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Partie II Villes secondaires, confins et métropoles : l'innovation au cœur ou à la périphérie ?

Benoît ANTHEAUME et Frédéric GIRAUT :

Margins at the Heart of Territorial Innovation?

A Comparative Look at Administrative Borderlands (South Africa, France, Morocco, Niger and Togo)

Margins at the Heart of Territorial Innovation? A Comparative Look at Administrative Borderlands (South Africa, France, Morocco, Niger and Togo)¹

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- Keywords: Borderland, Margin, Periphery, Boundary, Frontier, Border, Territorial restructuring, Territorial innovation, Park, Local government system; South Africa, France, Morocco, Niger, Togo.
- Abstract: On all levels and in very different contexts, administrative borderlands are often centres of functional specialisation as well as derogatory and potentially innovative initiatives or practices. Beyond the handicap of discontinuity created by administrative boundaries, institutional agreements take place officially to a greater or lesser extent, in order to manage an uncertain and complex situation. Observing these processes in contexts as different as those of Togo, France, Niger, Morocco and South Africa enables us to bring out certain geopolitical patterns indicating relations between centres and peripheries, and between various levels of territorial administration (e.g. municipalities, regions and central states). Perhaps, for that matter, the much sought-after new formulae of territorial governance are developed on these borderlands.

¹ Translated by Lynnaia Main from Anteaume & Giraut, 2002

Citizens of a State with a powerful, Jacobin² model of territorial administration, rational and consisting of a multi-tiered hierarchy of discrete, non-overlapping administrative units, we can only admire South Africa's tour de force. In the full swing of establishing a new territorial order, the Municipal Demarcation Board invented – alongside the usual administrative division – the cross-boundary municipalities. In this manner, whilst simultaneously substituting a certain administrative equality to the areas' statutory diversity – formerly organised in a rigid hierarchy and differentiated according to their inhabitants' skin colour – the new South African system emancipated itself from the sacrosanct principle of a multi-tiered hierarchy of non-overlapping units, habitually guiding all administrative reforms with egalitarian and rational references. Should this be interpreted as a South African oddity, or one more sign confirming the hypothesis that territorial innovation, in this era of complexity, occurs on the margin or, more exactly, in the borderlands?

Grappling with its margins, South Africa invented the cross-boundary municipalities

One of the challenges that has arisen with post-apartheid South Africa's social, political and territorial reorganisation is how to handle its internal margins, those where 'second rate' citizens were confined, in areas relegated far from economic and political centres. In reaching this objective of restoration and reintegration, two potentially contradictory necessities presented themselves: abolishing statutory differences and introducing a sense of equity, and therefore diversity, within the new entities and institutions. Consequently, how to treat the inherited margins or borderlands became a crucial issue and predominated debates firstly on the provincial redivision process, then the municipal divisions (Fox, 1995; Gervais Lambony M.A., 1996; Gervais Lambony P., 1999; Griggs, 1994; Khosa and Muthien, 1998; Maziau, 1995; Narsiah and Maharaj, 1997; Ramutsindela, 1998 and 2001). This focusing of debates on the internal margins rather than potential centres was expressed successively by:

- the inclusion in the 1994 Interim Constitution of a list naming fourteen potential border conflicts resulting from the division into nine provinces. These conflicts would need to be resolved by referendum and/or in the new local government apparatus. Some of these border 'disputes' were the subject of detailed studies. This is notably the case of Bushbuckridge, located in the Northern Province (renamed Limpopo Province in February 2002) touching Mpumalanga Province and composed of two parcels of land from the ex-bantustans of Gazankulu and Lebowa (Narsiah and Maharaj, 1999; Ramutsindela and Simon, 1999; Ritchken, 1994). It is also true of the border between KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape (Claude, 1997; Bekker and Manona, 1992), and settlements functionally linked to Pretoria, but located beyond Gauteng's northern limit (Gervais-Lambony and Guillaume, 1999; Allanic, 2001).
- critique of the 'transitional local councils'. These were hurriedly devised as an extension of the municipal statute reserved, up until then, for white sections of the cities, to their black, 'Coloured' and Indian peripheries – the townships – in the name of equity. These

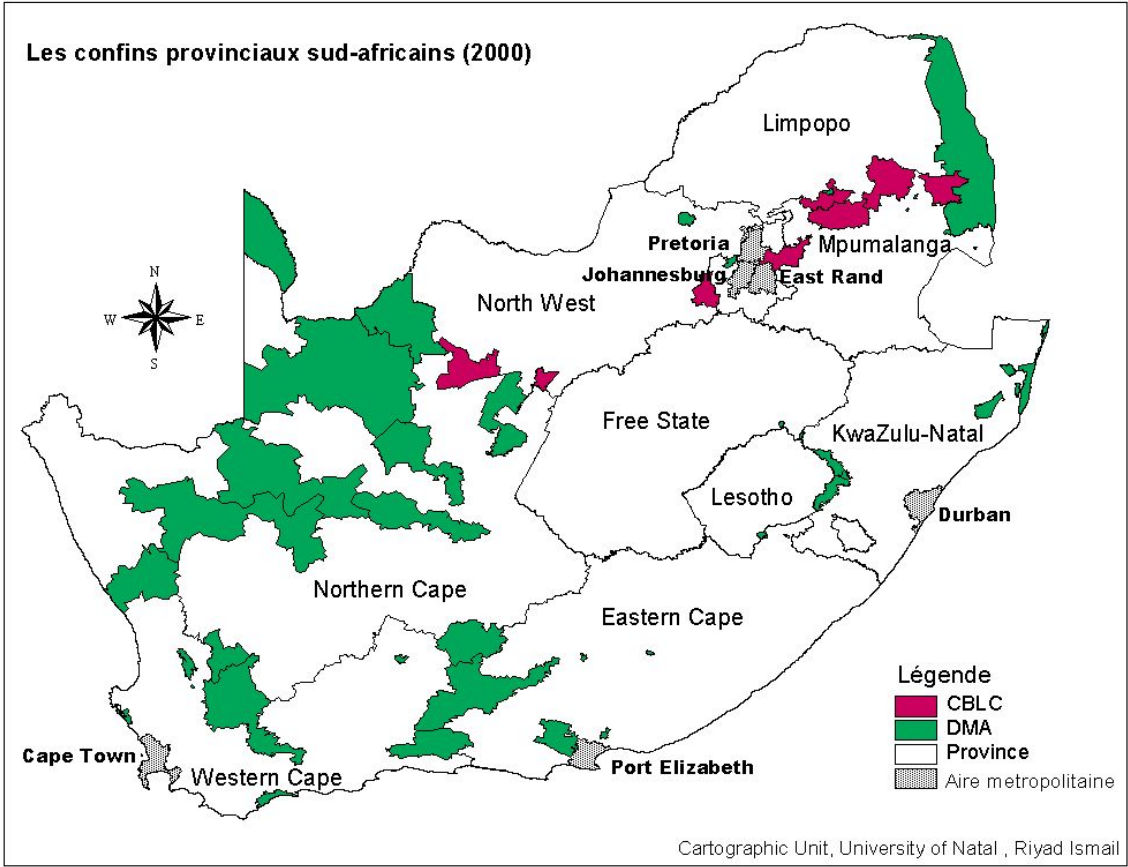
² *Translator's note:* The Jacobin Club, a radical political organisation during the French Revolution, held that democracy should take the form of a highly centralised, indivisible Republic. This became the basis for the centralised, 'strong' state model that has prevailed in France until recently.

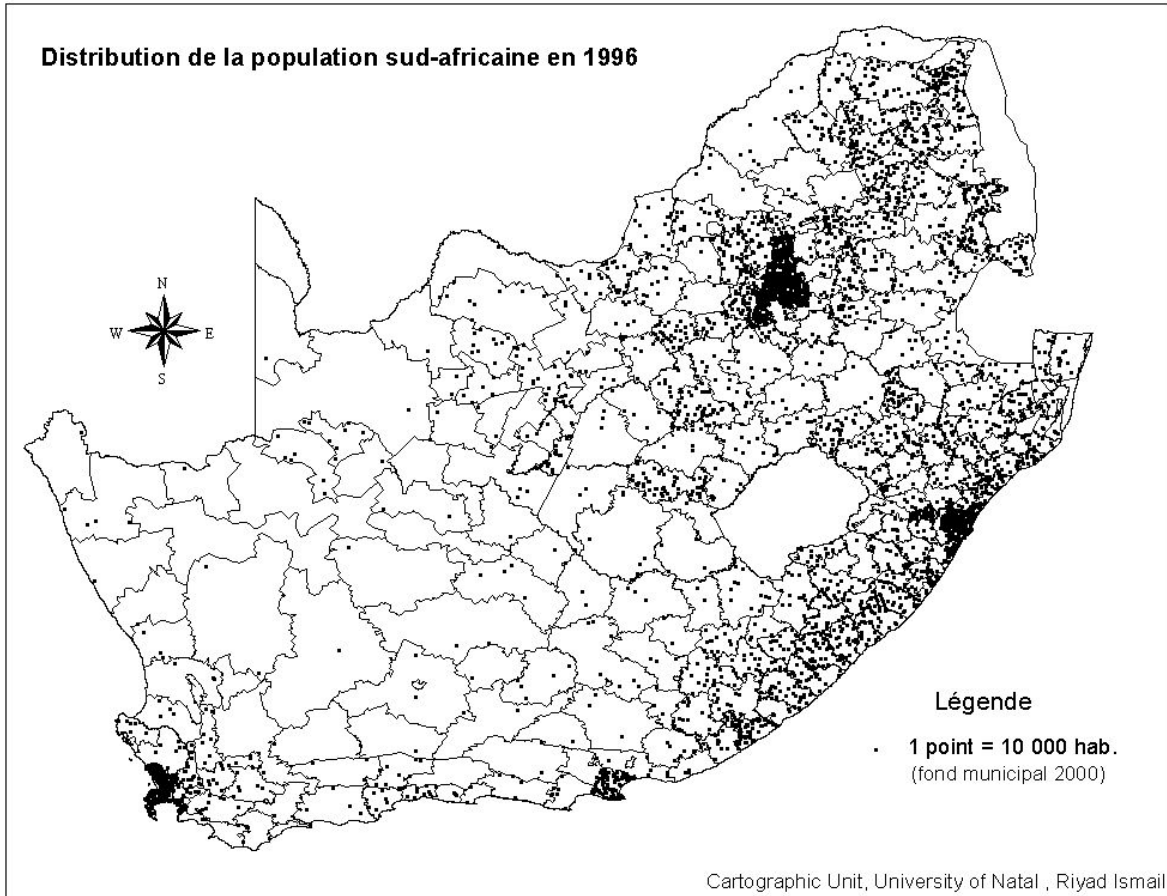
TLCs often were disputed and challenged for overlooking the cities' informal or semi-rural peripheries as well as displaced urbanisation beyond the former bantustans' limits (Cameron, 1999; Bekker, 1997; Bond, 1998; Gervais-Lambony, 1996; MacCarthy and Bernstein, 1998; Sutcliffe, 1996);

- the resurgence of the traditional authorities question and, more generally, demands for autonomy for the peripheral rural areas in the debate over the South African territory's complete, 'wall-to-wall' division into municipalities, metropolitan areas and districts. Traditional authorities threatened and marginalised by the new local government mechanism were able to find an echo and popular support for their demands against the background of the 'African Renaissance' slogan launched by President Mbeki and reinterpretable at will (Crouzel, 1999; Ramutsindela, 2001). While sometimes obliterating the important redistribution issue within composite municipal entities, these demands were able to lead to financially strapped but socio-economically homogeneous municipal entities.

Hence, debates on the issues at stake in radically reforming the South African state's territorial organisation focused on handling the internal margins. It must be said that in South Africa, at all scales, the contrasts are extreme between the limits of the inherited entities, and that discontinuity phenomena were exacerbated under the Grand Apartheid policy.

Nationally and regionally, however, one can distinguish two very different – indeed contrasting – types of marginal spaces or borderlands. On the one hand, the '**empty borderlands**', also often positioned along an international border, are marked by very low population density and development dominated by park- or reserve-type environmental protection measures; they are ex 'buffer zones', on a national scale, of an isolated South Africa. On the other, the '**full borderlands**', a sort of South African speciality, are direct heirs of the displaced urbanisation policies carried out within the Grand Apartheid framework and the establishment of the bantustans.





The administrative handling of the empty and full borderlands³

Comparing these two maps (created using 'SA Explorer') allows us to note that a portion of the 'full borderlands' enjoys the status of Cross Boundary Municipality (CBM). This is notably the case around the Johannesburg-Pretoria conurbation and the borderlands of the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces for the highly disputed Bushbuckridge region, but the system could not be applied to KwaZulu-Natal's southern limits following the provincial authorities' refusal. The 'empty borderlands', numerous along the international border and in the Northern Cape province, are composed for their part of district-administered areas (District Management Area or DMA); thus, they fall under the second level of local government and escape the integral municipalisation of the South African territory.

Within the framework of the new South African local government apparatus, the Demarcation Board devised straightaway the formulae of the *District Management Areas* for the 'empty borderlands' and the *Cross Boundary Municipalities* for the 'full borderlands'. The first type consists in not granting a basic municipality status to very low-density areas (parks, reserves, but also the arid, scarcely populated margins on Namibia's outlying areas) by directly entrusting their management to the second level of local government, the districts. The second sets up municipalities straddling two provinces, in particular as an attempt to settle the situation of the contested provincial identities listed in the Interim Constitution. Hence, at issue are two adaptations or special dispensations to the principles of 'wall-to-wall' division and a multi-tiered

³ *Translator's note:* Text for the two preceding maps reads as follows: 1) 'South African Provincial Borderlands', Legend: CBM, DMA, Province, Metropolitan Area. 2) '1996 South African Population Distribution', Legend: 1 dot = 10,000 inhabitants (Municipal collection, 2000).

hierarchy of non-overlapping administrative entities that, it should be noted, prevail in rationalising a local government system henceforth united through equity.

Therefore, one can perceive in this focusing the debates surrounding South Africa's territorial reorganisation on the margins, edges and internal boundaries, the resurgence of the boundary theme so precious to newly independent countries and former New World colonies. However, it is rather the heritage of a segregated system, taken to extremes and to different scales, which resurfaces in this manner. For our part, we think one must also see in the importance assumed by borderlands, and their handling, the symptom, here quite pronounced, of a universal process of growing recomposition and territorial complexity. Our observations and work in West Africa, North Africa and France – that is to say, in very different contexts – lead us to view borderlands as privileged places of invention and articulation. In these areas, special dispensations, compromises and flexible arrangements are tried and tested, as much on the level of individual and collective practices, as of institutional set-ups.

‘National peripheries’: beyond the exploitation of differentials, an expression of globalisation

As for dynamics related to borderland areas, the overwhelming majority of studies and works concern international borderlands. These areas are the headquarters *par excellence* of economic dynamics linked to the exploitation of differentials from centres that drain goods or labour from the neighbouring country. Conversely, these dynamics can be nearly entirely absent in the case of closed or frozen borders, either in the form of ‘no man’s lands’ made into a national park-type sanctuary or militarised buffer zones. But beyond this exploitation of local resources generated by discontinuity, many authors agree that in these cross-border zones, they perceive one of the signs of the nation-state’s obliteration and the elaboration of geopolitical compromises linked to globalisation (Anderson and Dowd, 1999).

These cross-border dynamics can be recognised, or pursued and encouraged by public authorities. On the European scale, this is the case with the services of the European Commission, which systematically favours cross-border projects by means of different programmes. The main one is INTERREG, a ‘community initiative’ that survived all the Structural Funds reforms and, on its third renewal, therefore has already supported several generations of projects since the 1980s. It provides substantial financing to cross-border initiatives, even when from regional groupings ineligible for the social and territorial objectives of *cohesion*, that is to say, regions wealthier than the European average. European states, and notably France, are little inclined to support this type of policy and do not make its legal feasibility any easier; on the contrary, contemporary South Africa is directly implicated in an ambitious policy of promoting cross-border dynamics. While the new local government system is being put in place, the South African land planning policy uses the Spatial Development Initiatives tool to promote opening up the territory and the South African economy. It is thus the ‘corridors’ and notably the one connecting the Johannesburg-Pretoria conurbation to Maputo, as well as the potentially transnational coastal areas, who benefit from these programmes to develop transportation and tourist infrastructures, which must accompany the economic and spatial opening up of the country and these selected sectors. Managed out of the Development Bank of Southern Africa, these SDI completely overlook the new municipal institutions and their areas

and are not linked to the provinces. In this, they are similar to the missions responsible for successfully carrying out large-scale regional development projects in France in the 1960s, such as the development of the Languedoc-Roussillon coast. They also differ markedly insofar as they rely on private initiatives to raise capital, design and manage development projects, which will then be transferred to the public authorities at the end of the concession contract period (BOT system: build, operate, transfer).

In Maputaland, region in northeastern KwaZulu-Natal between the Indian Ocean, Swaziland and Mozambique, and in the regions neighbouring these two states, the Lubombo SDI project focuses heavily on road and tourism infrastructures and ridding the area of mosquitoes. Sylvain Guyot (2001) and Benoît Rey (2001) were able to note the near non-existence of relations between the SDI's administration and local officials, be they newly elected or traditional authorities. Likewise, even though the Lubombo SDI is at the heart of a complex of coastal and continental reserves and parks enjoying the status of UNESCO World Heritage site and Biosphere Reserve, no co-ordination exists with the provincial-level parks and reserves administration (Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife).

Furthermore, the Southern African national parks, most of which touch international boundaries, were able to serve as 'no man's lands' and other national-level 'buffer zones' that today are at the heart of a large, Southern African-scale cross-border project (Koch, 1998). The Peace Parks project should thus put parks situated on either side of the borders into continuous contact as far as their management is concerned. In the process, this project is considering extending protected areas to make them coalescent. In Maputaland, considerations are underway to attach two small parks (Ndumo and Tembe), one formerly in Natal and the other in the KwaZulu homeland, to a Mozambican reserve (Maputo Elephant Reserve) by including vast interstitial areas under the designation of Futi Corridor. However, at the same time local communities established on these areas are demanding, on the contrary, to regain control of part of these areas (Rey, 2001). The conflicts of interest linked to the collision of differently scaled projects are thus flagrant, and compromises or settlements by arbitration are not only worked out on the basis of the projects' strength or their transnational nature. They must take into account the strategy of neighbouring local communities, without whose participation any project of this type is doomed (Neumann, 1997; Tapela and Omara-Ojunga, 1999).

In West and Central Africa, 'national peripheries'⁴ are the areas experiencing some of the sub-continent's most important urban, economic and political dynamics (Asiwaju, 1989; Bennafla, 2002; Cour, 1994; Mbembe, 1999). Here again, public policies initiated by international funders can encourage these dynamics.⁵ Along these 'busy international borderlands', 'national peripheries' emerge when trade is particularly intense and its briskness ensured by 'populations whose lives and practices straddle the borders' (Igué, 1995). These spaces are thus the central point for numerous cities – often small, sometimes twinned, but active and growing. According to the author, these 'national peripheries' are 'veritable enclaves that

⁴ J.O. Igué (1995), who takes an interest in West African border areas, defines a certain number of 'border enclaves' and contrasts the 'alternative international borderlands' that demonstrate 'limited dynamism' with 'national peripheries'. These are nearly all situated along monetary borders, that is to say on the edge of the 'Franc Zone', in contact with states with non-convertible currencies: Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone.

⁵ Thus a new programme to revive West African spatial planning and development, managed by the Municipal Development Programme (*Programme de Développement Municipal*) based at Cotonou and supported by the World Bank and the French DATAR agency, proposes to prioritise cross-border approaches.

dominate adjoining “nation-states” through their economic and social role’; they ‘create what inter-state negotiations and projects have not been able to build’, that is to say, integration of the sub-region’s economic policies. Such an approach focuses on the existence of informal and/or clandestine ‘parallel’ market networks organised from a pattern of central border areas. E. Grégoire (1996) speaks thus of a ‘webbed urban network’ in describing the dense and complex cross-border urban network joining Niger and Nigeria. The importance of the identified areas must not lead us to forget that the frontier phenomenon is equally involved in the dynamics of less populated, busy and structured areas. We were thus able to study several border situations, notably in Togo, Ghana and Niger.

Badou and the Litimé, Togo's bridgehead to the Ghanaian cocoa plantations

Or, cocoa at any cost

(Giraut, 1994 and Antheaume and Pontié, 1990)

In the Togolese ensemble, the Litimé is an isolated but wealthy periphery and an opening onto the Ghanaian plantations. This enclave was effectively joined to French colonial territory after the road link with Atakpamé was completed in 1939. However, the region long remained oriented towards the Gold Coast. A reversal occurred after the countries attained independence, when the heir to the £ sterling, the Ghanaian cedi, could not compete with a stable and attractive CFA franc; furthermore, the Togolese authorities favoured the drainage of the bordering Ghanaian cocoa plantation crops from this bridgehead. Plundering of part of the Ghanaian crop peaked at the beginning of the 1970s, in full-blown Ghanaian economic decay against the backdrop of a spread in illegal practices. This was known as the ‘Kalabule economy’. As a result, Togolese export volume for the year 1970/71 was nearly 30,000 t., or 3 times greater than the 1959/60 harvest and 4 times more than it would be in 1988/89! The economic stakes in this artificial inflation of Togolese exports were substantial. They generated an over-supply of roads and a tar-covered region in the 1970s, with roads obviously not extended beyond the border and which today have deteriorated. This border position also made the Litimé eligible for a television broadcasting station, whereas electrification has not yet really made its appearance!

Today, the region is captive to its economic and strategic posting and its cocoa plantation history. National economic stakes, and the importance of the commercial (marketing firms at Badou, network of collectors) and technical (packaging plant at Badou, Togolese Coffee and Cocoa Plantation Renovation Company (*Société pour la Rénovation de la Cafèière et de la Cacaoyère togolaises* or *SRCC*) at Badou and Tomégbé) infrastructures, impede any economic restructuring. Nevertheless, its necessity has become obvious with the fall in regional revenues and the failure of plantation rehabilitation, but is still forbidden by the authorities.

In relation to these stakes, the interest and position of the prefectural seat are paradoxical. On the one hand, the small town of Badou sorely feels the economic impasse in which its region finds itself, as collection point and catchment area for its market; on the other hand, it concentrates the bulk of infrastructures and operators directly linked to cocoa’s marketing. These last consist locally of a pro-cocoa lobby, whether of companies (branch of the Development Bank of Togo (*Banque togolaise de développement*) and private firms for buying and collecting cocoa), wholesale dealers or numerous administrative services linked to the processing, improvement and packaging of cocoa plantation production. This paradox is expressed in regional planning which, on the one hand, underlines the urgent need to economically restructure the region but which, on the other, advocates creating a chocolate factory and coffee roasting unit at Badou once electrification has reached this small town.

Outside the singular local realities that these situations present, their principal economic actors include them in networks that often reach well beyond their cross-border region to include the migrants’ native rural areas and the metropolitan areas of adjoining countries. As such, they are part of vast networks within which people, goods, and capital circulate and which largely free themselves of administrative and political limits.

Transgressing boundaries through individual and collective practices

The existence of individual practices that largely free themselves from limits imposed by the administrative and political order is an established fact for sub-Saharan Africa. Since the 1980s, researchers have been able to correlate residential mobility, the multiplicity of spatial practices, and socio-professional mobility.⁶

Far from allowing informal activities and spontaneous migratory behaviours to develop, apartheid South Africa attempted, on the contrary, to perfect the colonial system of directing migrant labour. To accomplish this, it organised and strictly controlled the labour migrations towards the residences of labourers who were single or separated from their families – particularly the hostels – whilst simultaneously forcing their families to live in the homelands. The spatial fragmentation of black labourers' lives was one of this system's most dramatic consequences (Bozzoli and Nkotsie, 1991; Mager, 1999). Another of Grand Apartheid's socio-spatial manifestations was the development of 'dumping grounds' along the homelands' limits (Graaf, 1986; HRC, 1992; MacCarthy and Bernstein, 1999). Located as closely as possible to employment hubs and sometimes even touching the industrial zones built on the homelands' external boundaries, these areas of displaced urbanisation constituted a breeding ground for a captive labour pool and areas functionally dependent on poles outside the political entities to which they belonged. From this, we gather that the dichotomy between political and functional areas was devised, sought and the fragmentation of spatial practices over these areas was organised.

In an entirely different context, and with the increasing mobility of individuals accompanying the phenomena of metropolisation and *ex-urbanisation* or rurbanisation in Europe, individual and family practices also tend towards a heightened spatial fragmentation. An approach in terms of basins (of employment and services) no longer suffices in capturing all these phenomena, which stem more from the networking of places than an extended, continued spatiality (Giraut and Vanier, 1999; Reynard, 1995). Thus, French attempts to translate the analysis of these phenomena into territorial redivision along functional lines are not entirely convincing. This is notably the case for the division into employment zones⁷, but also the more subtle division into urban areas proposed by INSEE⁸ at the end of the 1990s (Brunet, 1997). This new 'urban zoning classification' or '*zonage*' isolated the urban areas (defined according to a number of localised jobs), their peri-urban belts (definition based on commuting patterns) and introduced the concept of 'multi-polar communes' (*communes multipolarisées*) subject to a

⁶ 'Researchers, development practitioners and African migrants alike have, thus, to learn from an urbanisation from below, in which spatial practices fragmented over several sites compensate for the inadequacies of each [...] Local relations and spatial continuity do not seem to determine choices of economic and residential settlement. The 'local' as such is non-existent; rather, it fits into migrant practices of multipolar relations with regional, then national space [and international, we should add]; mobility does not necessarily signify a rupture with areas of origin or earlier stages, whose practical memory is preserved through extended social relations' (Bertrand, 1993).

⁷ It should be recalled that INSEE realised this division from a very restricting set of requirements elaborated at the beginning of the 1980s by the DATAR, the French Employment Ministry's central employment office (*Délégation à l'emploi*) and the regional prefectures. These were: respect for regional boundaries, minimal dimensions of 40-50,000 working persons and approximate *arrondissement* level, or 300-400 entities. Therefore, it distanced itself considerably from the rigorous employment areas map by creating extensions, regroupings, subdivisions, and amputations.

⁸ *Translator's note*: INSEE is the French national statistical agency.

certain level of commuting migrations towards several employment hubs. But this effort did not account for practices linked not to employment, but to education or training, recreation and shopping practices that can arise within households with a spatially different logic and that do not correspond to a single, commune-level model. Here, we encounter the limits of the will to contain phenomena escaping the rational geometry of a 'wall-to-wall' division. Some geographers – from very different schools but not hung up on one of the justifications of their discipline, which often consists in drawing boundaries – were able to highlight this.

With the exception of the spatial units that man delimits for political, administrative, legal, military or other reasons for spatial domination, it is often difficult, indeed impossible, to fix a clear, linear, continuous limit to a geographical space. Most often, the geographer is confronted with margins, edges, 'peripheral' areas or other zones of transition (Rolland-May, 1984).

The spatial dynamic of economic progress conjugates step-by-step spreading, often in a preferential direction, with expansion over a distance, itself controlled by complex factors (distance, accessibility, homology of the situations). All these reasons preclude development areas from yielding to a territorial logic. They are surrounded by vague, deficient, potentially deformed and sometimes overlapping margins (Sautter, 1990).

Anthropologists' reflections on cultural and identity boundaries also demonstrate, if this were necessary, this impossibility of 'mapping' phenomena that come from mixing different scales, networking and the existence of uncertain margins, of borderlands where different influences make themselves felt (Amselle and M'Bokolo, 1985; Bromberger and Morel, 2001; Knezevic-Hocevar, 2000). They are an appeal to 'reason other than on the surface' (Retaille, 1993) applicable to all continents. With such an approach, a detour past the organisation of African villages and their surrounding agricultural lands reveals other elements in our reflection on margins and borderlands.

Compromise: From the margins of villages to empires

Micro-level studies – of African and Madagascan villages and their surrounding agricultural areas – were the object of a methodological and theoretical approach (Sautter and Pélissier, 1964), then a first assessment some years later (Pélissier and Sautter, 1970), and the results published in a 25-volume collection (atlas of sub-Saharan agrarian structures, 1967-1987). The studies demonstrated that in zones consisting of forest-savannah mosaics, a kind of ecological buffer zone, situations of fundamental uncertainty, precariousness, and indeed insecurity greatly prevailed. In these particular areas, agricultural exploitation is dual: food producing near the village centre and market-oriented (coffee and cocoa, in the form of small village plantations) on the village's outlying agricultural areas.

Central areas, privileged places in food-producing cultures, remain governed by often inviolable and sometimes even rigid rules for land use and appropriation, dominated by the collective land authority led by a handful of chiefs. On the other hand, the borderlands – due to the permanent presence of perennial plantations – create conditions for a distinctly more personalised territorial appropriation, where individual decision-making predominates and private land appropriation is an established fact. This remark is valid for the Akposso village lands, whose use of production areas runs from food provisions towards the plantations, but also to a certain extent for the Serer village land, with its concentric circles running from the intensive towards the extensive.

Simultaneously, if innovation as regards land use and appropriation occur for the most part on the village's outlying agricultural areas, it very often emanates from the centre, which grants de facto permission for these dynamic interactions (Antheaume, 1995). The territorial architecture's perpetuity and the entire system's reproduction is guaranteed by allowing a territorial consolidation of the outlying areas through the settlement of planters foreign to the region, attracted to the sense of land security offered by a system with flexible margins. Whilst they are beneficiaries of such a system, they also occupy a functional role, as guardians of the village's marches, faced with the potential claims of neighbouring villages seeking new lands to colonise on the fuzzy and fluid outlying zones. One is reminded here of the independent status of the freehold on the outlying areas of fiefs during the Lower Middle Ages. To boldly borrow the language of psychoanalysis, it can thus be noted that the centre is often blocked by the fetters of land tradition, whereas the periphery, on the other hand, is emancipated from the forced constraints of 'tradition' (Antheaume, 1984).

In fact, it is a local-scale example of the 'territorial compromise' that De Koninck (1993) uses to describe the relations between peasants in the outlying areas and the State during its territorial expansion and stabilisation phases. Furthermore, one can extend this 'territorial compromise' expression to relations that are currently or were maintained by kingdoms or empires, with their dissident or partially controlled margins within the framework of a granted or maintained autonomy. Relations between the Makhzen (Moroccan sultanate) and the shifting Siba zone (dissident or autonomised areas) in 19th century Morocco bear witness to this expression's validity for agricultural, but also semi-nomadic margins on different scales (Boujrouf and Giraut, 2000).⁹ Moreover, not only was an attempt sought to eliminate the conflict through a subtle, diplomatic game of pinning down a shifting frontier, between the Makhzen and a dissidence that would possibly serve as a reserve to renew power. In addition – and in an even more complex way, even within the internal organisation of this 'state' – the central authority kept the Makhzen tribes sidelined within the power structure (Dakhia, 1998).

Moreover, these 'compromises' are generally temporary and transformed during the 'territorial phase' of the 3a model developed by F. Moriconi-Ebrard (2000). This phase corresponds to the passage from the domination of the 'agricultural' mode of spatial control and possession to the military-industrial ('army') mode. The evolution of central state relations with Namaqualand (pioneer frontier that became South African borderland touching on Namibia), recuperated little by little during the 20th century by the South African racist regime, is meaningful for this reason (Fauvelle, 1998).

⁹ 'Acknowledging the central authority's legitimacy could constitute a bargaining chip allowing the confirmation of an exemption benefitting a *zaouia*, an Islamic religious establishment; granting a delegating of authority to a *caïd*; or suspending an arbitrary condition weighing down a community (...) This instability of power relations between central government and numerous large tribal federations, very changeable depending on the regions, made the central authority's political project a priority' (Naciri, 1977).

'This organisation did not generate a precise territorial division: (...) it moulded itself to the forms taken by the ethnic and tribal groups, who were driven, in the framework of semi-nomadism and transhumance, to continual movement over vast territories with blurred and unstable boundaries' (Jennan, 1999).

Borderland aspirations to institutional recognition

Aspirations of overlooked or truncated territories to institutional recognition – whether corresponding to a historical, cultural or economic community that perceives itself as scorned and ignored, or exhumed or invented on occasion – is a phenomenon that is not specifically contemporary and is found in all parts of the world. Claims can be recurring or express themselves outside these contexts; this is notably the case for national minorities, regardless of whether their areas cross borders. This can also be the case for cities cut off from part of their area of polarisation, especially when their functionalist claims can find support in historical arguments (union of the city of Nantes and the Loire Atlantique department to the Brittany region; progressive establishment of a cross-border Regio Basiliensis association between France, Switzerland and Germany). The complexity of the present era undoubtedly favours the emergence of these claims. Indeed, the possibilities are many that perimeters transcending administrative limits will be recognised, thanks to the multiple programmes in support of area-based development, issuing from international organisations, central states, regions or provinces, or indeed NGOs. Recognition can come through a basic technical or sectoral project: catchment basins severed by administrative limits can be recognised as managing entity in the context of water management policies and associated developments. These can cover the international scale (for example, historical endeavours to internationally manage the Rhine and Danube in Europe or, in West Africa, joint hydroelectric development of the Mono River by Togo and Benin at the turn of the 1980s-90s) and the local scale (for example, age-old collective, area-based hydraulic management systems or the recent ‘Schemes for Water Development and Management’ (*Schémas d’Aménagement et de gestion de l’eau*) born of recent French water management legislation). They can also pass through the inter-regional scale (for example, the Basin Agencies (*Agences de bassin*) or the National Rhône Company (*Compagnie nationale du Rhône*) in France, which broadside several administrative regions while simultaneously splitting some¹⁰) (Ruf, 2000; Ghiotti, 2001).

However, administrative reforms remain periods strongly partial to the emergence of territorial claims. In periods where the administrative map is overhauled, borderlands can try to obtain recognition through an eventual administrative promotion when the division is uncontested, or by modifying pre-existing contours.

Promotion

In terms of administrative promotion, one could cite Corsica’s establishment as a region in 1970 (known at the time as a *Circonscription d’action régionale*), which in this manner gained autonomy from the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur region, leading five years later to the island’s split into two departments. Togo at the beginning of the 1990s offers a good illustration of the systematisation of the process when demands for advancement encounter a desire for widespread administrative action, in fact a ‘divide and rule’ strategy preceding the inescapable decentralisation. In this case, all Togolese sub-prefectures acceded to prefecture rank. These

¹⁰ The Burgundy administrative region thus finds itself on the outlying areas of three of metropolitan France’s six Basin Agencies.

pseudo-promotions occurred essentially in favour of districts in marginal, border positions. In this way, the Litimé border enclave, and its administrative capital of Badou, attained prefecture rank.

Finally, Niger's democratisation at the beginning of the 1990s was accompanied by the political upgrading of certain administrative entities that were, up to then, marginalised on the administrative chart and often in a peripheral position.

Multi-party system and special constituencies for minorities in Niger

Once the multi-party system was recognised in 1991, legislation followed by the Constitution specified its obligatorily non-regionalist character, whilst simultaneously conceding that political parties could undertake 'any regional or sub-regional integration project that would not undermine national interests'. Whilst awaiting local elections that were to implant a primarily parliamentary-style political life, it was decided that special constituencies would ensure minority groups' representation. Thus, in addition to the seven departments and urban community of Niamey, an arrondissement (Bilma) and seven administrative posts (Torodi, Tesker, Tessara, Bermo, N'Gourti, Bankilaré, Banibangou) in borderland positions were set up as special electoral constituencies. With eight National Assembly members out of 83, nearly ten per cent of the national representation came out of these special constituencies!

To a certain extent, these special constituencies are a compensation for the canton division experienced by minority or subservient groups, marginalised by the colonial recognition of traditional authorities. They direct political life towards the expression of communities who do not benefit from the medium of tradition or custom. But paradoxically, it also opens the door to explicitly ethnic electoral constituencies.

Revelation

As for the exhumation of cross-boundary borderlands unknown up to that point on the administrative map, Niger and France present two very different cases.

Niger: the return of reinterpreted pre-colonial entities

In 1993, Niger undertook a move towards global reform of the system of territorial administration. This seemed imperative in light of additional factors, such as the State's necessary disengagement and the systematic mobilisation of local stakeholders and civil society, the majority's demands for democratisation and the liberalisation of local public life. International financial backers echoed these demands in requiring decentralisation measures. Furthermore, the peace accords signed in 1995 with the Tuareg rebels committed the Nigerien government to creating regional territorial collectivities.

From 1994 to the end of 1995, an ambitious project consisting in Niger's integral redivision into communes, arrondissements, departments and regions was thus drawn up to serve as a framework to this process (Giraut, 1999). The project never got off the ground, considering the political incidents and the excessiveness of the final proposals (establishment of nearly 1,000 entities over four levels). It finally would be replaced in 1998 by decentralisation to the benefit of

certain existing entities. Nevertheless, thanks to this process, a certain number of meaningful claims and positionings were able to be expressed.

The selective reassertion of pre-colonial entities

Public officials' acceptance under duress of a certain regional autonomy was accompanied by the choice to divide into more than ten entities to avoid the constitution of powerful provincial opposition forces. From this choice ensued the non-appearance of large cultural and linguistic entities, and the jurisdictional shrinking of the principal secondary cities or regional metropolises (Maradi, Zinder, Agadez). The proposed division was especially founded on social entities based on historical political formations: historical provinces, in some sort. It is, in fact, the second level of pre-colonial political division that was sought, that of the kingdoms and principalities, and not the spheres of influence of the empires or major sultanates. The rebels did not challenge this bias, but accepted it fully. The approach is not without recalling the more empirical and pragmatic one adopted with the colonial constitution of so-called traditional circles and provinces. But this time, many demands were expressed.

With this division project, all provincial centres and official sultanates became regional seats, these being, at a minimum, canton capitals. Furthermore, eclipsed historical entities re-emerged; thus, Maouri lands regained their autonomy and a certain unity under the historical designation of Arewa. Moreover, Gobir and Katsina with their historic capitals (Tibiri and Maradi), although located in the same agglomeration, imposed themselves on the final map proposal.

This recognition, which can seem like historical justice, was made to the detriment of a rational administrative division and choice of administrative capitals in terms of spatial planning.

These restorations of administrative capitals and entities drawing their legitimacy from pre-colonial history brushed aside certain contemporary political and administrative creations. This was entirely the case for the new town of Diffa to the east, partially the case for many creations or colonial promotions who saw their jurisdiction drastically reduced (Dakoro, Filingué and even Dosso), whilst simultaneously integrating themselves higher up in the new organisational chart. Most of these centres had first attempted to have their constituencies' territorial distinctiveness acknowledged, acquired from over a century of functioning as a political and administrative entity.

Among the demands to become regions, some would only be registered at the lower rank (that of the departments), recalling the multi-tiered dimension of the solidarities or political and historical ties. Even if it meant reinterpreting them anew: among the uninhabited (Manga and Damergou) or inhabited (Boboye, Dendi and Arewa) buffer areas, some were granted regional autonomy (Manga and Arewa) and others not (Damergou, Dendi and Boboye). The reasons were geopolitical (Manga and Damergou as periphery of Zinder and pastoral zone, or Dendi as a border area) or linked to the balance of power established by representatives of regional interests (Arewa and Boboye).

Arbitration of borderland conflicts through territorialisation

In borderland or march regions, where pastoral, nomadic and sedentary groups co-exist, conflicts over land use can go hand in hand with conflicts over spatial sovereignty between chiefs

of cantons and nomadic groups, whilst continual circulation of people, capital and trade ensures geographic complementarity between places.

In this manner, the project to redemarcate the department of Zinder resulted in settlements by arbitration. It granted a certain political autonomy to the pastoral north vis à vis the current administrative seats situated further to the south (Tanout as sub-prefecture, and Belbédji as administrative post), which became department capitals. But this relative autonomy passed through an administrative division into arrondissements, with imposition of the ‘pastoral centre’ as administrative headquarters in one case (Tenihya), and affirmation of the tribal authority’s residence in the other (Tendé).

In fact, the Tanout and Belbédji tribal authorities’ desires for self-affirmation were expressed differently. Whilst we can speak of thwarted expansionist imperialism in the case of Tanout, whose elites demanded the capital of a region of Damergou or at least of a vast department, one must speak of fief reinforcement for the double chiefdom of the Tarka Valley, which held concurrently at Belbédji the functions of canton and group. Led by its elected members in the Nigerien government’s inner circles, the tribal authorities lobbied public authorities and international organisations to obtain equipment and infrastructures. Here, we find a case of agro-pastoral (valley) and cosmopolitan lands where the political power’s legitimacy tends to be exerted over the whole of a composite local society, restricting tensions linked to ethnic areas. The political authority tried to ensure growth in resources by capturing outside investments, and not by attempting regional domination.

Hence, Zinder department’s northern margins or borderlands bear certain similarities locally either to an area-based melting pot (Belbédji), or to an artificially linked zone of political tension (Tanout).

France: the *Pays* and *Parcs naturels régionaux*, or the possible institutional recognition of borderlands through area-based projects

In France, programmes to support rural area-based projects (particularly the *Pays*¹¹ and Regional Nature Parks (*Parcs naturels régionaux*)) are the road to recognition for borderland areas seeking a legal existence and accompanying framework for dynamics freed from the disabling presence of administrative limits (Lajarge, 2000). Appearing with the RNPs at the end of the 1960s, then with the *pays* programmes in the ‘70s, these labels and initiatives passed from experimental phase to principal public policies for rural areas during the ‘90s. Indeed, national, regional and European levels tried to outdo each other in these types of initiatives, to assert themselves as partners to the proposed areas (Giraut and Vanier, 1999). The Pasqua and Voynet laws finished by providing the unction of the law to these *pays* dynamics by associating them with more restrictive norms. Their map thus has been drawn up gradually, alongside the always denser RNP map.

Regional Nature Parks consist very often in a means of ‘handling’ the margins of administrative regions, which ensure co-supervision with the central state and handle new applications to become RNPs. A large majority of the current 40 RNPs are transdepartmental (case of the future Millevache RNP, straddling three departments in the Limousin region, for example, or the Rhône-Alpes regional parks: Vercors, Chartreuse, Bauges, Pilat), and a

¹¹ *Translator’s note*: Often translated as ‘country’ or ‘nation’, the French term ‘*pays*’ refers, in the context of the cited projects, to local villages or areas that retain their traditional customs and identities. An imprecise English language equivalent might be ‘native land’ or ‘local community’, especially in a rural context.

significant proportion are transregional (recent Périgord-Limousin Park, proposed Baronnies Park). Certain regions can even make this a privileged means of handling their margins – whether internal and peri-urban, or rural and external. This is the case of the Rhône-Alpes region, which would voluntarily consider transforming its rural outlying areas into marches in the form of ‘parks’ co-managed with neighbouring regions. It is already the case in the north (Haut-Jura RNP) and south-east (with the Ecrins National Park and the Baronnies RNP project), but proved impossible in the west where the projects (Madeleine Park and Rhône-Alpes extension of the Livradois-Forez Park) go unheeded. Indeed, in that area this desire conflicted with an entirely different notion of the RNP, notably that of the Auvergne region, which above all sees in this the emblematic status for the heart of its area, and certainly not a means of seeing its boundaries transformed into blurred marches.

With the systematic consultation of department and region levels to validate their perimeters, the new-style *pays* are less frequently carriers of cross-border dynamics. However, the challenge of emancipation from political and administrative constraints can exceptionally mobilise public services into an ‘administrative co-ordinating unit’ led by a sub-prefect, as is the case of the Vilaine and Redon *pays* between the Ille-et-Vilaine and Morbihan departments. It also can bring together socioprofessional and entrepreneurial circles, brought together in an umbrella body, ‘*Lauragais terre d'action*’, to promote the Lauragais *pays* straddling the Aude and Haute-Garonne departments.

Articulation through transition and intersection

Having skimmed transgressions, special dispensations, and demands for recognition, this quick trip through borderland realities leads us, by way of conclusion, towards articulations. By articulations, we mean the entire set of formal or informal arrangements that bring into contact – indeed harmonise and regulate – projects in adjoining perimeters. It is, moreover, certainly there that lie the most important ‘territorial innovation’ potential of borderlands. By way of illustration, we will retain three types of realities: the small articulating borderland *pays* in the contemporary French territorial complexity, the periphery arrangements of Southern African national parks and the Moroccan mountain borderlands, beset by the multiplication of the forms and areas of intervention.

The small, articulating ‘*pays*’

The cases cited up to present in France – parks and *pays* – are formed as proposed areas shared jointly between communes at the second level (co-operatives associating local government and central state administrators), equipped with a development charter laying hegemonic claims over their area. It is the same for borderlands of more modest dimensions and ambitions, which are thus, first and foremost, areas of transition with a potentially articulating vocation.

The Ardèche context allows us to appreciate the diversity of these structures. Indeed, one finds a dual reality in this department:

- the existence of transregional borderlands (Rhône-Alpes region with Languedoc-Roussillon and Auvergne regions) organised into different inter-communal joint ventures between associations and trade unions (such as the *SIVOM Vivarais-Lignon* association)

and in groups of actors (often *néo-ruraux*)¹² acting as carriers of projects, who invest themselves in an unofficial ‘pays’ dynamic (Friends of the Mézenc, the *Amis du Mézenc*). A ‘borderlands actors network’, backed by the DATAR¹³, brings these organisations together.

- the existence of interfluvial borderlands, organised on the same double basis as the preceding ones (Coiron Development Association, Crussols *pays*, Ay au Doux *pays*). They all straddle the perimeters of ‘Global Development Contracts’ (*Contrats globaux de développement*) developed along the Ardèche’s main valleys. These GDCs are the regional *pays* imposed by the Rhône-Alpes region over its entire territory in anticipation of the national policy concerning the *pays*. All these structures and initiatives play on their independence and especially their existence by receiving subsidies from the different programmes providing funding, thus by negotiating, notably, with the Regional Nature Parks and the regional *pays* with which they are secant. Although essentially marginal, these structures hold assets in negotiating with new entities desiring to integrate their margins and stabilise their new boundaries. In return, these areas (no longer of intersection, but of transition) play a linking role between neighbouring and potentially competing entities.

This role can also be played by structures playing an intersecting role, that find themselves in entirely different perimeters and generations of projects and can end up constituting the nucleus giving overall coherence to the entire system. This was the case of the Mené *pays* in Brittany’s interior or the Diois in the upper Drôme valley, which was able to simultaneously gain funding through the Vercors RNP, the Val de Drôme GDC and a Leader area (European Union’s programme for supporting innovative rural development). This position as core of the different area-based projects is directly linked to a definite dynamism and capacity for innovation in local development, which translates into becoming the headquarters for operations in a large number of areas. Articulation through polarisation and diffusion of initiatives from a borderlands sub-space, as it were.

The two institutional and spatial situations just discussed – borderlands of transition and intersection – are not, in actual fact, exclusive. In other contexts, in the peri-urban area on the periphery of metropolises, the borderland position can play a part in the margins jointly shared by the agglomeration and a *pays*- or park-type rural development structure. As example, we can cite the *plateau des petites Roches*, a peri-urban area of Grenoble perched on the flanks of the Chartreuse massif and consequently integral to the RNP of the same name, but also implicated in the dynamic of the Grésivaudan *pays* that it dominates (Gerbaux and Giraut, 1998).

Community participation in Southern African conservation: recognition or instrumentalisation of local borderland actors?

If the Regional Nature Parks can be borderland structures, national parks established on areas generally lacking a permanent population and consecrated solely to environmental conservation are a supreme example. These parks’ peripheries are thus the borderlands of

¹² *Translator’s note:* ‘*Néo-ruraux*’ refers to groups in France who, beginning in the 1970s, put into practice their desire to return to the land, in a reverse rural exodus following urban growth.

¹³ *Translator’s note:* The *Délégation à l’Aménagement du Territoire et à l’Action Régionale* (DATAR) is a French government agency created in 1963, that played a powerful centralising role in the 1960s and 1970s, by stimulating regional economic development through grants, ‘priority zones’, and devising optimal uses for the national territory.

borderlands, where the question is raised of the co-existence of a conservationist logic, deriving its meaning nationally and internationally, and a developmentalist logic, raising the issue of local resource exploitation of the park and its periphery. The question is not new; setting up peripheral zones and special dispensations for neighbouring local bodies made up a response on all continents during the twentieth century.

However, for more than two decades the question has arisen no longer in terms of compensation and development, but in management partnership to guarantee the perpetuity of the conservation process. This new approach is advocated by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) from 1980 (World Conservation Strategy); since then, the body of international actors in conservation and natural resource management have been converted to it. It is linked to the political and economic taking into account of two themes that have considerably modified local development paradigms, which have become sustainable and participatory: the sustainability of the development process and the rights of indigenous peoples.¹⁴ Thus, innovations or advancements on the subject came first and foremost from the 'newly independent nations' or former New World colonies (notably Australia and Canada) and Southern Africa, where it is a question, in fact, of relations between an indigenous majority population and a legacy of colonial land ownership (Compagnon and Constantin, 2000; Fig, 1999; Fritz, 1996; Neumann, 1997). Not without hypocrisy, this evolution can even be presented as having always been integral to the conservation project. Thus, the present provincial management body of KwaZulu Natal parks and reserves (Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife) prides itself as being a fruit of the union of the Natal Parks Board and the KwaZulu Directorate of Nature Conservation. This latter body fell under the bantustan administration's authority, established under Grand Apartheid, and was reputed to be more inclined to rely on indigenous communities' support in its mission of conservation and natural resources development. Furthermore, KZN's main game park, one of Africa's oldest (Hlulhluwe-Umfolosi), is today presented as directly aligned with pre-colonial spatial practices. Therefore, it would be a simple continuation of the royal hunting grounds of the Zulu king Shaka, where once yearly young Zulus were invited for a sort of initiation rite, as the park today would welcome young Zulus to associate them with managing this historical reserve. All the ambiguity of referring to indigenous origins or status – also a ferment of segregationist policies – can be found here (Mandani, 1996; Bayart, 1996).

The real contemporary practices of associating indigenous populations with provincial, national and international conservation projects are based, in fact, on different more or less radical and innovative policies. These can include giving priority to indigenous populations in employing the park and reserve personnel; the possibility of exploiting the economic effects of tourism either through a tax collected to benefit local communities or by supporting tourism and craft entrepreneurship. More rarely, it can consist in the set-up of associated, and sometimes even delegated management bodies, as is the case with Zimbabwe's famous CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous REsources) project.

The innovations that these new approaches represent can be at the vanguard of practices relating to territorial governance, in the sense that they bring together international bodies, the

¹⁴ To this effect, the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas (Caracas, Venezuela, 1992) recommended elaborating a protected areas policy that would take into account the interests of indigenous peoples, customary practices linked to resources and traditional land-use systems. In October 1996, the World Conservation Congress, meeting in Montreal, adopted a resolution on the 'Principles and Guidelines on Indigenous and Traditional Peoples and Protected Areas'.

central state's public services and different segments of civil society (local entrepreneurs and traditional leaders). But one cannot overlook that they can also be strategies for bypassing certain representative governing bodies, and in particular the new municipalities. Thus, after the Natal Parks Board admitted its mistake and defined, beginning in 1992, a set of measures associating local communities to the economic repercussions of the parks and reserves management, the Local Boards formula introduced in 1997 by the provincial executive went further. It established a discussion and negotiating forum for each park's relations with its surrounding communities. These councils are composed on the one hand of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife representatives and, on the other, of provincially-appointed members who are expected to represent the traditional authorities; agricultural, tourism and commerce sectors; environmental protection associations; local government and all 'groups representing particular interests'. They are especially mobilised to try to find solutions to the customary land tenure claims put forward on certain reserves. But beyond what can appear as a successful example of territorial governance that gives 'civil society' more than its due, one can perceive a clever attempt to circumvent the new municipalities and the preservation of a privileged tie between the provincial administration and the traditional authorities. Must we be reminded that KwaZulu-Natal province is ruled by the Zulu political party opposing the ANC (the Inkatha Freedom Party), openly regionalist and relying in the rural realm on the support of the so-called traditional leaders?

The complex systems of Moroccan mountain development

Remaining in the context of the periphery of a national park (that of Toubkal National Park), but this time in a Mountain area (High Atlas of Marrakech) and in North Africa (Morocco), we find systems that are even more clearly distinct, and that function independently of each other (Boujrouf and Giraut, 2000; Gebrati, 1999).

Indeed, one can distinguish:

a) **a political and administrative apparatus** consisting of a multi-tiered hierarchy composed of administrative districts and local authorities (*moqadem*, cheikh, rural commune, superquaid (*caïdat*), cercle, province, region).

Based on the colonial identification of tribal areas (fraction, tribe, confederation), the units or areas of local authority (ruled by government-appointed representatives) are freed, beginning with the second level (cheikh), from the topographical framework. This highlights the solidarities uniting the upper sections of two neighbouring valleys: the Imlil cheikh's jurisdiction is extended to the upper villages of the Rhéraya and Imenane, whilst the cheikh of Asni reigns over the lower sections of these same valleys.

At the higher level (superquaid for the central state administration and rural commune for the local authorities), the catchment basin logic is reasserted with entities centred on the administrative centres (Asni and Wirgane) of the two neighbouring basins. Finally, at the higher scale one finds a body of hinterlands grouped around a seat of sub-regional importance (Asni, this time for the cercle, and Tanahaout for the new Haouz province).

b) **a conservationist apparatus in the form of a reserve complex**

The ‘Takherkhort permanent hunting reserve’ for mouflon¹⁵, located at the northwest tip of the National Park and the only wooded section, is considered the Park’s ‘heart’ by the *Eaux et forêts*¹⁶, who have in this reserve the first area to be preserved ‘permanently’. The constitution of a veritable apparatus is recent and corresponds to the intervention of a bilateral aid sponsor (the German Technical Co-operation Agency, or *Deutsche Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)*) determined to enhance the image of Moroccan parks through a policy of wildlife preservation and recovery. Thus, in the first years of the 1990s, it first extended the Takherkhort reserve, then created a royal (hunting) reserve for mouflon, and finally the ‘Amasine gazelle reserve’ on the facing slope. It is thus the north-west margins (outside and inside the NP) that are experiencing draconian wildlife conservation measures. It is a sparsely occupied area and still fairly largely wooded, thus offering privileged environmental resources for a fairly largely artificial conservation project¹⁷ (acclimatisation reserve not corresponding to the species’ natural area of extension). This reserve complex is a veritable ‘GTZ domain’ whose care and management are entrusted to the *Eaux et forêts* (this administration furthermore have at its disposal a forestry and triage station division secant to the boundaries of the park and reserves). The constitution of this reserve complex is accompanied by measures or ‘rewards’ for the village authorities affected by the creation of these protected areas. In particular, the *GTZ* decided to set up a ‘self-development support’ programme for the douars affected by the establishment of these newly preserved and protected areas.

c) a double developmentalist apparatus

- **On the NP’s perimeter**, simultaneously to setting up a management plan and a revision of the boundaries. Accompanying measures to the plan for park management and the planning of gates (8 foreseen for the Toubkal) led to the selection of douars on the park’s perimeter (outside the *GTZ*’s area of action). The objective is to restrict herd pressure on the park through self-help measures in the villages. The participatory method, with the elaboration of ‘local community maps’, is significantly different to that conducted by the *GTZ*.

- **A network of collective projects by village associations**, supported or encouraged by an NGO in Casablanca (AMRASH)), over the entire Rhéraya catchment basin as a mountainous hinterland. If the *Association Tessaouine* in the town of Aguersioual represents a great success and the flagship programme of the NGO (whose first calling is promoting hygiene and improving the conditions of women) in the region, it is not the only project AMRASH supports. Thus at present, several villages of the upper Rhéraya, the Imenane and the Asni periphery make up this network. In each case, AMRASH’s partner association holds a hegemonic position in the development and programme dynamic, in latent conflict with the *Jmaa*.¹⁸

d) the economic and tourist complex

Mass tourism affects the Rhéraya (more internationally oriented) and Ourika (nationally oriented) valley-heads; the villages surrounding the resorts of Imlil and Oukaimeden benefit from

¹⁵ *Translator’s note*: A mouflon (or moufflon) is a wild sheep of the *Ovis* genus, found in the mountains of southern Europe and Morocco.

¹⁶ *Translator’s note*: The *Ministère Chargée des Eaux et Forêts (MCEF)* is the Moroccan government agency responsible for managing national parks.

¹⁷ The criteria put forward in choosing a wildlife reserve site were: water availability; food availability; favourable biotope; easy accessibility for emergency and support services and tourism.

¹⁸ *Translator’s note*: A traditional, village-level assembly, consisting of heads of household, which resolves disputes and makes collective decisions for the village.

this activity (mule-driven tours, gites d'étape, etc.), as do villages in the upper Imenane valley. A project is already underway to link the resorts with the park's northern gates, with the untarred road linking Imlil to Tacheddirt and which should continue towards Oukaimeden.

Interrelationships do exist between the components of these systems, but the linkage is not sought and even less organised. In this manner Aguersioual, former traditional capital (cheikh), is part of the developmentalist network and tourist complex, all whilst maintaining strong ties to the Imenane valley, for which it is a roadhead. Furthermore, these elements can be integrated into formal or informal external networks. The mountain hinterlands are thus connected here and there to metropolitan actors (besides AMRASH's support, the *Association Tessaouine* benefits from the free counsel of a hydraulic engineer from the *Office* of Haouz province¹⁹, by definition not linked to the mountain environment), indeed are composed of tourist or hunting annexes.

The establishment, functioning and overlapping of these different mechanisms or complexes – with contrasting spatial, economic and social logics that are not linked – produce positional effects and initiatives that hierarchically organise the borderlands situations to the benefit of a few places at the intersection of different modes of intervention.

Conclusion: Towards a theory of innovation at the margins

This vast but swift African and French survey of borderland realities leads us to certain generalisations, particularly on the margins' capacity to innovate, as much on the level of individual and collective practices, as of institutional arrangements.

Regardless of the scale examined – micro, meso, or macro – territorial relations between centre and periphery, between central areas and borderlands, always demonstrate a certain dialectical complexity. The apathy displayed at the centre often contrasts with the paradoxical dynamism of the borderlands, areas of transition, experimentations and innovations, sometimes to the point of conjuring up the image of a blocked centre and liberated periphery!

It is tempting to seek the reasons for this. Any territorial system patiently constructed through successive adjustments needs – to not jeopardise the entire edifice, in a word to self-perpetuate and reproduce – institutional stability at its centre. For this reason, it is often easier to innovate on the margins, carrier of a lesser symbolic and political charge, knowing that eventual failures will have hardly any consequences on the system's global territorial architecture.

The encounter between radical geography and post-modern studies²⁰ on identity and the status of difference goes even further, translating into a demand for social and spatial marginality as the place for elaborating counter-cultural practices.

As a radical standpoint, perspective, position, 'the politics of location' necessarily calls those of us who would participate in the formation of counter-hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin the process of re-vision...For me this space of radical openness is a margin - a profound edge. Locating one-step there is difficult yet necessary. It is not a 'safe' place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance (hooks, 1990: 145-9).

¹⁹ *Translator's note:* The *Office Régional de Mise en Valeur Agricole du Haouz* (ORMVAH) is a Moroccan regional governmental agency for agricultural development of the Haouz province, falling under the authority of the *Ministère de l'Agriculture, du Développement Rural et des Eaux et Forêts*.

²⁰ The postmodern and radical geographer Edward Soja draws (with Barbara Hooper) in particular on the works of bell hooks (1990) to develop his reflection on geographical margins in a new, political approach to cultural differences. The works are inspired from African-American and feminist critical thought.

Far from wanting to overturn, attenuate or even regulate the centre/periphery opposition, it is thus a question of advocating a social ‘de-centering’ from the socio-spatial margins.

The alternative process of choosing marginality reconceptualizes the problematic of subjection by deconstructing both margin and centre, while reconstructing in the restructured (recentred) margins new spaces of opportunity, the new spaces that difference makes (Soja and Hooper, 1993: 191).

Margins would shift from the status of laboratory to permanent incubators for new social relations. Margins as places of subjectivity also would be real and imaginary spaces, spaces of radical openness and possibility, of inclusion rather than exclusion where ‘radical subjectivities’ can develop, connect and combine. They would be areas to simultaneously invest at all scales, from the nooks and crannies of the human body to the far corners of the world.

For hooks, the political project is to occupy these (real and imagined) spaces on the margins, to reclaim them a place where one’s radical subjectivity can be seen and practised in association with other radical subjectivities. It is thus a spatiality of inclusion rather than exclusion, a spatiality where radical subjectivities can multiply, connect and combine in polycentric communities of identity and resistance: the spatiality searched for but never effectively discovered in modernist identity politics (Soja and Hooper, 1993: 191-2).

In our opinion, one nevertheless must not overestimate borderland capacities to invent and create new spatial arrangements to the centre’s detriment²¹, insofar as these territorial innovations sometimes appear only as uses or exploitations implemented by the centre, and ultimately, as indispensable tools for an enlarged territorial reproduction. Paradoxical at first glance, these potential functions of the margins are, therefore, explainable.

Taking these explanatory attempts further and moving towards developing a theory for these paradoxical phenomena, three postulates can now be set forth by way of partial conclusion.

1. The relative value of the limits

The situations of margins and borderlands can be organised hierarchically according to the value of the limit, the boundary that defines them.²²

Administrative value

There exist a whole gamut of administrative delimitations, from the international border separating two supranational blocs, to the local or village limit. Paradoxically, the most significant are those generating new resources through the exploitation of monetary, fiscal or legal differentials. This is not the case of intranational boundaries, which are more and more weighty as one ascends the hierarchy, since there is accumulation of discontinuities.

²¹ The approach that Soja and Hooper developed (1993), drawing on hooks (1990), does not only affect a function of innovation at the margins and borderlands; it also repudiates the relevance of any given politico-cultural centrality. In this sense, it can also be considered as postmodern avatar. At the heart of the claimed social construct, an aggregate of margins, there would be thus a hole, that of the unique lack of references with the collapsed totem of the former dominating values, those of the white, dominant, colonial male.

²² One should not forget that radical changes in the status of the break, like those experienced by Europe’s borders, can destroy the most solid boundaries, throw the best compasses into turmoil and return to the centre (resurgence of Central Europe) these same territories that found themselves – until the end of the 1980s – on the European continent’s outlying areas (Eastern Europe).

Functional value

When ‘physiotomy’ is at work, in other words when a limit relies on a discontinuity, a natural divide (hydrography) or even on a topographical or ecological contrast, we are faced with a ‘static discontinuity’ (Brunet, 1967). This can be potentially of historico-economic and cultural value, but its contemporary functional value depends on its mobilisation in the dynamics of development (endogenous and/or exogenous dynamic discontinuity). Even a ‘good boundary’ on the scale of the delimited entity, or a boundary with strong functional value and contemporary naturalist, historical and economic legitimacy (limit of a commuting and labour market area dependent on a water parting), can prove disastrous locally because it cuts a ‘mole’, where local solidarities are all the stronger since polarisation effects are weak.

The borderlands question is therefore one of scale.

2. Margins and borderlands: the necessary choice between them

The concepts of margins and borderlands apply to the same situations, but do not accentuate the same angles.

MARGIN refers etymologically to the idea of edge, of extremity. Margins exist in relation to an encompassing administrative area and distinguish themselves by the attenuation of factors of coherence that define this administrative entity. In relation to the centre, that generates an attenuation of the feeling of belonging to the administrative unit, whilst new forms of local coherence emerge, built on solidarities transcending the often porous administrative limits, bearing witness even to interactive capillarities going as far as an encounter (Strassoldo, 1980).

In some cases, this process can even generate a Larsen Effect-type phenomenon or, returning to an acoustic metaphor, create a resonance or echo – based on identical claims – between areas confronting the same territorial realities. Rightly or wrongly, they can perceive themselves as neglected in accessibility or access to services (weakness in the networking of schools or post offices, precarious reception signal for television or cellular telephone relay stations, etc.). There, we touch the reality of borderlands.

BORDERLAND refers etymologically to the idea of a limit. Borderlands exist in relation to a discontinuity, a separation between contiguous areas. They are characterised by a set of constraints linked to the imposition of a break that severs or limits access to local resources and solidarities, contributing to their marginalisation.

3. The territorial gamble: even/odd and high, or the ‘1-3 / 2-4’ law

In the institutional game affecting borderlands, and which makes them appear as privileged spaces for articulation and innovation in managing contemporary territorial complexity, the relative positioning of the higher levels must not be forgotten. Moreover, a law can be set forth which governs the territorial game between multi-tiered, non-overlapping administrative levels.

This ‘1-3/2-4’ law holds that a level of authority in the process of self-affirmation structures its territory by seeking intermediaries capable of short-circuiting the lower level against which it tends to affirm itself. Therefore, there would be a kind of ‘territorial gamble’, whereby the objective association of levels of administration division – ranked odd or even

between themselves – would occur, by intentionally doing without the services of the next closest level.

It is in this manner that the European Union is patiently building its area-based development programme, by relying as a matter of priority on cross-border regional areas. It is in this manner also that the French regions invest themselves in supporting voluntary rural area-based projects straddling departmental limits, whilst DATAR casts a benevolent eye on transregional initiatives. The law also is operative in terms of pattern and dimension, since the central state, regions and departments will have a tendency to see in the nascent territorial entity a local level independent of those controlled by another level. For the central state, the reference would thus be the *arrondissement*, for the department it would be the *canton* and for the region, an intermediary space between the two.

Applied to the South African context, this law undoubtedly accounts for the important role that the central state intends to give the new districts between ‘local municipalities’ and ‘provinces’. Moreover, for the borderlands that interest us it is undoubtedly at the origin of the major innovation that the cross-provincial municipalities represent (rejected, moreover, by KwaZulu-Natal province, the most sensitive in terms of opposition to attempts to compromise the integrity of its boundaries). Likewise, one might also see a demonstration of this law at work in the Local Boards mentioned above. In the area surrounding KwaZulu Natal’s many parks and reserves, the Local Boards would permit bypassing the new municipalities in favour of the proven duo of *ex-homeland* (present-day province) and ‘tribal authorities’.

Thus, borderland innovation occurs always under influences, and theorising these influences is as necessary as theorising the borderlands’ room for manoeuvre.

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