

# 'Direct' or 'indirect' rule? Reconsidering the roles of appointed chiefs and native employees in Portuguese West Africa

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## 1. Introduction

Generally, approaches to colonial rule in Africa have been characterized by the idea of direct or indirect rule (in the case of the British administration) and *association or assimilation* in the French case. The question arises whether this dichotomy and its imposition on colonial Africa reflects realities on the ground, and whether it can be used as a framework to analyze the situation in former Portuguese Africa. Indeed, these distinctions first beg the question whether direct or indirect colonial rule ever existed as a 'system', and secondly, whether the aims that policy makers and the colonial administration *in loco* pursued followed the precepts associated with these distinctions. And then again, taking into account the many changes in colonial policies and legislation that were introduced in different empires (e.g. British, French, Portuguese, Belgian, German, etc.) in Africa during the 1900s, how did they square with the overall framework regarding the twin models of 'direct' or 'indirect' rule? How did appointed chiefs fit into this dichotomy, to what extent did they actually form part of the colonial hierarchy and what margin for manoeuvre did they really have? What about the role of administrative clerks and guards – or rural police forces – in the complex network of relations between administrative and African authorities and the population at large? How were chiefs, clerks and guards looked upon by administrators and the populations under their command, and vice versa? In order to seek answers to these and other questions, the present paper will focus on the role of 'native agents' at the 'lowest' rungs of the administrative ladder, i.e. closest to the African populations. It will in particular shed light on their role in the maintenance of law and order and with regard to the extraction of revenue through tax collection which constituted one of the principal functions these actors carried out within the context of colonial rule.

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After being picked up earlier during the 1980s within a perspective of the neglected aspects of imperial administration, the topic of African intermediaries in colonial societies, and the roles they played in those societies, has produced important insights into the inner workings of colonial administration. Researchers turned to the office and commercial clerks as well as native police and interpreters who “had not received the scholarly attention given to the chiefs and the colonial rulers themselves”.<sup>1</sup> Given that the Europeans were “few and far between” and were often absent from the workplace (on tour, meetings, leave, illness) these actors secured the running of “vital services”<sup>2</sup>, while in towns and rural areas, native police and administrative guards formed the mainstay of law and order.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the roles of African intermediaries in different colonial administrations, legal systems and enterprises were subjected to closer inspection.<sup>4</sup> The latter thread further developed over the last decades in the context of the intense debate on the nature and practice of the colonial state.<sup>5</sup>

Only over the last decade have these threads developed into a serious debate on the involvement and agency of African actors in empire. Focusing on British Africa, Killingray identified the principal pillars of colonial rule which merited closer inspection, i.e. “the maintenance of law and order to uphold the authority of administration”, and “the collection of adequate revenue with which to finance the running of the colony”.<sup>6</sup> Criticizing scholars for having ignored the question of law and order, he highlighted the, in his view, conspicuous lacuna which grew out of an emphasis on “administrative structures and judicial processes”.<sup>7</sup> Despite the interest in extractive policies and tax collection in particular, the *pax Britannica* had largely been taken for granted, which led many to ignore “the role of police forces and measures of social control”.<sup>8</sup> However, the enforcement of colonial rule and the role of ‘native authorities’ varied widely depending on the type of colonies and whether the area involved was urban or rural: there was a greater emphasis on policing in settler colonies where the European presence was seen as crucial to the economy and where African populations were subject to tighter controls; this was also the case for towns where Europeans were mostly concentrated. However, generally speaking, colonial rule relied on relatively small forces to keep large but often dispersed, local populations in check, above all in rural areas. The idea to leave the daily maintenance of law and order to ‘native authorities’, was common to many colonial administrations. Both political and economic reasons lay at the heart of these notions, which were based upon an assessment of geographical, logistical and cognitive aspects. The often large expanses of territory, the limited infrastructures and the lack of knowledge regarding the terrain and human settlement, played a prominent role in these considerations. While small disturbances and petty crime were supposed to be dealt with by ‘native authorities’ themselves based upon customary law, other more serious cases, often involving disputes over land, cattle, labour and marriage fell under the jurisdiction of administrators. Thus there was a division of labour in which

1 DERRICK, 1983: 62.

2 *Ibid.*

3 MCCracken, 1986: 127.

4 OSBORN, 2003; RICH, 2004; LAWRENCE, OSBORN & ROBERTS, 2006; NEWELL, 2008.

5 BERMAN, 1990; BAYART, 1993; CHABAL, 1994; YOUNG, 1994; MAMDANI, 1996; COOPER, 1996; CHABAL & DALOZ, 1999; HERBST, 2000; COOPER, 2002.

6 KILLINGRAY, 1986: 411.

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*: 412.

administrators and appointed chiefs employed their own agents to carry out the tasks of policing, translation and mediation.

In his study on the politics of coercion in Nyasaland, McCracken demonstrates how these "African intermediaries played a crucial role in sustaining imperial control at the cheapest possible cost"<sup>9</sup>. What was most notable about these African actors was the fact that they could hardly be described as traditional police forces, but rather as agents of coercion with regard to tax collection and the recruitment of labour.<sup>10</sup> After the introduction of 'native authorities' in the early 1900s, their involvement increased with the recruitment of African auxiliaries to serve at the fronts of the First World War, and the depression years when greater pressures were brought to bear upon African tax payers and labour. In turn therefore, combating evasion (from taxes, conscription, work teams, or crop cultivation) became a major concern for authorities, which employed all means at their disposal to enforce measures. The abuses that ensued thus became generalized with regard to the actions taken by administrations and 'native authorities', and the principal focus of international organizations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) from the 1920s. Whereas these institutions and colonial bodies charged with administrative inspections tended to focus upon the administrative aspects of rule, the increasing number of tasks delegated to the chiefs and guards who came to occupy the lowest rungs of colonial administration, was often ignored.

As the instrumentalisation of African agents took on novel features that included the repression of popular unrest, protests and riots (e.g. during the 'Women's War' in Nigeria in 1929) and larger-scale manifestations and strikes in the 1930s and 1940s in urban centres across the African continent, the 'native' coercive apparatus expanded. At the same time, the growing colonial bureaucracies and increasingly complex procedures, triggered a marked tendency for administrators to 'withdraw' from direct involvement in the maintenance of law and order in rural areas<sup>11</sup>, while troops were used to quell unrest whenever it occurred by using the extended road networks. This led to a shift of responsibilities of provincial commissioners to their direct subalterns within administration, i.e. resident district officers, the district secretaries, African clerks and guards, and within 'native authorities', from paramount and district chiefs and retainers to village heads and the elders. Thus, the network overseeing law and order not only expanded but also gained greater proximity to the local populations, while the different 'native agents' were gradually incorporated into the administrative hierarchy as remunerated personnel. These measures gave rise to a multiplication of tasks for (badly paid) 'native agents' who were expected to maintain the peace while exacting greater contributions from African tax payers and labourers. As the distance between administrators tied up with bureaucratic work and local populations under their jurisdiction augmented, actual control over the latter rested "on a minimum of force". This did however presuppose that populations did not threaten the colonial order 'in large parts of Africa'.<sup>12</sup> Some have argued that memories of a recent past (conquest, military campaigns) guaranteed law and order rather than actual force<sup>13</sup>, at least until the 1940s.<sup>14</sup> Others hold that this herit-

9 MCCRACKEN, 1986: 127.

10 *Ibid.*: 131-132.

11 KILLINGRAY, 1986: 420.

12 *Ibid.*: 422-423.

13 BARBER in KILLINGRAY, 1986: 423.

14 MCCRACKEN, 1986: 130.

age of ‘pacification’, which included the ‘systematic use of violence’, both physical and structural, characterizing most colonial regimes<sup>15</sup>, did not dispense with and positively fomented forms of ‘native rule’ akin – based upon the appointment of commoner chiefs – to ‘decentralized despotism’.<sup>16</sup> The abusive power of chiefs and guards has also been contemplated from the perspective of gender relations and identities, owing to their direct intervention in local affairs as an expression of male power and patronage and their control over women.<sup>17</sup> This also raises the problem of the recruitment and selection of native agents which often purposefully tended to favour certain social and/or ethnic groups above others.<sup>18</sup>

After the Second World War colonial authorities augmented police and paramilitary forces in order to rise to the challenges posed by burgeoning nationalist and unionist sentiments and movements in colonies, whilst, simultaneously, the idea of development took hold in British and French Africa.<sup>19</sup> The emergence of a “black middle class” which “had won respectability in city politics and even gained seats on the judicial bench and in the legislative council” of some colonies, demonstrated the direction the winds of change had taken in post-war Africa.<sup>20</sup> However those “trained in mission schools and government colleges”<sup>21</sup>, may have included literate clerks<sup>22</sup> but did not generally speaking refer to the likes of chiefs and guards who were more likely to be “an illiterate ex-soldier from an illiterate group on the periphery of the colony or from outside its frontiers”.<sup>23</sup> Whilst the narratives associated with the former were characterized by resistance and nationalism, and having contributed to the end of empire, the latter have often been depicted as collaborators who allied themselves with doubtful colonial interests. Whereas the literate ‘native elites’ who once served as colonial employees but embraced the nationalist cause could claim to be “champions of modernization”<sup>24</sup>, their unskilled fellow countrymen on the ‘lowest’ rungs of administration did not benefit from a similar reputation. By playing a role in the coercive institutions that perpetuated colonial sovereignty and extraction in favour of distant metropolises, these subaltern strata were frequently seen to occupy the opposite end of the spectrum in relation to those that mediated, negotiated, and secured independence. Their association with law and order and the repressive colonial apparatus stigmatized them to the point of becoming marginalized and rejected in the late colonial period and during the process of decolonization. Moreover, whenever the quest for independence was fought out on the battlefield – as in the case of the former Portuguese colonies of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique – their lot was more likely to be one of implacable social stigmatization. This stigmatization could range from exclusion and unemployment to imprisonment or even the firing squad. While clerks were mocked for being arrogant, corrupt and for imitating whites<sup>25</sup>, directly participating in the enforcement of mandatory labour practices, crop cultivation and tax collection had made chiefs, retainers and guards outcasts in their own community and country. As we will

15 See, e.g. MARTIN, 1983.

16 MAMDANI, 1996.

17 RICH, 2009.

18 KILLINGRAY, 1986: 423-424.

19 COOPER, 1996.

20 BIRMINGHAM, 1995: 27.

21 *Ibid.*: 26.

22 NEWELL, 2008.

23 KILLINGRAY, 1986: 425.

24 ECKERT, 2006: 249.

25 RICH, 2004: 59.

see below, they were not only seen as problematic by their own communities or those they were supposed to control, but also by the colonial administration which, increasingly after the Second World War, came to regard them, just like appointed chiefs, as an awkward legacy of the past and/or as a hindrance to modernization and development. After being considered as pillars of the colonial regime in the decades following occupation, and as guarantors of 'pacification', appointed chiefs and administrative guards thus came to be viewed as cumbersome allies and employees.

Distinctions should of course be made between the two as well as within each category. Whereas lineage chiefs were hierarchically superior to guards, and could boast "monarchical and patriarchal" authority<sup>26</sup>, commoner chiefs and guards were often little more than mere auxiliaries to administrators' policies and whims. In some cases however, such as in parts of British Africa, 'native authorities' and paramount chiefs had their own police force at their disposal and used their services for carrying out tasks allotted to them in accordance with authoritarian manners and personal interests. Besides, under the regime of 'indirect rule' the appointment of administrative chiefs in stratified or centralized societies obeyed to very different rules than that of their pairs in segmentary, acephalous 'lineage systems'.<sup>27</sup> While the former might enjoy some support in the 'ethnic' community, the latter who were mostly outsiders never did, while usually pertaining to stratified groups that had allied themselves with the colonial administration. One of the declared aims of the authors of the first "comparative study of African political institutions" was to contribute to a better understanding thereof in the context of indirect rule.<sup>28</sup> In his preface to this soon-to-be reference work, Radcliffe-Brown underlined the difficulties in defining 'government'<sup>29</sup> in the case of segmentary societies. Those societies that had a government, i.e. "centralized authority, administrative machinery and a judicial system", would therefore, in all likelihood, react differently to the incorporation of new cultures of authority, than segmentary lineage societies. As the maintenance of political organizations implied the "organized exercise of coercive authority", the question was therefore how these 'types' of societies would respond to the imposition of colonial government, and the culture of coercion associated with it.<sup>30</sup>

Two distinct approaches to the impact of colonial rule are worth mentioning here, i.e. a top-down and bottom-up perspective. The first focuses on colonial 'native affairs' institutions and policies, and the imposition of a 'modern' system of authoritarian rule with an emphasis on the role of these novel agents 'invented' by colonial law as mediators between 'traditional' and 'modern' societies. It holds that in the case of a system of indirect rule (administrative) chiefs, "protected by a halo of custom" while heading 'native courts' and "armed with a whip", devised strategies to carry through measures and make rules in arbitrary fashion while being formally remunerated for their efforts.<sup>31</sup> However, this emphasis on the 'dark side' of the 'native forces' tending towards hegemonic rule and 'despotism', contrasts with another angle on African involvement, which takes mediation as a point of departure. In the case of French West Africa, the "informal corridors of power" that "linked the colonial bureaucracy to indigenous

<sup>26</sup> MAMDANI, 1996: 39.

<sup>27</sup> TIGNOR, 1971.

<sup>28</sup> FORTES & PRITCHARD, 1940: 1.

<sup>29</sup> RADCLIFFE-BROWN in FORTES & PRITCHARD, 1940: xiii-xiv.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*: xiv.

<sup>31</sup> MAMDANI, 1996: 49-52.

hierarchies” represented effective “localized networks” that illustrated the boundaries of European rule.<sup>32</sup> The fact that European – here French – officials only too often “did not control or fully understand the conflicts and contests that took place within their colonial empires”, shifts the emphasis to the complexities of local administration by incorporating the circulation of knowledge and the shared nature of administrative authority. It emphasizes the importance of an understanding of the daily functioning of administration, in terms of the negotiated encounter between the different members of the hierarchy at various levels on the one hand, and between them and the population at large. Administrative and chiefly guards who acted as interpreters, informants and intermediaries formed part of these multifaceted, indigenous and hybrid networks, and straddled a number of boundaries while working within but also challenging established conventions. Depending on the circumstances, despite their less than popular status in local eyes, they were sometimes able to occupy the position of ‘gatekeeper’, managing relations between local populations and colonial bureaucracies.<sup>33</sup> Thus, at the same time this approach also allows for insights into the way in which these subalterns influenced their superiors, by brokering relations and conflicts, thereby “opening a fresh perspective on colonialism” and on “the malleable underbelly of colonial rule”.<sup>34</sup> With the aid of archival sources, the present essay intends to cast new light on these actors and their actions in the so far neglected context of the Portuguese empire in West Africa and the way in which administrative authority was exercised during the crucial phase of the 1930s to the 1950s.

## 2. ‘Native Authorities’ in Portuguese West Africa: administrative chiefs

After an initial phase marked by military campaigns and conquests in African territories claimed by the Portuguese monarchy, based upon its alleged multi-secular presence, which was completed by about 1915, those appointed in chiefly roles were mostly African auxiliaries who had fought on the European side. The 1914 law on colonial administration<sup>35</sup> defined their role in the administration in Portugal’s continental African territories, which essentially amounted to tax collection, organizing the recruitment of ‘native labour’, and the maintenance of law and order. A number of key legal statutes were passed and provided the basic structure of colonial administration, i.e. the so-called *Leis Orgânicas* introduced after the fall of the monarchy and proclamation of the republic in Portugal in 1910. They included the establishment of native affairs departments, or *Serviços de Negócios Indígenas*, in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, while the new borders of the *regulados* (chieftaincies) were drawn after the colonies were divided into *províncias*, *concelhos*, *circunscrições* and *postos*. As the 1914 law stipulated, *regedores* or *régulos* as chiefs formed the lowest rung of the administrative system and were beholden to the *administradores*, who relied upon the rural police, the *cipais*<sup>36</sup>, as interpreters, go-betweens and guards.

32 OSBORN, 2003: 30-31.

33 *Ibid.*: 72.

34 *Ibid.*: 31.

35 Lei Orgânica da Administração Civil das Províncias Ultramarinas, no. 277, 15 Aug. 1914.

36 The Portuguese term ‘*cipaio*’, ‘*sipaio*’ or ‘*sipaí*’, also used locally in African languages as well as Guinean Creole, is of Persian (*shipāhi*) or Hindi origin (*shipāhi*), meaning cavalryman or soldier. The English term *sepoys* is derived from the same root. The term

Despite the fact that the administration was transferred to civil personnel in the colonies after military 'pacification' with the passing of these *Leis Orgânicas* from 1917 onwards, some key posts, including of governor-general, provincial governors, heads of departments but also administrators at district level, were still occupied by members of the armed forces. Generally, they were 'old hands' with many years of experience in military campaigns or younger officers who had rapidly risen through the ranks. Relations they developed over the years with 'their' auxiliaries would therefore largely determine the latter's appointment as chiefs, as a reward for their services. Similar procedures – or lack of them – would determine the contracting of clerks (e.g. interpreters) and guards, recommended by appointed chiefs or circles close to them. This proximity, although it did not always translate into their longevity in office, did however shape the way in which 'native affairs' or *negócios indígenas* were handled during the first decades of colonial rule. Besides the fact that these former auxiliaries had played a key role in forcing fellow Africans to surrender, they also served as middle-men for the introduction, enrolment and payment of taxes from their inception in the early 1900s. The practice whereby appointed chiefs received a percentage of the tax revenue collected in their territories or *regedorias*, was later laid down in laws that stipulated their share of taxes. Thus the relationship between colonial officer and native auxiliary was not only hierarchical but also prebendial.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, if the appointed chief was recognized as legitimate by the local community, this relationship could in the case of centralized societies be paralleled by a 'traditional' hierarchy that allowed the incumbent to enjoy prebendial privileges. This overlapping of ties and interests would strongly define the complex networks of allegiance that largely shaped and informed colonial policies and practices, but also internal, local and regional power relations.

The souring of relations between administrator and chief, which could be personalized, would often lead to the retention of their share by the administrator-in-charge, as well as to the withholding of their remuneration, which was similar to a soldiers' pay or *soldo*, and other regalia, such as uniforms. Complaints by chiefs usually referred to the non-payment of one or other of these components of income, which they claimed as their rightful reward. The *Cartas Orgânicas* and the statutes determining the responsibilities of native affairs departments, between 1915 and 1920, defined the roles of administrative chiefs who were appointed by and directly subordinated to district administrators (*administradores de circunscrição*). The dualistic approach towards these authorities, common to most colonial legislation for example in the case of French and British empires, was evident:

A regulado/sobado is understood to be a group of villages subordinated to a native chief, on the condition that this relation between chief and subjects is confirmed by tradition and by the government of the province/colony.<sup>38</sup>

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may have spread across the Portuguese empire, from its territories in Goa, Damão and Diu, to Africa in the course of colonial expansion, or alternatively as it contacted with Ottoman interests. For the background on the early presence of sepoys in Mozambique, see RODRIGUES, 2006. The *sipahi* formed the mainstay of the Ottoman armed forces until the sixteenth century. See on the role of *sipahi* in an Ottoman context, IMBER, 2002, Ch. 7: 252-286.

<sup>37</sup> HAVIK, 2010.

<sup>38</sup> DINIZ, 1917: 8.

In fact similar statutes were implemented by one and the same colonial civil servant, first in Angola (1917) and thereafter in Guinea (1919). At the same time, this legislation as well as the 1914 law on the administrative districts defined the tasks pertaining to “native authorities”, i.e. the chiefs, for assisting the authorities with tax censuses, enrolments and levies; the recruitment of labourers and of military conscripts; clear bridges, roads and pathways; communicate any problems to the administrators; maintain law and order and transmit superior orders to their subjects. In turn these appointed chiefs were expected to exercise authority over the village heads who assisted them with their tasks. The only Africans who did not fall under the authority of chiefs were the ‘native employees’, including clerks and guards; in addition, both chiefs and guards were exempt from paying direct taxes.

The 1914 law had been preceded in Guinea and other colonies by decrees, which introduced the regime of the ‘residências’ and thereby were to establish a pattern later emulated by successive regulations regarding the administrative divisions in each colony. The 1906 decree on these resident administrators in Guinea stipulated that each ‘residente’ would have a small staff at his disposal consisting of a servant (‘amanuense’), an official interpreter (‘interprete de diligências’), a servant, and four guards.<sup>39</sup> The latter were expected to maintain communications within the district, oversee the water supply to the administrative headquarters and residence, as well as taking care of the horses, which at the time served as means of transport. They were not allowed to request any remuneration or accept any gifts for services rendered to the African inhabitants of the district. The 1912 decree repeated the composition of staff per resident as given in the 1906 decree.<sup>40</sup> While at least formally, clerks and interpreters were appointed by the governor, the servants and guards were in effect nominated and paid by the district administrator. The latter could suspend or dismiss them whenever their services were not required, and they were expected to carry out his orders, while being obliged to declare their loyalty to the regime. Clerks and interpreters were in effect the highest-ranking local assistants to the administrator, charged with keeping the books and gathering (confidential) information in local circles, while registering, charging or detaining any African inhabitant upon the former’s instruction. The district was divided into sub-districts or ‘postos’, headed by a *chefe de posto*, who had a servant and a guard at his disposal, appointed by the administrator. It was clear therefore that these laws had essentially created a locally recruited administrative apparatus, which owed its loyalty and remuneration to the administrator, and was responsible for maintaining law and order in a given district. They ‘shared’ the latter task with the appointed chiefs who were responsible for maintaining law and order in their ‘regulados’ and authorized to detain any ‘native’ who had disturbed or was suspected of intending to disturb the peace or commit a crime.<sup>41</sup>

At the same time these and other measures refined the organization of the *colônias de indígenato* – i.e. those colonies where a distinction was made between *civilizados* and *indígenas* such as Angola, Mozambique and Guinea – and contributed to defining the main contours of the native affairs policy or *política indígena*, which had to be imple-

39 Regulamento para as Residências, Portaria 184, arts. 49-54, *Boletim Oficial da Guiné Portuguesa (BOGP)*, 35, 6 Sep. 1906.

40 Regulamento das Circunscrições Cíveis da Província da Guiné, arts. 7; 31-39, Lisbon, 7 Sep. 1912, *Boletim Oficial da Guiné Portuguesa*, 42, 24 Oct. 1912. Once effectively implemented, this law would therefore imply the appointment of 6 clerks, 11 interpreters, 7 servants and 24 guards in the colony.

41 Regulamento das Circunscrições Cíveis da Província da Guiné, art. 52.

mented by authorities in each colony. In this respect, practice varied from colony to colony and from district to district. Governors-general and provincial governors clarified their ideas in circulars, which set out the main thrust of their policies towards native affairs and authorities. In Guinea for example, the then-governor, a high-ranking military official, who had also surveyed districts as administrative inspector, stated:

Without a good and healthy native affairs policy, there cannot be any native trade, industry or agriculture worthy of that name, and to achieve the prosperity of any African colony, the collaboration of native authorities is necessary and indispensable. Very much depends on the way in which they are recruited and the responsibilities they are given.<sup>42</sup>

He added that these societies were “*disciplined, and governed by a solid hierarchy, which guarantees the maintenance of (their kind of) order by means example and by the prestige of its ruling incumbents*”, who were therefore “*the only natural auxiliaries*”, of the colonial administration. However, “serious mistakes” had been made with regard to native policies, not only in Guinea and other Portuguese territories, but in most African colonies, that were not only serious but also had a price tag on them, and reflected – negatively – upon colonial authorities. Governors also criticized what they saw as the ‘empirical approach’ followed by military commanders who had, in the course of pacification campaigns, “*never actually thought about chiefs and their succession*”, so that “*there were no certainties in native affairs*”<sup>43</sup>. Now that the respective territories were occupied, and officials informed about ‘native traditions’, correct procedures regarding their appointment and the preparation of their likely successors – designated by incumbents or chosen according to custom – for their future tasks was crucial. They should receive schooling, learn Portuguese, be well-dressed, be housed in ‘official’ residences that distinguished them from their subjects and enhanced their status and prestige, and be supplied with tools and seeds for cultivation, in addition to the remuneration and bonuses they received by law. While their loyalty should be rewarded, if they strayed and failed to comply with their duties, they were to be punished; significantly, the governor added: “*that is how we should treat them, because that is the way one deals with children*”.

At the time, high-ranking officials already alleged that chiefs had turned into what Mamdani would later call ‘decentralized despots’: given that military commanders, who “*after creating an army of auxiliaries commanded by native chiefs or regular native officers, had, as a reward for services rendered, appointed them as paramount chiefs, who constitute a scourge for native populations over which they exercise authority*”. The result had been utter chaos.<sup>44</sup> In their view, it was therefore of the greatest urgency to remedy this problematic legacy of the colonial wars, and regulate not only the obligations and responsibilities of ‘native chiefs’, but also their appointment and succession. These questions were complex because of their political and *moral* nature, which had to be handled tactfully; while each administrator had to deal with these matters to the best of their abilities, officials admitted that it was difficult to explain how relations between administrators and chiefs should be regulated in practice.<sup>45</sup>

42 Carlos Ivo de Sá Ferreira, *Circular sobre a Política Indígena*, Bolama, 26 March 1918, *BOGP*, I Serie, 8, 30 March 1918.

43 Sá Ferreira, *Circular*..., 26 March 1918.

44 DINIZ, 1919: 9.

45 Sá Ferreira, *Circular*..., 26 March 1918.

These views were reinforced by those vented by the internal opposition, which was highly critical of ‘native affairs’ policies of the governors appointed by the new republican government in Lisbon. The lack of procedures regarding the appointment of chiefs, their arbitrary nature, the suppression of ‘traditional chiefs’, the appointment of auxiliaries and the disregard and ignorance of ‘custom’, were all given as examples.<sup>46</sup> Several instances regarding the confusion surrounding the appointment of chiefs were meant to show that the government had to opt for the use of force or follow local custom.<sup>47</sup> These complaints were associated with the very tense political climate in Guinea, which had, since the 1890s become a theatre of violent battles for control of the territory – and above all of littoral regions – between the Portuguese administration and ethnically based resistance.<sup>48</sup> This situation was somewhat similar to the intense fighting across the border in the Casamance region in Senegal between the French administration in Dakar and Jola communities, which had cultural connections with populations in ‘Portuguese’ Guinea.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, competing factions in government in Guinea were vying for control of the administration throughout the 1910s, provoking considerable internal tensions and awkward relations with the Portuguese government in Lisbon.<sup>50</sup>

### 3. Overlapping hierarchies: administrative chiefs and guards

However, the quandary of native affairs and chiefly appointments was never solved during the colonial era, which was to provoke innumerable problems and tensions that left their indelible mark. Several attempts were made in Portuguese colonies, including Angola and Mozambique, to regulate the thorny issue of ‘native authorities’ from the early 1920s onwards. Generally they reflected the abovementioned dualism, opting for a hybrid approach that while emphasizing non-intervention in ‘native politics’ and chiefly appointments, maintained that political and/or administrative reasons could justify the contrary, but only with the prior consent of the general or provincial governors.<sup>51</sup> In the process, the list of chiefly obligations had grown considerably, to include the prohibition of witchcraft and fortune-telling, informing authorities about the presence of Europeans in their territory, keeping a watchful eye on non-ethnic strangers, catching cattle of suspect provenance, and reporting any complaints their subject might voice.<sup>52</sup> In short, chiefs’ roles were being crafted principally in terms of law and order, as a combination of ‘native’ policemen and informers, responsible for the extraction of taxes, labour and conscripts.

It is interesting to note here that officials claimed they modelled native affairs in Portuguese colonies on the British ‘system’, but this was interpreted as the creation of *separate spheres* between ruler and ruled, rather than as indirect rule, with racialist overtones.<sup>53</sup> In practice this distinction was a non-starter. First, ‘native authorities’ were actually subsumed into the administration, occupying the lowest echelon of its

46 CAMPOS, 1912: 42; VASCONCELLOS, 1916a: 40-46.

47 CAMPOS, 1912: 28-33.

48 FORREST, 2003: 85-123.

49 ROCHE, 1985.

50 HAVIK, 2010.

51 Regulamento das Autoridades Indígenas da Província (da Guiné), elaborado nos termos do no. 1 do art. 125 da Carta Orgânica em vigor; Bolama, 26 Oct. 1920, in BOGP, 45, 6 Nov. 1920.

52 Regulamento das Circunscrições civis da Província da Guiné, Lisbon, 7 Dec. 1912, in BOGP, 42, 24 Oct. 1912.

53 FERREIRA DINIZ, 1919: 9.

hierarchy. Second, native employees were also directly involved in the implementation of administrative policies and measures. Taking into account the role attributed to the rural police force, the so-called *cipais*, whose tasks were regulated in the colonies during the 1910s<sup>54</sup>, colonial legislation and practice created overlapping and often duplicated responsibilities. *Regedores*, *régulos* and *sobas* (in Angola) on the one hand, and *cipais* on the other, were entrusted with maintaining law and order, carrying out the orders of the administration and generally acting as liaisons between administrators and the local population. In practice, they were both held to provide assistance with regard to demographic and tax censuses, tax enrolment and collection, and labour recruitment. In addition, the *cipais* and other native agents were used by administrators to control and if need be cajole or force chiefs into complying with their orders. Thereby, the officials in effect introduced and superimposed an intermediate layer upon the already complex relations between colonial authorities and paramount chiefs. A governor criticized this approach when referring to the common use by administrators of *intermediários estranhos* (i.e. stranger-go-betweens) “*in their dealings with native subjects who only served their unconfessable/unmentionable interests and not those of the colony or the collectivity*”<sup>55</sup>. He asked rhetorically that if administrators used the services of these strangers whom he branded as “bad go-betweens”, in order to “*carry out their orders or for transmitting their desires or thoughts, how could natives ever gain confidence and trust in their authorities?*” He did not rule out protests and unrest on the part of local populations, which he regarded as legitimate, and warned that colonial authorities had to change their attitude toward African communities.

Practice however, would demonstrate that his warnings were not heeded. Despite the gradual transformation towards a civil administration after 1917/18, the legacy of military rule remained. The reliance on chiefs who had acted as auxiliaries, and on guards, for a broad and growing gamut of tasks, became the rule, while chiefs became subordinated to the whims of administrators and increasingly to those of the ... *cipais*. While some maintained close relations with colonial authorities, such as in the case of a Fulbe chief, Monjur Embaló, whose reputation was hailed by both Portuguese and Guineans, and whose feats were the subject of a publication by a former governor<sup>56</sup>, generally the attitude towards chiefs was quite ambivalent. Some literary efforts undertaken by colonial officials in the 1930s and 1940s illustrated the role of ‘native authorities’, including Afonso Correia (1931) and Fausto Duarte (1945). While the first gave a critical view of the transition from military to civil rule, casting doubts upon the qualities of the new personnel brought in from the metropole, describing them as “yesterday’s private soldiers” with a penchant for committing “affronts and brutalities”, the second highlighted the loyalty of appointed chiefs towards colonial commanders-administrators as well as their military prowess. Ten years earlier the same had been said by critics of the colonial regime’s abuses with regard to military commanders and their tendency towards abuse and extortion, above all with regard to tax collection, which had served as a justification for “rigorous military intervention”.<sup>57</sup> The considerable appetite of resident commanders, sometimes acting in an irregular and unscrupulous fashion, for augmenting tax

54 For Guinea, see the decree on the Polícia Rural of 7 Aug. 1912 regulated in the same year.

55 Sá Ferreira, *Circular*... , 26 March 1918.

56 VELLEZ CAROÇO, 1948.

57 VASCONCELLOS, 1916b: 2.

returns in order to obtain greater benefits was also given as a cause of unrest and migration.<sup>58</sup> While chiefs and village heads were mentioned, little was said however about the rural police and its role as go-between and administrative agents in native affairs. That is until a few cases which emerged during the 1920s began to draw attention to their activities. While complaints about coercive tax levies carried out by auxiliaries had already been voiced at previous occasions<sup>59</sup>, denunciations by an administrative official about the manner in which traders were levying taxes in the Bijagós archipelago off the Guinean coast without any intervention on the part of district authorities, led to an internal inquiry.<sup>60</sup> It transpired that on the basis of a rather vague authorization for traders to collect hut taxes, the latter were doing so while using *cipais* and their own clerks as go-betweens with the population of various islands. This process was apparently fraught with abuses, given that the tax was paid in kind, i.e. in palm kernels, which together with peanuts, were the main export products of the colony. French diplomats touring the area had already alerted their superiors about the fact that the isles were the only part of Portuguese Guinea where money did not circulate.<sup>61</sup> As a result all transactions with the Bijagós were realised by barter, and exclusively in kernels. The enquiry showed that the administration itself had proposed that traders could collect the taxes, because it could thereby anticipate the reception of revenue by several months, which was welcomed on account of the colony's empty coffers.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, similar procedures had been followed for many years in the case of a large concession on the isles, the *Empresa Agrícola e Fabril da Guiné*, originally established in 1911 by British citizens from Sierra Leone and Portuguese administrators, which had taken over German interests in the 1920s. The company that produced palm oil, collected taxes paid in kind by those living on its premises, without any supervision or control being exercised by the authorities. As the inquiry gathered evidence from local village heads, they soon found that guards, the *cipais* or *guardas administrativas*, were forcing the population to crush the nuts and extract the kernels, punishing those who failed to attain a certain quota, with the so-called *palmatória*, a round piece of wood with a handle which was commonly used to beat the palms of African workers.<sup>63</sup> Once satisfied that every 'native' had paid a pre-determined tax quota the *cipais* handed the kernels over to the trader in question, leaving the locals without any kernels to exchange for commodities and often without anything to eat according to the local health services.<sup>64</sup> Apparently, guards used all kinds of ruses, e.g. the diminishing market price of kernels, to demand a surcharge, which they in turn exchanged for rice for their own meals. Essentially amounting to coercive levies and forced labour, these practices caused many able-bodied islanders to leave and settle on the continent, abandoning an aged population to survive by their own means.

The inquiry quoted above unearthed what was probably the first clear-cut and documented case of abuses committed by guards who acted on their own accord without any administrative supervision. They acted as much more than simple go-betweens, giv-

<sup>58</sup> CAMPOS, 1912: 42.

<sup>59</sup> VASCONCELLOS, 1916a: 23.

<sup>60</sup> HAVIK, 2007.

<sup>61</sup> Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence, France (CAOM), Fonds Ministériel (FM/1AffPol)/1291, Edouard Hostains, French Consul, Bissau, 10 June 1922.

<sup>62</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon, Portugal (AHU), DGAPC, 1031, Victor Hugo de Menezes, Bolama, 15 Jan. 1930.

<sup>63</sup> AHU, DGAPC, 1031, Witness statement, Henrique, dignitary of the island of Orango, 21 Sep. 1931.

<sup>64</sup> AHU, DGAPC, 1031, Delegação de Saude de Bubaque para Repartição de Saúde Bolama, 9 Nov. 1930.

ing orders to village heads and threatening, cajoling or forcing them into compliance. Generally, like appointed chiefs, guards benefited from tax exemptions, i.e. from paying the hut tax, and the guards, despite being state employees, were also liberated from the National Salvation Tax or *Imposto de Salvação Nacional*, introduced in 1931 by the New State regime as a measure to increase tax revenue and balance the colonial budgets following the 1929 economic crisis.<sup>65</sup> In addition to their policing roles, *cipais* also began to be placed in positions otherwise reserved for qualified administrative officials, such as border guards and tax clerks, responsible for collecting customs duties.<sup>66</sup> Besides the lack of – qualified – personnel, the then governor argued that the measure was justified by the savings made on salaries that were possible by employing ‘native guards’.

During the 1930s several complaints about the doubtful behavior of guards were referred in official reports, some of which were brought before the courts. For example, another case from the Bijagós archipelago involved a guard who was found hunting hippopotami with the help of the governor’s chauffeur on one of the islands, in order to sell them to the zoo in Lisbon. Whilst collecting taxes, he was cornered by locals after trying to force them into paying, and subsequently disarmed and beaten up.<sup>67</sup> Another case in the North of Guinea, in the Costa de Baixo area, revealed that a trader had incited guards to spank locals in order to force them to pay the tax on the extraction of palm wine, at a rate which he himself had imposed, with the tacit approval of the *chefe de posto*.<sup>68</sup> When the trader’s intentions – who tried to get the locals to sell their stocks of rice – were met with vehement protests, he called in the guards to requisition the rice. As a result the chief of Pecixe encircled the residence of the local district officer, who was then forced to take action to defuse the conflict. Often guards were also sent out by administrators or district officers (*chefes de posto*) to fine chiefs who had allegedly failed to comply with orders, round up workers or levy taxes, thereby provoking protests, unrest and complaints. Alternatively, guards were entrusted with appeasing conflicts – but failed to do so – such as in the case of the quarrels between two rival groups, Oincas and Balanta in the north of Guinea, where they formed the sole occupants of an administrative post.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the climate surrounding native affairs was a tense one, mostly associated with tax levies and labour recruitment.

With the introduction of new legislation on the administrative organization of Portugal’s colonies by the New State or *Estado Novo* regime coming to power in a military coup in 1926, regular inspections carried out by officials of a special body created by the Ministry of Colonial Affairs became the rule. The *Reforma Administrativa Ultramarina* (RAU for short) passed in 1933 saw administrators as ‘men of action’ who regularly travelled in their districts, contacted the local population and informed themselves about ‘native’ custom and practice. Councils (*conselhos disciplinares*) were created in every colony in order to deal with complaints against administrative staff, which could be brought before them and lead to disciplinary measures decreed by governors and confirmed by metro-

65 AHU, DGAPC, 606, António Leite de Magalhães, Bolama, 10 April 1931, on the Imposto de Salvação Nacional introduced by DL 564, de 30 March 1931.

66 AHU, DGOcd, 400, Carvalho Viegas, Colónia da Guiné, *Relatório referente ao 4.º trimestre do ano económico 1933-34*, Bolama, 12 Dec. 1934.

67 AHU, ISAU, Mç. 1669, Henrique Jones da Silveira, *Relatório Inspeção Administrativa da Guiné, 1940*: 95.

68 AHU, ISAU, Mç. 1665, *Relatório sobre os acontecimentos de Pecixe*, Canchungo, 11 May 1936, in José Salvação Barreto, *Relatório da Inspeção Ordinária aos Serviços Administrativos da Guiné*, 18 March 1938.

69 CARDOSO, 1936: 18.

politan councils.<sup>70</sup> As a result, metropolitan authorities were able, for the first time, to obtain a clearer picture of administrative practices throughout the empire. In the case of Portuguese Guinea, the first inspection reports criticized the lack of direct interaction between administrators and the African population:

I observed little contact between administrators and natives and as a result a lack of control over the way in which the *chefes de posto*, who are more directly in touch with them (i.e. the locals), carry out their duties, above all with respect to the measures taken with regard to the fiscal enrollment of huts and the levying of taxes.<sup>71</sup>

The report concluded that most of Guinea's administrative officials were ill-prepared for their jobs, and were devoid or severely lacking in terms of moral principles in their treatment of local Africans and their dignitaries. Apart from some rare cases in which administrators were found to act in cahoots with chiefs in doubtful transactions, they were found to commonly hold them in low esteem, and engage in local politics, especially when quarrels ensued over chiefly appointments. While in some cases their intervention was justified, when appointed chiefs were found to usurp their position to force their subjects to work their lands or requisition their crop harvests, generally they appeared to bypass those chiefs.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, official reports in the 1930s concluded that colonial administrations became by and large convinced that many appointed chiefs had little effective authority over 'their' co-ethnic populations and therefore were of little use. In the case of appointed chiefs not pertaining to the same ethnic group, as occurred with the segmentary and acephalous Balanta and 'Felupe' (Jola), tensions often ran high, while the population tended to ignore imposed (Fula and Mandinka) chiefs. Often administrators carried through ad hoc measures such as altering frontiers of the chiefly districts in order to make them more manageable or punish and depose chiefs when they became expendable.

Rather than changing or improving policies, administrators tended to 'improvise' in an attempt to reinvent the wheel: the colonial paradox that faced them was how to combine the perceived need for an intermediary layer of administration (i.e. to administrate large geographical areas and/or constituencies, fill gaps left by lack of personnel, and as source of information) with that of exercising control over often highly dispersed populations under their jurisdiction (in order to extract taxes, crops and labour) at the lowest possible financial and political cost. Over time the implementation of these aims was perceived as contradictory, thereby putting administrations in an awkward position: should they simply exclude or by-pass chiefs – who with the 1933 reform had become auxiliaries of the *chefes de posto* – and thereby undermine their lawful role, or should they tighten control over appointed chiefs while allowing them to exercise authority – and thereby risk the emergence of 'native elites'?

70 Reforma Administrativa Ultramarina (RAU), DL 23,229, 15 Dec. 1933, arts. 270-276.

71 AHU, ISAU, Mç, 1665, José Salvação Barreto, *Relatório da Inspeção Ordinária aos Serviços Administrativos da Guiné*, 18 March 1938: 7.

72 *Ibid.*

#### 4. Tensions and conflicts: a crisis in native affairs?

During the 1930s and 1940s, the debate with regard to the best policy to adopt in the case of 'native authorities' continued, without there being any clear-cut consensus on the matter. It becomes clear from reports that while some district administrators considered that chiefs were useful intermediaries, many voiced doubts about their roles. Indeed, they often showed disdain for chiefs, to the point of ignoring them. One of the principal causes for contention in relations between the administration, chiefs and the population at large, was the organization of work parties to build or maintain roads. Road construction had rapidly expanded the network from the early 1920s, which had been carried out by local administrators with the help of chiefs and guards and rivalled with those built in neighbouring French Africa at the time.<sup>73</sup> To begin with, chiefs or village heads would be ordered to present a certain number of workers; if they failed to do so, guards would be sent in to round people up, using violent means if deemed necessary, "because they did not know how else to do so, or simply out of malice".<sup>74</sup> These practices had already become widespread when, owing to international pressures brought about by the ILO, several colonial governments (e.g. French, Belgian and Portuguese) felt obliged to introduce a labour tax for a set number of days a year, which could also be paid in cash. In the Portuguese case, this was the so-called *contribuição braçal*, introduced in the mid-1930s in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique. Given that paramount chiefs were not allowed to collect taxes in Guinea, contrary to for example Angola, they were often simply bypassed. Also, Africans were expected to pay their taxes at the *postos* or district capitals rather than in their own villages, which saved time and money on the part of colonial authorities. And given that by law, paramount chiefs were appointed and deposed by the governor-general, administrators were at least in hierarchical terms, intermediaries, and their attitude towards appointees was often distant.

However, relations between administrators and village heads, whom the former did appoint, were different, also because the latter in accordance with the abovementioned Administrative Reform Act of 1933 (RAU) had been designated as the legitimate go-betweens in the collection of taxes. This shift was accelerated in the 1930s as a result of pressures coming from central government in Lisbon which obliged colonial governors to present balanced budgets. These pressures in turn induced officials to raise tax revenue by all available means, thereby provoking rising tensions and the large-scale migration and exodus of populations.<sup>75</sup> In cases where the *régulo* system failed to work, as a result of constant infighting or serious irregularities and unrest, governors intervened directly, employing guards to depose chiefs, while also changing administrative frontiers to suit tax collection, alter chiefly boundaries, abolishing chieftaincies altogether or not replacing them and relying on village heads.<sup>76</sup> The investiture of appointed *régulos* tended to be a formal ceremony – of which minutes were made – sometimes a curious mixture of traditional and solemn military-colonial custom, in which the chiefs received their uniform – nicknamed '*botão amarelo*' or yellow button – presented to them by officials.

<sup>73</sup> HAVIK, 2009.

<sup>74</sup> AHU, ISAU, Mç. 1669, Henrique Jones da Silveira, *Relatório Inspeção Administrativa da Guiné*, 1940: 188.

<sup>75</sup> HAVIK, 2007; HAVIK, 2008.

<sup>76</sup> See VIEGAS, 1939: 152-153, on the case of the Gabú region and the decision to depose a number of incumbent chiefs, and opt for the policy of adopting village heads as the main intermediaries of administration.

Since the mid-1930s, village heads were also equipped with uniforms, which differed from those of the paramount chiefs, and were sometimes described as “*carnavalesque outfits*” imitating European dress, worn by . . . former auxiliary soldiers.<sup>77</sup> But then again, some administrators were uncomfortable with these ceremonies, for in their view bestowing too much prestige upon chiefs, who promptly used their regalia to act like despots, e.g. in order to impose taxes for their exclusive benefit.<sup>78</sup> As one administrator acknowledged, the *cipais* also used the same ‘yellow button’ uniform to similar effect, i.e. to get from the locals what they wanted.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, parallel to the issue of native authorities, the question of the role of administrative guards was also raised, timidly at first, by a few colonial actors, but increasingly so from the 1940s onwards. Indeed, colonial authorities were not the only actors aware of the impact of uniforms: planters or *ponteiros* as they were locally called, got some of their most trusted clerks to dress up as guards in order to force African producers to sell their harvests only to them and not to a competitor.<sup>80</sup> If the latter refused to do so, they would be punished until they complied. Inspection reports severely criticized the manner in which local administrations handled the issue of law and order with respect to the African population.

Currently, [urban and rural] police as well as in many official quarters, use and abuse corporal punishment exclusively for the punishment of natives, such as *palmatoadas* (i.e. strokes given with a palmer) and whiplashes and more, pretending that it does not occur, as if it were an innocent illusion (...).

The habit of using the *palmatória* (or palmer) was so ingrained that

(. . .) newly arrived *chefes de posto*, trained in colonial schools, accompanied operations for the collection of taxes with the *palmatórias* to entertain themselves; one of them in fact took the *palmatória* from a *cipaio*, responsible for applying these sentences, in order to punish natives himself.

One of the cases that provoked a number of complaints and disciplinary measures was that involving a *chefe de posto* who had directly intervened in disputes over chiefly succession amongst the Manjak in the North of Guinea. The administrator had given ‘*carte blanche*’ to one of the pretenders, who had a long history of tense relations with the authorities and fomenting local intrigue, against the son of the incumbent chief. In order to put an end to rising tensions, this administrator had been replaced by an experienced official, who had succeeded in pacifying the situation through diplomatic means. The inspector concluded that the deposed official “*had shown a “despotic attitude towards the natives with whom he did not sympathize”*”, and had used the *cipais* as a “*secret police*”.<sup>81</sup> One of the *chefes de posto* under his jurisdiction was found to run a *granja* or government farm/nursery, forcing locals to grow rice without remuneration for his own benefit with

77 AHU, ISAU, Mç. 1669, Henrique Jones da Silveira, *Relatório Inspeção Administrativa da Guiné, 1940*: 180.

78 COLÓNIA DA GUINÉ, 1943: 43.

79 *Ibid.*: 44.

80 AHU, ISAU, Mç. 1669, *Relatório Anual do Administrador da Circunscrição de Buba, 1939*; AHU, ISAU, Mç. 1669, Henrique Jones da Silveira, *Relatório Inspeção Administrativa da Guiné, 1940*.

81 AHU, ISAU, 2245, Mário Costa, *Relatório da Inspeção Administrativa da Colónia da Guiné, 1944-45*, 15 March 1945, pp. 257-260, on the actions of the *chefe de posto* Álvaro Cavaleiro.

the help of guards. Apparently, the said administrator never visited the different administrative posts in the interior, being unaware or complacent towards his subordinates. To his shock and surprise, the inspector who filed disciplinary measures against the administrator, found that the latter had his 'protectors', not only in the governor's office, but also at the Colonial Ministry in Lisbon; in fact, the administrator complained about the inspector's 'meddling' who thereupon received a stern note from the Minister ordering him "*not to intervene in the judicial responsibilities of the administrators*".<sup>82</sup>

Such reports called into question not only the aptitudes and attitudes of administrative personnel but also the lack of awareness and inaction of authorities to detect and discipline transgressors. The fact that native affairs policies and practices did not conform to legal provisions and procedures, as well as moral and ethical standards, not only in Guinea but also in other colonies such as Angola and Mozambique, indicates that the administration had ingrained mentalities and routines that were a legacy of the preceding period of conquest. Administrative staff had gained a certain *habitus* and adopted a concomitant discourse akin to what Bourdieu called *doxa* that silenced or ignored these issues, thereby illustrating an authoritarian culture that had gone unchecked for decades. This was evidenced by the widespread use of guards in order to serve the whims of officials, but also the technical and moral aptitudes of the latter and the way they were selected. At district level, many posts pertaining to qualified *chefes de posto* or trained candidates, were occupied by personnel on temporary contracts – '*funcionários interinos*' – who were not pursuing an administrative career, while some did not possess the minimum requirements demanded by law. Observing how an administrator was completely ignored by the local chiefs and the population at large during a ceremony and tended to ensconce himself in his residence, the inspector commented that, sadly, he had to break the silence and include it in his report. He argued that he could not hide it from the governor and the minister, "*because the moral and civil aspects of an official's behaviour could not be separated from his bureaucratic record: one is linked to the other.*" What becomes clear from these and other reports is that the doubtful attitudes and practices demonstrated by guards towards the African population, on the whole reflected and emulated those of their superiors. Official references to complaints from chiefs and their counselors in cases brought before administrators, native courts and administrative inspectors about them being publicly ordered around by *cipais*, who often punished or fined them in front of their subjects, humiliating them in the process, highlighted a common practice that had distanced and antagonized 'native authorities' from the administration. In 1940 there were 32 *postos* in the colony, which governed two thirds of the population (then totaling about 450 000), excluding the small urban population. Underfunded, like neighbouring French colonies at the time, staff was in short supply. Only too often, *chefes de posto* did not have any official interpreters at their disposal; as a result this task was carried out by *cipais*, or even by officials' domestic servants. District administrators who had learned the ropes of native affairs, tended to put forward their own candidates, including guards, sometimes succeeding in getting them appointed as paramount chiefs. Also, in some cases cooks had been appointed *régulos* (e.g. in the Mansoa region in the 1940s) as well as chauffeurs working for high-ranking officials. As a result, the idea of a 'native aristocracy' that was supposed to serve as an intermediary

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 274-275.

between African communities and the administration, and who were expected to guide the former in the conduct of native affairs, had been seriously compromised.<sup>83</sup>

An analysis of complaints shows that while administrators and *chefes de posto* accused of infractions or irregularities (between the late 1920s and the mid-1940s) were rarely punished, demoted or dismissed, guards subject to disciplinary action were fined or in some cases transferred to distant and isolated destinations. One such location was the (above-mentioned) Bijagó archipelago and above all the island of Canhabaque, which had been the scene of a number of punitive military campaigns from 1917 onwards.<sup>84</sup> Apparently, the guards with the worst reputation had been sent there, while new arrivals aspiring to become *chefes de posto* and those with a doubtful record had also been stationed there as a form of punishment.<sup>85</sup> By the mid-1940s, the accumulated evidence showed that fines for guards as a result of disciplinary infractions had become generalized, instead of detention or imprisonment as the law prescribed.<sup>86</sup> Reports noted that administrators considered it unwise or inappropriate to arrest and imprison them, arguing that “*it would be degrading for them if other natives witnessed the fact*”.<sup>87</sup> As one high-ranking official commented, this reasoning was faulty: if it was all about a “loss of prestige”, then “one should never arrest a European”. The attitude towards guards reflected similar views on the waiving of legal procedures in the case of colonial officials who were found to have acted unlawfully. Thus, officials and auxiliary staff tended to circulate: those with a good record or good contacts tended to be given posts in more densely populated areas, where tax returns were potentially the highest, while those with a blemished one, ended up in peripheral locations where revenue was lower, as well as their percentage of it. Minor infractions were usually overlooked, and official complaints by native authorities were generally disregarded.

## 5. Winds of change: rethinking native affairs?

The arrival of a newly appointed governor in 1945, intent on modernizing the colony, which was seen as one of the most backward in Africa, had a considerable impact upon official attitudes towards governance and native affairs. He started by clearly stating his intention to abolish the *regulado* system, declaring that “*the fewer the chiefs, the weaker they were, the better*”.<sup>88</sup> In a number of speeches and conferences, he informed district administrators that they should not replace chiefs if their post was vacant, and gradually phase them out, as they were incompatible with modern colonial governance, and had lost most of their authority. One of his predecessors had already hinted that “*the majority of chiefs only enjoyed the prestige that the administration wished to give them*”, not in the least because administrative intervention with regard to the resolution of native questions had significantly weakened their traditional roles”.<sup>89</sup> After WWII, the already existing tendency to work directly through village heads, already codified in the

83 AHU, ISAU, Mç. 1669, Henrique Jones da Silveira, *Relatório Inspeção Administrativa da Guiné, 1940*: 180.

84 PÉLISSIER, 1989; MENDY, 1993.

85 AHU, ISAU, 2245, Mário Costa to Ricardo Vaz Monteiro, Governor of Portuguese Guinea, *Relatório sobre o posto de Canhabaque*, Fulacunda, 16 April 1944.

86 AHU, ISAU, 2245, Mário Costa to Vaz Monteiro, *Relatório sobre as dúvidas de interpretação legal e outras deparadas na inspeção a Circunscrição Civil de Bijagós*, Fulacunda, 3 April 1944.

87 AHU, ISAU, 2245, Mário Costa, *Relatório Inspeção Administrativa da Guiné, 1944-45*, 15 March 1945: 58.

88 SARMENTO RODRIGUES, 1949: 116.

89 VIEGAS, 1939: 154.

Administrative Reform Act of 1933, was put into practice, these village chiefs thereby becoming the administration's main autochthonous go-betweens. There was, however, no consensus on the issue amongst colonial and metropolitan actors. Some protested that it played into the hands of "*administrators who adopted the policy of combating chiefs by undermining their authority, and denting their prestige, arguing that there was no justification for their continuation in office*". But they also added significantly that "*guards should not replace chiefs as caretakers because they tended to take revenge for fearing not being elected in the future. Of all cases of replacements, they were the worst.*" The aforementioned (newly appointed) governor also strongly and publicly disapproved the generalized use of corporal punishment.

It is unquestionable that there was a general repugnance [amongst natives] with regard to the use of force. I intervened in an uncompromising fashion in this matter, and presumed that the satisfaction would be general. But no. In a thousand different ways [administrative officials] lamented that the natives could now do what they wanted.<sup>90</sup>

Referring to similar practices observed in Angola, such high-ranking officials, who moved between colonies in positions of authority, thus had means for comparison. *Política indígena* or native affairs had, essentially, been reduced to the following notion: "*As long as we do not stop mistreating the blacks, and explore, and stifle them, any [form of] protection is exaggerated*". The question of law and order in urban areas (the capital and district capitals) which had been regulated in 1944 with the creation of a new police force<sup>91</sup>, was legally and administratively separated from that of rural areas. The latter fell under the jurisdiction of the *curadorias*, locally represented by administrators, in accordance with racially based *indigenato* policies, which would eventually be abolished by the Lisbon government in 1961. By the late 1950s, official reports show that throughout the colony there were a total of 240 *cipais* – about 23 to 24 per district – and officially a hundred-odd *régulos* in Guinea, which is a rate of two to one.<sup>92</sup> However, many *regulados* were unoccupied, while others had mere 'caretakers' to do the job. Officials admitted that one of the most sensitive interventions with respect to African populations was the question of policing measures, "*which should guide and correct them towards higher levels of civilization.*"<sup>93</sup> However, the available evidence from rural areas showed that the contrary was common practice. Following the cue from the governor, who publicly criticized the widespread practice of corporal punishment in Guinea, official reports began to discuss the role of guards thereby breaking the silences that had reigned since conquest and imposition of colonial rule. As a result, guards came to be identified as one of the main culprits of the deplorable state of native affairs in the colony, as well as the administrators who relied on the services of these 'native agents':

90 AHU, ISAU, 1946-1969, Sarmiento Rodrigues, 2.<sup>a</sup> Conferência dos Administradores, de 1946.

91 See Regulamento Corpo de Polícia, Portaria 195<sup>a</sup>, Bissau, 27 Nov. 1944.

92 List of *cipaios* employed by the administration in Guinea in 1958 in the whole of the colony. Amongst the total of 240 *cipaios*, 11 are chief *cipaios* and 229 unranked guards. The average by *circunscricção* or district is 23/24, except in the district of São Domingos (14) and that of Bolama (5). In the capital Bissau and the town of Bolama security is also guaranteed by a European-style police force (Polícia de Segurança Pública, PSP).

93 AHU, ISAU, 1946-1969, Carlos Henrique Jones da Silveira, *Parecer*, ISAC, Lisbon, Feb. 1946.

Unfortunately, local administrations employ miserable elements in their dealings with the native people. The moment they praise the qualities of the natives, they also condemn it: the cipais, who are made of the same roots as the others, immediately transform themselves into omnipotent and despotic masters, displaying a small degree of civilization. Generally speaking, they are the natives' worst enemies.<sup>94</sup>

One administrator provided a graphic description of the situation he encountered when taking up his post in the North of Guinea, in the Costa de Baixo region:

Who are the cipaios? Natives (...). They are:  
Irreconcilable enemies of authority, as we all know, that is if the same authority does not steal and let them steal too.  
They rob and plunder natives in any way they can. If the authority punishes the thieves, we have made new enemies.  
In their thievery, they usually invoke the name of authority, as I have found and as everyone knows. The hate that this provokes is directed at the authorities because the native was robbed in their name. Here we have the cipaio undermining the proper course of native affairs.<sup>95</sup>

After travelling his district, this administrator found that the guards were in control of the administrative post (i.e. of Calequisse) itself. They actually wielded power. With the connivance of his predecessor they collected taxes, imposed fines and gathered the revenue from it – and handed over the proceeds to the authorities, or whatever they saw fit; and whenever money was missing they imposed fines in order to account for the difference just like administrators and *chefes de posto* had been accustomed to do in the past. They also issued and charged for licenses, and organized work groups supplying unpaid labour and forced the local populations to grow cash crops (e.g. peanuts), which they then sold on the market while obtaining seeds from a local trader. Anarchy and indiscipline reigned at a post which had in effect been left to its own devices as result of a process of 'nativization'. In effect, as officials acknowledged, guards were hierarchically speaking superior to appointed 'native authorities' and indeed acted out their *de facto* administrative status.

The then-administrator of the district observed that administration had been seriously affected by its instability and political tensions, at the level of its frontiers, personnel and capacity for revenue extraction.<sup>96</sup> The strong politicization of native affairs since the 1920s had transformed the region into a theatre of complex intrigues between incumbents and pretenders over chiefly positions and the privileges associated with them. This led to an intensification of the flux of those who outmigrated but also emigrated to neighbouring Senegal, i.e. the Casamance region. Such migratory fluxes, which had already been registered during the 1930s<sup>97</sup>, were directly associated with the tensions pointed out above, while lower tax rates and other incentives offered by the French authorities in neighbour-

94 AHU, ISAU, 1731, *Relatório da Conferência dos Administradores da Colónia da Guiné, 1946*; AHU, ISAU, 1731, *Parecer do Inspector Superior, Eurico Nogueira*, Lisbon, 24 Oct. 1946.

95 Antero Campos Magalhães Duarte, chefe de posto, Calequisse, 24 Jan. 1945.

96 AHU, ISAU, António Carreira, *Relatório Circunscrição Civil de Cacheu, 1945*, Cacheu, 23 March 1946.

97 See Archives Diplomatiques du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris/La Courneuve (MAE), K-Afrique, 1918-1940, Possessions Portugaises, K-76, 6, Edouard Hostains to French Foreign Ministry, secret dispatch, Bissau, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1931; CAOM, FM 1AFFPol/517.

ing Senegal incentivized local populations from Portuguese Guinea to emigrate. Besides the need to pacify these relations, the official also argued for increasing investment in local sanitary and agricultural services in order to improve the living standards of the African populations. At the same time, he recognized the need to diminish the pressures on local societies caused by taxation and the recruitment of 'native labour', and the frequent abuses surrounding their implementation about which complaints were made 'in silence', far from the public arena. The *cipais* were singled out for their tendency to commit abuses and arbitrary acts that called for vigilance on the part of administrative staff. Complaints about their behaviour from locals should therefore be carefully investigated, also because the latter often attempted to take revenge upon them for having been recruited for obligatory public works. Many '*chefes de posto*' tolerated a number of infractions committed by guards rather than disciplining them; after all they were instrumental in the carrying out of a variety of duties, including tax censuses and levies, for which they received a small percentage of revenue, on top of their salary. But the administrator did not hesitate to underline that the margin for irregular and abusive behaviour on the part of guards was also directly related to the vigilance and control exercised by officials, and the participation of the local population in the administration of justice.

Administrative officials arrived at similar conclusions in other colonies such as Angola and Mozambique immediately after the Second World War. The criticism on administrative practice, from both metropolitan and colonial quarters, had become more frequent during the 1930s and 1940s as information from a variety of bodies charged with overseeing colonial finance, administration and native affairs circulated. Faced with mounting tensions at the local level, colonial officials lamented the lack of health, educational and agricultural services for African populations, while also complaining about the failure of Portuguese authorities in the country's major colonies such as Angola and Mozambique to foster their peaceful development. Inspector and former administrator Henrique Galvão's incendiary report to the Committee for Colonial Affairs of the Portuguese National Assembly in 1947 reinforced this notion at the highest level in the metropole. The then-deputy focused on the progressive fragmentation of African societies and its consequences for the colonies, besides surgically cutting through the New State propaganda by denouncing the negative impact of forced labour and taxation which had provoked a demographic exodus. Criticizing the "intellectual incomprehension of people with a rudimentary culture", he lamented the "dismantling of native institutions before creating or conceiving those that should replace them".<sup>98</sup> Allied to the question of native and forced labour, high mortality rates and the population exodus, the former administrator denounced the "complete moral, political, social and economic disorganization of indigenous societies". Two parallel processes were in his view responsible for this disintegration, i.e. the despotic practices of commoner chiefs and those perpetrated by unscrupulous administrations in the colonies. This disconcerting dynamic could only be recorded and understood *in loco* by meeting with and listening to local populations as well as administrative staff, who would generally 'hide' their concerns for fear of reprisals or of the dissatisfaction of their superiors.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Henrique GALVÃO, *Exposição do Deputado Henrique Galvão à Comissão de Colónias da Assembleia Nacional em Janeiro de 1947*: 40; AHU, Ministério do Ultramar (MU).

<sup>99</sup> *Ibidem*: 9. He concluded that native affairs policies in the empire only existed in an abstract legal sense but had no practical significance (*Ibidem*: 51).

These threads were also picked up a decade later by those travelling Portugal's African colonies. Their observations showed that there was a considerable gap between official discourse and practice. The considerable powers vested in administrators without any effective controls had led to widespread use and abuse of authority. The absence of native courts and the dominance of processes under the legal native codes meant that decision making on civil and penal cases involving the indigenous population lay in the hands of the district administrators.<sup>100</sup> *Cipais* were therefore not only called upon to carry out administrative but also legal decisions. "Paternalistic" attitudes towards Africans regarded as unruly children were said to be responsible for the reliance on corporal punishment; the New State had effectively "brought state efficiency to an informal apparatus of terror".<sup>101</sup> Taxation was quoted as one of the most effective forms of control over the African population, as tax collection kept them "in close contact with the administration".<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately, however, by viewing these practices from a top-down perspective, i.e. the vantage point of the colonial state, these and other authors provided little insight into the inner workings of this coercive and extractive apparatus 'on the ground', thus omitting the important role that Africans played in it, the influence they exercised, and the relations they mediated. Although anti-colonial, nationalist resistance movements would capture widespread local discontent and widely denounce the violent nature of this apparatus, the question of the complexities of rule, the diversity of practice and involvement of local actors has only recently become the subject of debate.<sup>103</sup>

## 6. Conclusions

While the roles of 'native employees' have been the subject of (limited) study in the case of British and French Africa, the case of their agency in Portuguese colonies has so far remained obscure. As some scholars have pointed out the historiography on Portuguese Africa is strongly marked by the issue of administrative abuse with regard to the recruitment of 'native labour' and of collusion with private interests. However, despite these widespread practices, they also maintain that "we lack (...) archive-based enquiries into how colonial conditions changed from the 1930s to the 1960s".<sup>104</sup> In order to shed more light on the 'inner workings' of native affairs in the context of colonial rule, this essay focuses on some neglected aspects of colonial rule and its practical complexities in the context of 'indirect rule'/native affairs in Portuguese Africa with the aid of unpublished archival data.

As a number of scholars quoted above have pointed out, the reliance of colonial – and African authorities – on these actors has long been underestimated and neglected. However, while research into their activities has provided new insights into their *modus operandi*, much research still has to be done given the great variations across the continent. Over the last decades, publications in the social sciences have recognized the great diversity of 'colonial situations' and the different approaches employed to analyze

100 DUFFY, 1959: 300-302.

101 *Ibid.*: 304.

102 *Ibid.*

103 See e.g. the transactions of conferences organized by the Centro de Estudos Africanos (CEAUP) of the University of Oporto on the subject of forced labour since 2004: CEAUP (ed.) *Trabalho Forçado Africano: experiências coloniais comparadas* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 2006); CEAUP (ed.) *Trabalho Forçado Africano. Articulações com o poder político* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 2007), and CEAUP (ed.) *Trabalho Forçado Africano: o caminho de ida* (Porto: Húmus, 2009).

104 KEESE, 2007: 30-31.

them.<sup>105</sup> In order to produce a reconstruction of 'rule from below', oral as well as archival research is needed. Recent findings show that African actors "were not simple lackeys of the colonial state" and "the importance of locating these figures within their respective social, economic and political contexts".<sup>106</sup> Indeed, it is argued here that an analysis of their actions and aspirations, and the perceptions of their roles within colonial spaces require a particular, multi-disciplinary framework that takes into account these micro-levels of rule that have until recently largely been overlooked. Far from limiting themselves to the mere implementation of tasks imposed by their superiors, they themselves issued orders and ensured their execution, acting as decision makers 'on the spot', while exploiting and manipulating the dependency of administrators on their 'collaboration' for the daily management of colonial rule.<sup>107</sup>

The trends and changes referred to above raise a number of questions. One of the main quandaries scholars need to address is why Portuguese colonial administrations – not only in Guinea but also in Angola and Mozambique – resolved to maintain appointed chieftaincies despite their apparent or alleged failure to deliver? Was the native affairs policy mere window-dressing or were authorities unable to agree upon an alternative? Also, what kind of administration developed after conquest when ancestral, lineage-based traditions were rapidly overturned and replaced by an administrative logic? As colonial authorities increasingly came to regard appointed chiefs as expendable go-betweens, what did that mean for their relations with African societies? In view of the loss of influence of appointed and commoner chiefs and the growing reliance on village heads and native guards, is there still a case to be made for 'indirect' rule? Did the growing influence of guards in terms of the maintenance of law and order, as well as the levying of taxes and labour recruitment, mean that they actually wielded power? What then were the main causes of these shifts in the priorities of administration and what was their impact on local populations and the latter's perception of those agents? How did local communities deal with the agents, especially when they defied existing notions of social morality and justice? And looking further ahead, what happened to these guards during the period of decolonization and after?

This essay has attempted to provide some answers to these questions by focusing on policies and practices in a small corner of 'Portuguese' Africa. It shows that two simultaneous, politico-administrative shifts occurred: one from appointed chiefs to village heads, and a second from chiefs to guards. These shifts were largely associated with the instrumentalization and 'optimization' of 'native agents' in order to implement coercive measures, which responded to the financial pressures and legal reforms imposed by the metropole. The maximization of revenue via tax returns, an elaborate system of fines, cash crop production and the mobilization of labour to suit public or private interests all contributed to these ends. Although there was a marked shift in official policy during the 1930s, administrators and their immediate subalterns, the *chefes de posto*, retained considerable margin for manoeuvre for exercising authority in terms of the selection and employment of, as well as the remuneration and assignments given to, 'native agents'. The latter also grew accustomed to the tasks entrusted to them and the opportunities they offered for advancing their own interests and turning them to their personal

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105 STOCKING, 1991.

106 LAWRANCE ET AL., 2006: 7.

107 OSBORN, 2003: 419.

advantage. Moreover, the lack of direct supervision and control of an underfunded, understaffed and geographically dispersed administration provided the lowest rungs of administration with leeway to use and abuse laws and regulations. Thus practice, often induced by financial restrictions but also by bureaucratic pressures – and by no means exclusive to Portuguese Africa – belied the idea, codified in statutes and regulations, of regular, direct contact between administrators and populations.<sup>108</sup>

The tendency of administrators to initially promote and then sacrifice chiefly intermediaries in favour of village heads and guards, should of course be qualified in accordance with the social and cultural context within their jurisdiction. Relations between African communities and colonial authorities were personalized, so that rotation and replacement of personnel being a common feature of colonial administration, could lead to sudden changes in attitudes. Symptomatic for the increasing discomfort, which the failings of administration in Guinea – and elsewhere in the Portuguese empire – aroused amongst some metropolitan observers, was the fact that despite the existence of complaints and disciplinary procedures, colonial practice had adversely affected the administrations' capacity to deliver while maintaining peaceful relations with 'native authorities' and local populations. The governmentality of extraction had by and large negatively affected 'native affairs' in spite of the enormous pressure exerted by the metropole upon colonial administrations in the wake of the 1929 crisis. In order to balance the books, pay outstanding debts to the central government while securing the extraction of produce, foreign exchange and revenue<sup>109</sup>, pressures coming from the metropole significantly changed colonial practice. Thus, as world market prices for colonial products plummeted, tax rates did not drop, fiscal targets were imposed and strictly monitored, and the financial autonomy of colonies was severely limited.<sup>110</sup> The constant need for fiscal revenue, which was intensified by the global economic crisis, was also reinforced by the unwillingness of metropolitan governments and parliaments, not only in Portuguese, but also in British and French Africa<sup>111</sup> to underwrite colonial budgets, subsidize administrations and develop the colonies until the 1940s. Even when mechanisms were put in place for metropolitan support for investment in Portuguese colonies in the 1940s and 1950s, when the first development plans were introduced, their respective administrations were expected to largely fund them with internal revenues.<sup>112</sup>

In the Guinean case it becomes clear that after an initial period of appointing chiefs and creating one *regulador* after another, increasingly, authorities began to ponder their utility. While some argued in favour of their continuation and investiture, also for lack of alternative, others decided that they had no use for them. One of the main triggers of this debate was the change of rules introduced by the RAU in 1933. This reform shifted responsibilities from chiefs to their subordinates, i.e. the village heads, which naturally raised eyebrows and increased local tensions. One of the main reasons for these changes was the perceived need to guarantee and increase tax revenue which chiefs were increasingly unable or unwilling to deliver. As a result, appointed chiefs became progressively marginalized or even expendable, while the responsibilities and obligations vested in local representatives further fragmented authority at village and community level. But

<sup>108</sup> SIMONIS, 2005: 65; RICH, 2004: 59.

<sup>109</sup> CLARENCE-SMITH, 1985: 16; 146-148; LAINS, 1998: 485.

<sup>110</sup> HAVIK, 2008: 42-48.

<sup>111</sup> CLARENCE-SMITH, 1985: 188; KLEIN, 2006: 274.

<sup>112</sup> CLARENCE-SMITH, 1985: 169.

as 'indirect rule' gained proximity to this micro-level of African society, guards actually saw their role expanded as they became the right hands, eyes and ears of administrators and *chefes de posto*. Not only did they receive a broader brief for enforcing administrative routines and measures in districts and *postos*, but they actually exercised control and even replaced chiefs. However, as we have seen not only chiefs but also guards had a mind of their own and sought to fill these 'gaps' in the organization of native affairs. Moreover, their autonomous agency proved much more difficult to harness and limit than that of the chiefs, given that guards were essential cogs in the administrative wheels, despite being presented as auxiliaries and scapegoats in order to mask the failings and shortcomings of colonial rule.

The cases discussed above illustrate that similarly to other colonial regimes and areas<sup>113</sup>, policies and practice regarding law and order in Portuguese colonies shifted over time in order to cope with changing economic, political and social conditions. At the same time, they also show how African agents "became intimately acquainted with the idiosyncrasies of colonial rule" and constructed "mutually beneficial relationships".<sup>114</sup> The constant rotation of administrative staff also played into the hands of those who remained in place and guaranteed continuity. The complexities of local politics as a result of 'indirect rule' also led administrators to increasingly rely on local intermediaries and their "subterranean networks"<sup>115</sup> as their 'eyes and ears'. These patterns of African involvement in administration demonstrate to what extent the roles of 'native agents' both illustrated as well as filled "the gaps that existed between colonialism in practice and colonialism as envisaged by its architects (...)".<sup>116</sup> But at the same time they emphasize the complexities of understanding and generalizing administrative practice in terms of a 'strong' or a 'weak' colonial state, 'direct' or 'indirect' rule, 'association' or 'assimilation' and other concepts commonly used in colonial studies. As some scholars have stated, the different approaches to colonialism are complementary, i.e. a mixture of domination, modernization as well as negotiation.<sup>117</sup> In order to comprehend the great diversity of situations which precludes making broad generalizations<sup>118</sup>, it will be necessary to take a closer look at the roles of those whose contribution to colonial rule has commonly been viewed in terms of collaboration or resistance in the context of colonial rule, and attempt to identify trends across colonial borders. Scholars have recently reiterated the need for comparative approaches ("reciprocal comparison") to African history while underlining the difficulties of combining the potential "building blocks produced by specialist studies into syntheses of African history that are sensitive to internal variation yet sufficiently definite at regional and sub-regional level (...)".<sup>119</sup> Comparative, multi-disciplinary perspectives linking the different actors and institutions associated with the two pillars of colonial rule mentioned above – i.e. law and order, and extraction of revenue – should therefore take into account the relative autonomy, interests and strategies of African actors at the 'bottom end' of administration while placing them in the broader context of relations between the latter and local populations. As some have pointed out, despite a number

<sup>113</sup> MCCracken, 1986: 146; Killingley, 1986: 436-437.

<sup>114</sup> Osborn, 2003: 44.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*: 44-46.

<sup>116</sup> Osborn, 2003: 44-46.

<sup>117</sup> Pels, 1997: 164.

<sup>118</sup> MCCracken, 1986: 146.

<sup>119</sup> Austin, 2007: 11.

of significant exceptions<sup>120</sup>, most ‘native agents’ such as chiefs, village heads and guards did not leave a paper trail.<sup>121</sup> But as we have seen above, they were very much present in the daily affairs at ground level of administration and its relations with African populations, leaving tell-tale footprints in unpublished, archival documentation that need to be explored further, as well as the oral trails that survive in African societies.

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<sup>120</sup> DERRICK, 1983; OSBORN, 2003, AUSTEN, 2006.

<sup>121</sup> OSBORN, 2003: 49.

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