Preface

Over the last decade several conflict, development, and natural resource scholars focusing on governance processes in so-called fragile or post-conflict states have claimed that existing theory and concepts cannot fully grasp the multiple, co-existing, overlapping, interacting, and intertwining strategies with which everyday governance practices are shaped. These scholars have therefore “developed” and “offered” the concept of hybridity.¹ Hybridity, however, is in no way new. The foundation of the concept did not originate in the fragile states debate, as is regularly argued.² The idea underlying today’s interpretation of hybridity, that of a fluidity of (discursive) regimes and contradicting power relations in which the state, or any other institution, “waxes and wanes”³ and with which ‘citizens’ continuously need to navigate and negotiate in order to get what they want, has a much longer history.

Sociologists, anthropologists, and human geographers of various disciplinary hues have long charted how “encounters, subjugation, extraction, and control depend on a series of cautious interactions, uneasy truces, and the lending and borrowing” between governance logics, the conceptualization of identities, and ideas of the state which are understood to be at the core of hybridity.⁴ Following themes of syncretism,⁵ mimicry,⁶ and the post-colony,⁷ the idea of hybridity is

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part of an analytical approach which not only refutes “boundedness” and “essentialism,” it is also associated with constant discursive reconstitutions of “identities” and “practices” and the postcolonial critique of situated knowledge. Long before today’s debates about hybridity in fragile states, Canclini had already suggested shifting the analytical focus from hybridity as a form or attribute to hybridization as an ongoing process of mixing and reconverting sources of authority, power, and knowledge. In these sociological traditions hybridity or, more precisely, hybridization is postulated as a non-functionalist concept that frees scholars from the binary thinking and compartmentalization of conceptual building blocks so common in studies of state building and resource governance.

Yet, despite such a rich variety of theoretical traditions that have sought to work with hybridity globally, today’s application of the concept by peace and development scholars and researchers of resource governance seems to be poorly theorized and problematically applied to those spaces that scholars understand to be hybrid, often believed to be found at the “edge of the state.” Today’s hybridity seems to be part of a popular response, both in academia and in policy, to celebrate forms of predictable pluralism, but at the cost of identifying winners and losers of particular processes of hybridization. Not everything that is hybrid is good – nor is it necessarily bad.

There is a growing tendency to see and claim some sort of undeniable, essentialized hybridity in every troubling context which supposedly needs no further explanation. After describing pressing dilemmas concerning conflict, development, and access to services and resources in areas typified as fragile states, many scholars call up hybridity as a conceptual Deus ex Machina that is supposed to miraculously and instantly solve and explain the insolvable complexity

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10 Néstor García Canclini, Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).
without actually addressing it. Subsequently, hybridity has often been reduced to being an answer to a question, rather than being addressed as the foundation of an enquiry. This dispassionate approach has regularly degraded hybridity to mere adjectival use in order to reflect the complexity of situations: for instance, “hybrid elements” in Somalia, “hybrid mechanisms” at the east coast of Mexico, “hybrid authority” in south-eastern Nigeria, “hybrid wars” and “hybrid threats” originating from the Middle East, “hybrid regimes” in Côte d’Ivoire, “a hybrid governance partnership” in the Brazilian amazon, “hybrid paternalism” in Africa, “hybrid security” in South Sudan, “hybrid tribunals” in Kosovo, “hybrid peace” in international peacebuilding interventions, and “hybrid political contexts” in fragile states.

Turning to the analytics of today’s investigations of hybridity, we furthermore see that these studies seem to fall back on a conceptual essentialism of states, authorities, institutions, and resisting ‘citizens’ along with an ontological rigidity that stresses the supposed informal versus the formal, the alleged non-state versus the state, and that which is claimed to be traditional versus the modern. The ontological utility by which self-anointed critics have sought to describe hybridity have, consequently, reproduced representations that serve dichotomous thinking and the structural inequities they purport to abhor. In other words: hybridity scholars have rejected the cover term, but have kept and still

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16 Meagher, “Weak States,” 1090.
heavily rely on its fundamental components. For this very reason hybridity critics like Goodfellow and Stepputat are right to argue that most studies of hybridity lack explanatory value and are of no additional analytical use; these studies obscure rather than reveal fluidity and change.\textsuperscript{25} They therefore assign to hybridity the fate of a temporary buzzword that will soon be replaced by yet another compelling but vaguely defined concept.

While embracing the ambition and analytical promises put forward by hybridity, namely of a non-functionalist investigation of fluidity and change in the shaping of practice, I simultaneously underwrite and engage the growing critique of today’s implementation of the concept. Yet, rather than abolishing hybridity and its analytical promises, this book suggests a more productive framework for investigating precisely those mechanisms, processes, and practices that hybridity once promised to clarify. Returning to rich theoretical traditions and analytical excavations in the fields of sociology, anthropology, human geography, and political science that are already available to us, I turn to a particular ethnographic reading of Michel Foucault’s Governmentality, as I believe it is best suited to studying the conduct of conduct in spaces currently characterized as hybridized.\textsuperscript{26} When coherently implemented and operationalized, with critical reflexivity on the part of the (field) researcher, governmentality, I argue, holds the potential to boost the productiveness of future analyses of processes of hybridization. Since it is especially ambiguity and incoherence that have been hampering the analytical purchase of hybridity, this study sets out to be clear and coherent on the framing and implementation of governmentality.

Much to my own frustration, however, incoherence, ambiguity, and ontological rigidity are not unique to the hybridity literature. The governmentality literature, too, is highly diverse in terms of its application and fraught with abstraction and contradictory interpretations of concepts, likely the result of Foucault’s own inconsistencies and mystifications. Grasping Foucault’s work and setting out a coherent and productive framework for studies in those post-conflict, post-colonial, and fragile areas that are the focus of the hybridity literature has been a particularly arduous journey. I have had to fight my way through various contradictory uses and applications of many Foucauldian concepts before I have been able, I hope, to demonstrate the usefulness of governmentality to operationalize hybridity.

\textsuperscript{25} Tom Goodfellow, “‘Hybrid’ Governance and Africa: Examining a Development Buzzword,” \textit{African Arguments, Royal African Society} (2013); Stepputat, “Contemporary Governcapes.”

Foucault’s premise of the multiplicity of ubiquitous power fits well with hybridity’s assumption of simultaneity of a plurality of governance arrangements. Further, where today’s interpretation of hybridity lacks firm theoretical grounding, governmentality has been enriched by far deeper theoretical and empirical engagement that affords investigations of hybridity the appropriate tools to support a more nuanced explanation of the effects and relationships of the simultaneity of overlapping, competing, and contradictory governance arrangements. Any study of dispersed processes of governance evokes the fundamental issue of how we view the location of power, an issue that is, oddly enough, rarely sought after in today’s studies of hybridity, but one that is essential to governmentality. Moreover, governmentality forces us to approach ethnographic fieldwork differently. Governmentality pushes us out of our comfortable but highly normative domains from which we interpret ‘the other’ and forces us to do away with compartmentalized and binary thinking. Lastly, it does not allow either the essentialization or exoticization of the practices under study, which can still be found with the spatial limitations of hybridity at the so-called margins, fringes, or edges of the state.

Practices of claim-making to peri-urban land in a post-conflict environment is the empirical grist supporting this exploration of governmentality, specifically in the city of Bukavu, in the much troubled eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is important, substantively, as urban land is becoming increasingly scarce in rapidly expanding cities of eastern Congo, primarily due to internal rural-to-urban migration resulting from regional insecurity. Land matters, because for many people it is key to survival and to feeding one’s family. For many more it is a primary method of both gaining or securing the social capital needed to integrate and navigate local regimes of belonging.\textsuperscript{27} Practices of making claims to scarce urban land not only reveal a search for economic gain, but especially a quest for (social) security.\textsuperscript{28} The governance of peri-urban land is also important analytically, as land governance and state authority in Africa are believed to be closely linked and to co-evolve.\textsuperscript{29} It provides an an-


analytical lens that illuminates precisely the constant interaction and mutual influence of both authorities and those who seek to make use of or avoid their services or intervention. It shows us everyday negotiations and resistance in those areas that matter most in people’s lives. It is in these negotiations and mundane interactions that the question of how hybridization goes about shaping practice will be scrutinized, rather than simply assumed. Further, as strategies to gain access to land take place within broader governance structures, a better understanding of the perils and promises of hybridizing practices to shape claim-making practices may contribute to development and peace building programs in the region.³⁰ Policy relevance is of particular interest to many of today’s hybridity studies. This interest does not suddenly vanish with the introduction of governmentality. Governments and donor organizations, for instance, cannot assist in solving land tenure and land administration issues if they do not try to understand how claimants’ uses, meanings, and functions of land coexist and intertwine beyond the country’s legal system.

Apart from shedding light on the complexities of hybridizing practices that shape claims to land and authority in Bukavu, another central objective of this book is to help postgraduate students, junior researchers, and other academics or interested individuals in understanding the applicability as well as the limits of governmentality; to provide clear-cut, easily accessible and very concrete examples of how governmentality serves ethnographic studies of ‘the conduct of conduct’ in deeply complex environments. Theoretical debates on the usefulness of governmentality for studies of hybridity are in relatively short supply. Debates that are grounded in rich and rather diverse sets of empirical data are especially rare and, therefore, a welcome addition to the technical and abstract discussions held by theorists and philosophers working with Foucault’s concepts from their ivory towers.

However, since this work entails drawing from disparate disciplines, diverging literatures, and from debates in which there is no single agreed interpretation, either on hybridity or on governmentality, I hope not to fall into the traps of oversimplification, ambiguity, distortion, or naiveté, which according to Peters can be associated with recurrent disciplinary boundary crossing.³¹ I am not interested in heating up the already inflammatory debate between Foucault’s renowned and well-cited interlocutors on what truly is the most appropri-

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ate interpretation of his work, not least because I have not been able to find in Foucault’s oeuvre a moment that would support challenging fidelity to an inconsistent master. In this book, I do, however, draw conclusions that may differ from those of these authors, mostly in terms of emphasis, but occasionally of interpretation. My understanding of governmentality is derived from Foucault’s use of governmentality as a broader analytical framework rather than a particular form of power or a specific rationality of rule. While my understanding of governmentality is drawn from Foucault’s 1977 lecture series Security, Territory, Population, this book’s operationalization of governmentality takes its cue from the later Foucault and therefore gravitates more to his work on subjectivation and the reflecting, ethical subject in his series called The History of Sexuality, originally written between 1976 to 1984. This particular focus is also reflected in my use of ethnographic methods. My interest here lies, once more, in a sound and coherent use of Foucauldian concepts, which is something Foucault himself had difficulty with as well. It is only with a coherent use of a governmentality framework that we can explore its usefulness in and added value to studies of hybridization in the shaping of practice.

Nevertheless, this book does not promise or provide a silver bullet that solves all analytical and methodological difficulties in studying hybridization. At its bare minimum, it is an attempt to discover what we are able to analytically unveil with regard to these unpredictable, volatile processes when looking through the lens of governmentality. At its best, it is written as a thought-provoking and accessible step-by-step guidance for other theoretically inclined academics seeking to apply a more ethnographically appropriate reading of governmentality to studying complex forms of (resource) governance anywhere on the globe.