaries saw this as the main goal of the colonial project. Colonial rule was seen by colonial officers, who, in the first years, gained an important influence over colonial politics, in terms of enforcement of brute power over Africans. Moreover did most colonial officers and bureaucrats belong to the Prussian nobility in contrast to the missionaries, who came from the lower and middle classes of the country side of East Elbia.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore we have to consider that in most colonial projects Europeans were a minority. The colonial order, whether it manifested itself in administrative practices, at barrack squares, in plantations, in hospitals and missions, was made up by Africans. These intermediaries of colonial rule were ordered to count huts for taxation, to report about their societies, or to exercise punishments and health campaigns. Governmentality assumes certain complicity and a common understanding of the political rationalities. Most studies on the role of intermediaries have shown that the Africans developed their own views and goals of colonial rule.<sup>30</sup>

One may argue that the difficulty of the colonial state to gain dominance over the colonial project was a result of its teething troubles. But the history of colonial rule cannot be written as a successive enforcement of European political rationalities. By the end of the First World War colonial rulers became, as Cooper notes, increasingly frustrated by their failure to remodel African societies. The declaration of “indirect rule” as an official goal of colonial politics can thus be regarded as an attempt to rationalise or spirit away this

28 M. Pesek, *Koloniale Herrschaft in Deutsch-Ostafrika: Expeditionen, Militär und Verwaltung seit 1880*, Frankfurt am Main 2005.

29 M. Pesek, *Islam und Politik in Deutsch-Ostafrika, 1905–1919*, in: A. Wirz/K. Bromber/A. Eckert (eds.), *Alles unter Kontrolle – Disziplinierungsverfahren im kolonialen Tanzania (1850–1960)*, Hamburg 2003, pp. 99–140.

30 M. Klein, *African Participation in Colonial Rule: The Role of Clerks, Interpreters, and Other Intermediaries*, in: B. N. Lawrance/E. L. Osborn/R. L. Roberts (eds.), *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*, Madison 2006, pp. 273–285; D. Van Den Bersselaar, *Acknowledging Knowledge: Dissemination and Reception of Expertise in Colonial Africa*, in: *History in Africa*, (2006), pp. 389–393; A. Eckert, *Regulating the Social: Social Security, Social Welfare and the State in Late Colonial Tanzania*, in: *The Journal of African History* (2004), pp. 467–489.

failure as a change in the paradigms of their politics.<sup>31</sup> In fact it was a partial capitulation in face of this failure to gain dominance over local political rationalities.

Foucault saw the emergence of a new form of political rationality (governmentality) as a reaction to the “demographic explosion” and industrialisation. This was based on a growing economic and administrative and coercive potential of the state in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as new technologies and knowledge. Authority was thought and eventually constituted around discursive and coercive techniques for disciplining space, populations and individuals in order to create a new “modern” system of production and consumption. If Foucault concentrates on the emergence of the discourse rather than social realities, he is assuming a certain historical symbiosis between discourses of governmentality and the social and political transformation of European societies. Governmentality is a discourse that corresponds with and results in the bureaucratization of the main sectors of societies: their economies, their political institutions and places of socialisation. The political rationality of governmentality connects these main sectors of societies and enables a mutual transfer of concepts and practices between them. Thus political institutions are able to embed economical discourses and goals. Places of socialisation like the family or the school share concepts and practices with places of power and economics, like the barrack square or the factory, etc.

The diffusion of governmentality into society results in the normalisation of power. This is, according to Foucault, a continuous process of investigating, disciplining and regulating subjects. Disciplinary and regulatory power presupposes mechanisms of power, which are already present and become effective in its establishment and dispersal. The presence of modern states in everyday life is thus rarely a problem and not only because of their developed administrative structures. While ordering the time and space of its society power realises itself in spatial and temporal configurations, creating and displaying itself in “serial rooms”.<sup>32</sup> Just as the dispositions of the state are present in its institutions they are also incorporated in its subjects. In the disciplinary society, the modern state tries to create its counterpart: a society that shares its dispositions and therefore, so to speak, understands its orders and, to a certain extent, agrees to the legitimacy of its actions. What Gregory describes as the “inherently spatializing” character of disciplinary power is its ability to penetrate and transform social space with its presence or representations of its presence.<sup>33</sup> The modern state develops an overwhelming visibility by occupying its territory with representations of its power (monuments, administrative buildings, uniforms of its agents, etc.). Its disciplinary power is, due to its unspectacular normality, almost invisible in everyday life.<sup>34</sup> With these newly regimes of sovereign

31 Cooper, *Conflict and Connection* (footnote 22), p. 1531.

32 G. Deleuze, *Foucault*, Frankfurt am Main 1992.

33 D. Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, Cambridge 1994, p. 28.

34 M. Foucault, *Überwachen und Strafen: Die Geburt des Gefängnisses*, Frankfurt am Main 1976, p. 259; M. Foucault, *Dispositive der Macht: Über Sexualität, Wissen und Wahrheit*, Berlin 1978, p. 35.



authority a new regime of visibility and representation of the sovereign emerged.<sup>35</sup> The baroque state-rituals of the past were increasingly replaced by mundane and invisible representations of governmentality. The new disciplinary techniques produced a reversed visibility of power. Whereas power was by then visibly embodied in the sovereign, disciplinary power is much more “exercised through its invisibility”. If the visibility of power fades away in the mundane and everyday-life, the subjects of power are forced “to come into view, since their visibility assures the hold of the power exercised over them”.<sup>36</sup> This new visibility of subjects is assured by the creation of spatial arrangements of societies (the prison, the modern city) and new technologies of knowing as they emerged with sciences, in particular medicine, criminology, pedagogy, mathematics and social sciences, and bureaucratic practices in the last two hundred years.

Colonial governmentality did not emerge in such a historical symbiosis. It was brought to Africa by the conquest even if it was not always connected with the exercise of brute force. Colonial conquest was not only a military endeavour, but also a political project that aimed to fundamentally change African societies. If colonial governmentality was the result of such a conquest, then we have to take the specific feature of a colonial order in the making into account. James C. Scott suggested that historians should concentrate on how the targets of colonial power were formulated and in which fields of operation colonial power emerged and was maintained.<sup>37</sup> Although there were certainly “historically heterogeneous rationalities through which the political sovereignties of colonial rule were constructed and operated”, I am going to suggest some common characteristics of colonial governmentality, which resulted from specific spatial and temporal fields of operation of colonial power.

### 3. The Anti-Westphalian Colonial State

The dispersal of the idea of the territorial state around the globe is historically connected to the era of European imperialism and colonialism. With imperialism, as Clifton Crais argues, “mapping of frontiers and the creation of boundaries between polities gained special prominence in the European political imagination”.<sup>38</sup> The process of exploring, mapping and conquering the African continent, often occurring simultaneously, was the prelude to a colonial transformation aimed at creating political entities that fitted into European political imaginations. Mapping was often among the first acts of colonial

35 M. Foucault, *Die Ordnung der Diskurse*, Frankfurt am Main 1991; Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* (footnote 4), p. 249.

36 G. Deleuze, *What is a Dispositif*, in: T. J. Armstrong (ed.), *Michael Foucault: Philosopher*, New York 1992, pp. 159-168, here p. 160; N. Gordon, *On Visibility and Power: An Arendtian Corrective of Foucault*, in: *Human Studies*, (2002), pp. 712-145, here p. 131.

37 Scott, *Colonial Governmentality* (footnote 23), pp. 191-220, p. 193.

38 C. C. Crais, *Conquest, State Formation, and the Subaltern Imagination in Rural South Africa*, in: Id. (ed.), *The Culture of Power in Southern Africa: Essays on State Formation and The Political Imagination*, Portsmouth 2003, pp. 27-48, here p. 32.

conquerors, and creating these maps more precisely and adding knowledge about the population belonged to the first duties of the colonial administrators. Mapping, counting bodies and property, entitling populations and rulers “were central to the creation of colonial subjects, their disciplining, and control over their bodies and their movements”.<sup>39</sup> The history of European colonialism can therefore be written as a process “in which colonial practices were inscribed both physically and psychologically on the territories and peoples subject to colonial control”.<sup>40</sup> The question remains how far-reaching and how successful this colonial intervention was.

In Europe’s colonial empires sovereignty was stripped off its territorial dimension. It was a recourse on pre-Westphalian models of core zones of sovereignty.<sup>41</sup> For colonial bureaucrats and politicians in the metropolis the question of territoriality/sovereignty seemed not to be of high priority. The Congo Conference of 1884 outlined how to establish claims over a territory and not, as is sometimes stated, define the borders of colonial territories. Thus the final documents of the conference can be read as a manifesto of colonial statehood. Colonial occupation was thought to be a prelude of a series of juridical rituals performed by Europeans in front of an African public. Protection treaties negotiated with African rulers legitimized colonisation in accordance with international law and marked the region as a sphere of influence against European rivals. By hoisting a flag of some kind (not always the national, but, as in the case of the Congo Free State, the Star-Spangled Banner) at the residence of an African ruler, the approbation was symbolically as well as actually performed. The Europeans, who were present in these initial moments of colonial state-building, did not always hold an official mandate of a European Government to act as its representative. Henry Morton Stanley made his treaties with African Chiefs in the Congo Basin while on an official mission of the Belgian King Leopold II. The King was not the actual head of the Belgian state; in fact he was by then no more than a private investor, who was tricking the European public by posing as the head of state. The notorious Carl Peters, who travelled in 1883 to East Africa to conclude protection treaties with East African chiefs, did so without an official approval by the German Empire. Originally he thought of establishing his very own private empire, which he wished to sell off to the highest bidding protecting power. Only when he presented his treaties on the eve of the Congo Conference did he receive his official mandate from the German Emperor. The same conference entitled the Belgian King as a sovereign over his shadow possessions in the Congo and with him Stanley as his official representative. In the bargaining atmosphere of the Congo-Conference not only colonial

39 Ibid., p. 33.

40 R. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London 1995, p. 173.

41 The Westphalian process, starting in the middle of the 17th century, eventually led to the emergence of the territorial state as the dominant political order in Europe. Although there is a lengthy debate on the significance of the Treaty of Westphalia for this process, one can indeed argue that before the 17th century sovereignty was not necessarily bound to territoriality. The Holy Roman Empire with its complex dependent and tributary relationships was oscillating around the political figure of the Emperor. The sovereignty vested in the Emperor did not exceed a core territory or even the place where he actually resided.

territories were made but also their sovereigns. In 1884 the German delegation voted for a European sovereignty/territoriality model to be adopted for defining the validity of claims at the Berlin Congo-Conference. European colonial powers were assured of their claims by rivals only after they proved to have established a sound administrative network throughout the country. Nevertheless the German novices in colonial empire-building were quickly advised by the British that the implementation of European standards of statehood would be too costly. The British prevailed with their views and the Germans soon experienced the advantages that came with a low-level engagement in colonial state-building.<sup>42</sup>

This juridical choreography of colonisation was, vaguely defined as it was, unsoundly based on international law. An African ruler – whose power was seldom based on territorial rights – was declared a sovereign over a territory with whom one could negotiate the cession of that territory. Sovereignty was thus “invented as an unavoidable part of colonial conquest because of the necessity of identifying the political subjects of empire”.<sup>43</sup> Simultaneously, this however invented sovereignty of African rulers over a certain territory was denied to him by the European concept of “ownerless sovereignty”. This concept negated per se the existence of states and statehood in Africa. It was partly the result of Europe’s limited knowledge of African political structures; partly it was a strategy to legitimise colonial projects. Before Africa was conquered, its political landscape had to be erased and its rulers de-legitimised as cruel and irresponsible tyrants by colonial discourse.

Once the colonial state set its first footholds on the African soil the anti-Westphalian nature of the colonial state became obvious. The Westphalian state established a particular regime of visibility. As in most other colonial projects, colonial rulers in German Eastern Africa for instance struggled with their presence and therefore with their ability to project the sovereignty over its African subjects in their daily life over many years. The presence of colonial rulers, like in most other colonial territories, was scattered on “islands of rule”. Colonial economies were merely “islands of cash crop production”.<sup>44</sup> Sovereignty was vested in the use of state-symbols and in the performance of state-rituals and rituals of statehood. It was vested in simulations of a territorial state. Notwithstanding, the Westphalian model remained a strong imagination for colonial politics. The territorial image still prevailed in the everyday colonial politics and thus created it as an imagination.<sup>45</sup> Colonial expeditions stopped at the borders of the colonies even if they chased resisting Africans. Bureaucratic practises of report and accounting created the colonial territory as a framework that was defined by spatial categories. The introduction of currencies imagined the colonial territory as a single market. Colonial festivities like

42 C. Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, New Haven 1994, p. 96.

43 C. C. Crais, *Custom and The Politics of Sovereignty in South Africa*, in: *Journal of Social History*, 3 (2006), pp. 721-740, here p. 727.

44 Cooper, *Conflict and Connection* (footnote 22), pp. 1516-1545, p. 1529.

45 A. M. Brighenti, *On Territorology: Towards a General Science of Territory*, in: *Theory, Culture & Society* (2010), pp. 52-72, here p. 57.

the birthday of the Emperor, the Queen and the 14<sup>th</sup> July were invented by the colony as a territory. They were to be held at every colonial station in the German, French and British colonies and later also reported in the newspapers of the colony and in administrative reports.

The question of the territoriality of the colonial state may thus open new perspectives on the sovereignty of the colonial state. My first point to make here is that the territoriality/sovereignty nexus of the colonial state can be seen as an exchange coin in global politics at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the Westphalian process in 1644 territoriality had emerged as the dominant way to describe the spatial dimensions of sovereignty in Europe. During the partition of Africa on negotiation tables of 19<sup>th</sup> century European diplomacy this sovereignty/territoriality nexus was also the blueprint for the political landscape of colonial Africa. Nevertheless, the imperial expansion became also the first major event in the history of Europe to challenge the Westphalian nexus of sovereignty/territoriality.

#### 4. The Politics of Campaigning

What is often neglected in studies of colonial governmentality is the question of time. Foucault describes the emergence of the new rationality of governance as a gradual process over a time span of nearly three hundred years or more. In order to become an effective form of governance, this new rationality has to lodge itself into the everyday-life of its subjects. This is something that cannot be achieved overnight and time, or more exactly, durability is the important resource of governmentality. Had the colonial rulers of Africa enough time to impose colonial governmentality as a political rationality? This is thereby not an accident that South Africa became the heartland of Foucaultians not only due to the “French connection” but also because colonial rule with its relative long history there opened a window for a *longue durée* investigation into colonial rule. South Africa is the most ancient project of modern colonialism in Africa. It was founded as a Dutch settlement in 1652, nearly 250 years before the scramble for Africa started in most parts of the continent. The initial phase of colonial conquest started here at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a hundred years before it did for most of Africa. If we speak of colonial history in southern Africa we are dealing with a time-frame of more than two hundred years, which is hardly the case for most parts of Africa where the colonial episode was usually far briefer. In most colonial territories of Sub-Saharan Africa, where the initial phase of colonial conquest only ended with the end of the First World War, colonial rule became settled in the inter-war years.<sup>46</sup>

The First World War was a watershed between the period of colonial conquest and the emergence of colonial governance. In most parts of Africa, the politics of conquest had

46 C. Young, *The African Colonial State* (footnote 41); J. I. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, 2000.

not coincided with a pervasive institutionalisation of colonial rule. One reason for the underdeveloped colonial state during the period of colonial conquest was the fact that the conquest afforded relatively few resources. In most colonial projects, the number of troops used for the conquest hardly exceeded a few thousand. Measured against the huge territories, the administrative staff was comparatively small. Nevertheless, the anti-Westphalian nature of the colonial state in the making limited the goals of colonial conquest. In many places, the establishment of colonial rule took more the character of a fragile armistice than it led to the establishment of effective patterns of colonial administration. This changed with the First World War. The war efforts of the involved colonial powers resulted in the introduction of new forms of bureaucratic rule and economic management. This was particularly the case in Eastern Africa, where the military confrontation between Allied and German forces lasted four years. New needs and chances arose during that period to transform the largely unknown African into a member of a population. In British East Africa the newly created Military Labour Bureau issued thousands of identity cards for military labourers, which, after the war, became a basis for the bureaucratic management of colonial labour force. With military labour came the registration and military training. Investigations into the food-habits and health of Africans produced a knowledge that formed the basis of colonial bio-politics. Nevertheless, the colonial panopticum had a limited reach; so it was with colonial policies. Within the context of the war economy of British East Africa the colonial state mustered resources till then unavailable but only limited to the short period of time of the war. By the end of the war, some projects prevailed, but many were quickly abandoned because they threatened to exceed the meagre budgets of colonial administrations.<sup>47</sup>

It is worth mentioning that one of the first moments when we can speak of the emergence of a sort of colonial governmentality is connected to a crisis. The inter-war period was in this regard a time of transition. With the introduction of Indirect Rule the colonial state disengaged from a further penetration of African societies. On the other hand, this period saw in most African colonial territories an increasing grip of colonial rulers on African societies. There were investigations on all matters of life of Africans. For the aim of tax gathering Africans were counted and categorised. To fit into the principles of indirect rule, which was introduced at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by most colonial governments in one form or another, Africans had to be drawn up as separate social and political populations. Whereas the imagination of Africans as populations was based on similar techniques of counting, categorizing and investigating like in the metropolis, it was not aimed at the production of homogeneity but of differences.<sup>48</sup> Within the context of Indirect Rule different political rationalities were ascribed to these populations and, as a result, different ways of colonial politics to deal with them.

47 M. Pesek, *Das Ende eines Kolonialreiches*, Frankfurt am Main 2010, p. 207 ff.

48 P. Pels/O. Salemink, Introduction: Locating the Colonial Subjects of Anthropology, in: Id. (eds.), *Colonial Subjects: Essays on The Practical History of Anthropology*, Ann Arbor 1999, pp. 1-53, here p. 18; A. L. Stoler, *Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance*, in: *Archival Science* (2002), pp. 87-109, here p. 95; K. Dauber, *Bureaucratizing the Ethnographer's Magic*, in: *Current Anthropology* (1995), pp. 75-95, here p. 84.

Nevertheless, many of these colonial counting campaigns rarely went beyond mere estimates. South Africa seems to have been a forerunner in introducing this particular technique of governmentality on the African continent. As early as in 1690 the first census was held in the Cape Colony. By 1862 the first Census Act had been passed in the colony setting the norms and procedures of future census. What is therefore more relevant is that even with humble beginnings of the first censuses, which covered only parts of the colony's population, it was followed by regularly held censuses over the next 300 years. Each of the censuses successively widened its scope as the colonial conquest continued and more and more Africans came under colonial rule.<sup>49</sup> The first census in British West Africa was held in 1871 for the city of Lagos. It took another forty years to widen the geographical scope, when in 1911 a house-to-house enumeration was made in some ports and townships. Only in 1921 was the first attempt at a systematic census for the entire population made by the administration. But the colonial administration struggled with an underfunded budget and untrained staff and sometimes also with a fragile political situation in many peripheral parts of the colony. Moreover, there seemed to exist a general mistrust for the results of the census and some were corrected according to estimates of colonial officers.<sup>50</sup>

Later phases of colonial rule saw increasing potentialities and a willingness on the side of colonial bureaucracies to project the dispositifs of colonial governmentality to African societies and to transform the subjugated into subjects and people into populations. Like in the case of the First World War a current crisis of European Empires led to a modernisation of colonial rule. The Second World War saw, as Crawford Young argues, a change in colonial politics. The doctrine of colonial self-sufficiency, which had previously been an obstacle to the development of colonial rule, was partially abandoned. The once isolated and autonomously acting colonial field agents became embedded in a hierarchy, which "was now fleshed out with a proliferating array of technical services". Developmentalism was the new "mantra" of post-war colonial politics and was followed by attempts of economic planning and social engineering.<sup>51</sup> But was this the arrival of governmentality in Africa?

At least in terms of space and time colonial politics were much more characterised by campaigns than by the everyday routine of governmentality. Most of these attempts were spatially and temporally limited or were quickly abandoned. A campaign is to be understood here as a temporary and concentrated attempt to change within a short time span particular aspects of social configurations of a given society. The Oxford Dictionary gives two meanings of "campaign": it is either "a series of military operations intended to achieve a goal, confined to a particular area, or involving a specified type of fighting"

49 F. Tesfaye, *L'usage public et politique des statistiques des populations en Afrique: des projets de domination aux violations des droits humains* (paper presented at the Communication présentée au congrès annuel de la Société québécoise de science politique, 2010).

50 D. van den Bersselaar, *Establishing the Facts: PA Talbot and the 1921 Census of Nigeria*, in: *History in Africa*, (2004), pp. 69-102, here p. 72.

51 J. D. Hargreaves, *The End of Colonial Rule in West Africa*, New York 1979, p. 41.

or “an organized course of action to achieve a goal”.<sup>52</sup> In colonial contexts campaigns, to transform African societies, represented in certain matters a continuity of techniques of conquest like the expedition. And sometimes medical campaigns turned into military campaigns against a reluctant population as was the case with the plague expedition of the German doctor Max Zupitza to Lake Victoria in 1898, which ended in the devastation of several villages.<sup>53</sup>

The idea to change societies through particular campaigns is connected to what James C. Scott has described as “high modernism”.<sup>54</sup> They are typical for historical situations of rapid change, where elites took up the challenge to transform societies in a relatively short period of time. Soviet Russia initiated in the 1920 and 1930s a number of campaigns, in which the communist elites tried to catapult the rural population, which they regarded as backward, into the future world of socialism within a few years. Underlying the discourse of such campaigns is the understanding of a deep rift between spheres of a society as they were common in post-revolutionary Russia and in colonial situations. Colonial campaigns for the introduction of new crops, disease control and against “amoral” behaviour were engineered according to discourses, which were accompanied by a vocabulary of “control”, “modernisation” and “improvement”. They were perhaps the most common techniques of colonial governmentality. As Megan Vaughan notes, the encounter of Africans with colonial medicine in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was predominately through the “great campaign”.<sup>55</sup> Also, attempts to change the patterns of rural agricultural production in colonial Africa were exercised mostly through campaigns.<sup>56</sup> If some authors recognised in the rise of developmentalism in the inter-war period the major theme of colonial politics then the campaign became a major technique to enforce it. As in the first colonial conquest this second colonial conquest met the resistance of African societies. Marie Luise White has described some forms of this resistance in her book *Speaking with Vampires*.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, colonial campaigns illustrate the shifting alliances within colonial projects as well. Venereal disease campaigns in colonial Buganda met the enthusiastic support of local chiefs, because they hoped to acquire more control over women.<sup>58</sup> The campaign against joint-drinking in urban Rhodesia in the 1930s

52 “Campaign”. Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford University Press. 6 Jan. 2011 <[http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m\\_en\\_gb0118630](http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0118630)>.

53 Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills* (footnote 20), p. 37. For the Zupitza expedition, see: H. Rehse, *Kiziba, Land und Leute*, Stuttgart 1910, p. 267.

54 J. C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Humans Condition have Failed*, New Haven 1998.

55 Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills* (footnote 20), p. 37.

56 A. F. D. MacKenzie, *Contested Ground: Colonial Narratives and the Kenyan Environment, 1920–1945*, in: *Journal of Southern African Studies* (2000), pp. 697–718, here p. 703; W. Beinart / K. Brown / D. Gilfoyle, *Experts and Expertise in Colonial Africa Reconsidered: Science and the Interpenetration of Knowledge*, in: *African Affairs*, (2009), pp. 413–433; Eckert, *Regulating the Social* (footnote 30), pp. 467–489; D. H. Groff, *Carrots, Sticks, and Cocoa Pods: African and Administrative Initiatives in the Spread of Cocoa Cultivation in Assikasso, Ivory Coast, 1908–1920*, in: *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (1987), pp. 401–416.

57 L. White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumour and History in Colonial Africa*, Berkeley 2000.

58 Vaughan, *Syphilis in Colonial East and Central Africa* (footnote 19), pp. 269–302, here p. 276.

was initiated by missionaries and the colonial administration, but found its staunchest supporters in the urban African elite. It was again the question for the control of women which drove African elites into the ranks of colonial campaigners.<sup>59</sup>

Although campaigns often use the language of metropolitan governmentality, they differ in their techniques. Campaigns have another regime of visibility and temporality. Many colonial campaigns were reactions to current crisis, notably as a reaction to diseases, famines and social unrest that were a result of the rapid transformations of African societies in the inter-war period and after the Second World War.<sup>60</sup> Often their short-term goals were only vaguely connected to long-term strategies of the colonial administration. With the crisis gone or solved by successful campaigns, the colonial state reduced its high-profile engagement and disappeared behind the veil of indirect rule. Regarding the chronic shortness of funds of colonial administration, it is no wonder that short-lived campaigns gained such an importance for colonial politics. If we can speak of a disciplinary power in these contexts, then it was not enforced through the constant acquisition of a habitus, but by the magic of propaganda and violence. The introduction and maintenance of colonial rule was much more characterised by the spontaneity and forcefulness of campaigns than the ordinary and reformatory change that seems to me typical for the emergence of what Foucault described as governmentality.

## 5. Afterword: The Political Rationality of Developmentalism

The concept of governmentality and disciplinary power offered new possibilities to historians to describe the peculiar nature of colonial rule in Africa. First of all, the Foucaultian notion of governmentality de-centred the previous focus on the colonial state. Foucault came into African history in the middle of the debate on the questions of the magnitude of the colonial and post-colonial state.<sup>61</sup> The ability of the colonial state to establish itself as an institutional framework for bringing Africans under the tutelage of colonial rule was increasingly doubted in African history in the 1980s.<sup>62</sup> It opened up moreover a

59 M. O. West, *Liquor and Libido: 'Joint Drinking' and the Politics of Sexual Control in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1920s–1950s*, in: *Journal of Social History* (1997), pp. 645–667, here p. 646.

60 M. Dawson, *The 1920s Anti-Yaws Campaigns and Colonial Medical Policy in Kenya*, in: *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 3 (1987), pp. 417–435; R. Waller, 'Clean' and 'Dirty': Cattle Disease and Control Policy in Colonial Kenya, 1900–40, in: *Journal of African History* (2004), pp. 45–80; M. H. Dawson, *Socioeconomic Change and Disease: Smallpox in Colonial Kenya, 1880–1920*, in: S. Feierman/J. M. Janzen (eds.), *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa*, Berkeley 1992, pp. 90–103.

61 One of the first to come up with new perspectives on the complexities of colonial/post-colonial states was the afore-mentioned Hargreaves. Also see: B. J. Berman, *Structure and Process in the Bureaucratic States of Colonial Africa*, in: *Development and Change*, 2 (1984), pp. 161–202; T. Ranger, *White Presence and Power in Africa*, in: *The Journal of African History* (1979), pp. 463–469; Berman, *A Palimpsest of Contradictions* (footnote 10), p. 16; J. Lonsdale, *States and Social Processes in Africa: A Historiographical Survey*, in: *African Studies Review* (1981), pp. 139–225.

62 In 1989, Jean-Francois Bayart published his famous book on the state in Africa (*J.-F. Bayart, L'Etat en Afrique – la politique du ventre*, Paris 1989) which subsumed his earlier work on this topic, see: J.-F. Bayart, *L'Etat au Cameroun*, Paris 1979; Id., *Le Politique par le bas en Afrique noire*, in: *Politique africaine*, 1 (1981), pp. 53–83; Id., *Civil*



view on a non-state agency in the process of an establishment of colonial rule. Foucault thus helped historians of colonial rule to collect the broken pieces of the colonial state, which had been smashed by a new generation of historians and political scientists in the 1980s. To describe the colonial state as an institution had certainly lost its momentum, but it could now be taken as something that was softer than institutions. It was a new rationality that produced discourses and techniques of governance. But what was easily overlooked is that the Foucaultian notion of governmentality bore in itself a certain “dogmatic functionalism”.<sup>63</sup> Despite using his concept of governmentality to dethrone the state as the sole agent of power in modern Europe, he still sticks to the state as a central agent.

As the colonial state had been part of an imperial world order, the post-colonial state, which was to emerge in the process of decolonization, became a subject of a post-war world order of nation-states even if many of these nations were in an ambiguous state. This world order, with its different political power blocs and centres, constructed its subjects, the nation-states, according to its premises. Crawford Young hints at the semantic metamorphosis of the “new” or “post-independent states” into “post-colonial states” or states of the Third World in the context of global discourses in the wake of decolonisation.<sup>64</sup> Most former colonies, in particular former French and British, developed special relationships with their former colonial powers. This led some authors to conclude that the post-colonial state was the continuation of Indirect Rule. But this did not happen within the space of the territorial defined and organized colonial state but within the framework of the post-colonial world order.<sup>65</sup>

Much more such continuation in early post-independence politics than one could have expected had been exercised. Major development schemes that were started or planned after the Second World War were continued by nationalist politicians like the Volta-River Project in Ghana or the Geschira irrigation-scheme in the Sudanese Nil delta.<sup>66</sup> Developmentalism became a vision of nationalist elites of the post-independence states as well as of major global institutions. Some authors see in the emergence of the developmentalist institutional framework (the UNO, the World Bank, and the IMF) the creation of a “single social field” that was shaped by Foucaultian *dispositifs* of social engineering.<sup>67</sup> The new states / post-colonies quickly joined a variety of international organisations from the UN to the OAU, from the IMF to the World Bank. May it as it is, if Developmentalism

Society in Africa, in: P. Chabal (ed.), *Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power*, Cambridge 1986, pp. 109-125. For a good overview, see: A. T. Gana, *The State in Africa: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, in: *International Political Science Review* (1985), pp. 115-132; M. Doornbos, *The African State in Academic Debate: Retrospect and Prospect*, in: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (1990), pp. 179-198.

63 D. Garland, *Frameworks of Inquiry in the Sociology of Punishment*, in: *British Journal of Sociology*, 1 (1990), pp. 1-15, here p. 4.

64 Young, *The End of the Post-Colonial State* (footnote 3), p. 23

65 C. Clapham, *Degrees of Statehood*, *Review of International Studies*, 2 (1998), pp. 143-157, here p. 147

66 See also the article by Julia Tischler in this issue on the Kariba-Dam.

67 M. Brigg, *Post-development, Foucault and the Colonisation Metaphor*, in: *Third World Quarterly* (2002), pp. 421-436, here p. 429.

still prevailed as a major theme in the political rationalities of post-colonial Africa, the campaign remained the appropriate tool for its enforcement. Post-colonial campaigns tried, like their colonial predecessors, to introduce new techniques of agricultural production and schemes for the prevention of diseases. They promoted new forms of habitus and (national) patterns of identity and fought against remains of “tribalism” and “colonialism”. Nearly every new president in post-colonial Africa launched his own anti-corruption campaign. Ghana under Nkrumah saw several campaigns for new dresses for women, for back-yard gardening in support of the politics of self-reliance.<sup>68</sup> Nyerere’s pronouncement of Ujamaa was followed by numerous campaigns for new settlement schemes, alphabetisation and the introduction of mechanized agriculture.<sup>69</sup> In William Tolbert’s Liberia campaigns became “sloganised responses to festering problems”, such as ‘Rallytime’, ‘Higher Heights’ and ‘Mats to Mattresses’ campaigns.<sup>70</sup>

African elites eagerly took over the sovereignty / territoriality paradigm. “Seek the political kingdom first”, as Kwame Nkrumah put it in his famous phrase, was meant to inherit the shallow sovereignty of the colonial state. For Nkrumah and most of the African nationalists of the first generation the political kingdom lay at the capital and the main urban centres. The national state became the main framework for the political emancipation. This nationalisation of African political movements was quite astonishing with regards to the strong Pan-African tradition of the first generation of the then converted nationalists. The political kingdom the nationalists hoped to achieve was not a coherent political space nor was it a sovereignty-scape. African elites inherited the instruments of statehood from the colonial state but not the power that came with it in colonial days. The nationalist movements, which brought the African elites to power, quickly lost their momentum as a political force of national relevance simply because there was no nation to rely on. The problem for most post-colonial states was that they faced a mixture of different political traditions and systems. The politics of indirect rule had persevered although to a certain extent in a transformed manner. Some pre-colonial institutions and the political tradition of African elites themselves were a highly hybrid mixture of Christian, liberal, Marxist and nationalist ideologies, not to speak of the artificial boundaries inherited from colonial times. Somalia is here an interesting case to point out. After gaining independence from Britain and Italy Somali nationalists resorted to the idea of a Somali nation that included people living in the neighbouring countries of Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. This led to more than 50 years of civil and inter-state war at the horn of Africa. The Congo (Zaire) is another example. The artificial creation included such heterogeneous political traditions as the former Congo-Kingdom and the former Lunda Empire and the stateless societies of the lower Congo basin. The Congo was one

68 J. A. McCain, Attitudes toward Socialism, Policy, and Leadership in Ghana, in: *African Studies Review* (1979), pp. 149-169, here p. 166.

69 H. Glickman, One-Party System in Tanganyika, in: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1965), pp. 136-149, here p. 136.

70 J. D. Kandeh, What does The ‘Militariat’ do when it Rules? Military Regimes: The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia, in: *Review of African Political Economy*, 69 (1996), pp. 387-404, here p. 389.

of the two examples for an experiment with federal structures in post-colonial Africa. The other, Nigeria, was to a great part abandoned after the Biafra-War.

Therefore “Tribalism” and “Balkanization” became the ghosts in post-colonial discourses on statehood. When Nkrumah was faced after the independence by the Ashanti-Aristocracy with the slogan: “we are the true rulers” he reacted with condemnation of tribal tendencies that endangered the young nation and later with imprisonment of some of the Ashanti rulers. The struggle against tribalism was aimed at overcoming the fragmentation of the political space of the post-colony. Whereas Nkrumah lost this struggle, many other African leaders tried to manipulate the fragmented political space of the post-colony. The fear of Balkanization was based on the peculiarity of post-colonial state-building. Unlike Europe, where borders were the result of state-building processes, the African post-colonial state started with borders as a prerequisite. This made, as Clapham argues, the question of boundaries one of the most important for the survival of the post-colonial state.<sup>71</sup> In Africa’s arena for international norm building, the Organisation of African Unity, the inviolability of former colonial borders became one of first principles for inter-state relations.

As I have argued at the beginning of my paper the maintenance of the sovereignty/territoriality nexus depends on a certain amount of resources that are available to agents of sovereignty like the state. The state in Africa, in its colonial and post-colonial shape, failed to dominate or even create a political field where his dispositifs were embedded. Paradoxically, many academics, as well as politicians and NGO employees, reacted to the failure of the sovereignty/territoriality nexus in post-colonial Africa with a Foucaultian language: Where there was no sovereign government to perform control over a territory to be found, many authors looked for some sort of governmentality. The failure of the state is answered by many commentators with concepts of a neo-liberal global governmentality. Nevertheless it seems doubtful that the globally circulating techniques will heal the African states as they emerge as a prerequisite of colonial and post-colonial governmentality.<sup>72</sup>

71 C. Clapham, Rethinking African States, in: African Security Review (2001), pp. 1-6, here p. 1.

72 J. Joseph, The limits of Governmentality: Social Theory and the International, in: European Journal of International Relations, 10 (2010), pp. 1-24, here p. 16; R. Abrahamsen / M. C. Williams, Introduction: The Privatisation and Globalisation of Security in Africa, in: International Relations (2007), pp. 131-141; C. Clapham, Governmentality in Sub-Saharan Africa, in: Third World Quarterly (1996), pp. 809-824; K. C. Dunn, Africa and International Relations Theory, in: Africa’s Challenge to International Relations Theory (2001), pp. 1-28.