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WORKING PAPER SERIES NO. 73

Qatar Charity in Niger: Biopolitics of an international Islamic NGO

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February 2011

Refugee Studies Centre
Oxford Department of International Development
University of Oxford

Working Paper Series

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Contents

List of Figures	4
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	5
Glossary	5
1 Introduction	6
Contribution of the study	7
Structure of the thesis	7
2 Methodology	8
Introduction	8
Conceptual framework	8
The case	8
Methods	11
Data analysis	13
Conclusion	13
3 Entitlements and biopolitics: A theoretical framework	14
Introduction	14
Explaining famine and food insecurity	14
The biopolitics of international development	17
Conclusion	24
4 (Bio)Political economy of the <i>soudure</i>	24
Introduction	24
The 2005 food crisis	24
Entitlement failure in rural Niger	25
Maintaining biopolitical distinctions in rural Niger	27
Conclusion	33
5 Qatar Charity's brand of self-reliance	33
Introduction	33
Appropriate self-reliance, by association	34
Instrument effects and instrumentalizations	42
6 Qatar Charity's progression towards contingent sovereignty	47
Introduction	47
Analyzing corruption	48
Providing veterinary services	50
Negotiating the corruption complex	52
Shifting priorities	55
Conclusion	58
7 Conclusion	58
Introduction	58
Limitations of the study	59
Implications of the study	60

Conclusion	62
References	63
Interviews	63
Primary source documents	65
Print references	65

List of Figures

Figure 1: Qatar Charity Dosso Project Site	18
Figure 2: Sampling Frame	21
Figure 3: Funding & Implementation Connections in Qatar Charity's Partnerships	109

List of abbreviations and acronyms

AMA	Agence des Musulmanes d’Afrique
ANPIP	Association Nigérienne de Promotion de l’Irrigation Privée
APELDO	Projet d’Appui à l’Élevage dans la Région de Dosso/ Project for the Support of Breeding in Dosso Region
AQIM	al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb
CESAO	Centre d’Études Économiques et Sociales de l’Afrique de l’Ouest/ West African Center for Economic and Social Studies
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FCFA	West African Franc
GBP	United Kingdom Pound Sterling
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHI	Global Hunger Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-governmental organization
KU	Khalifa Union
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PPP	Purchasing power parity
SDR	Stratégie de Développement Rural/Rural Development Strategy
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
US	United States
VSF	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières/ Veterinarians Without Borders

Glossary

da’wa – the call to Islam

embouche – literally “fattening”; the practice of raising livestock over a period of months for sale as meat

ighatha – humanitarian relief

jihād – armed support of the Islamic cause

prestation – an allowance or *per diem* paid by NGOs to government agents for field visits.

riba - usury

soudure – the “hungry period” between the time when stocks from the previous year’s harvest run out and the next harvest is ready

zakat – obligatory charitable donations; the third Pillar of Islam

1 Introduction

This paper focuses on the conjuncture of three concerns: explanations of famine and food insecurity, contemporary critiques of international development and humanitarianism, and the phenomenon of Islamic humanitarianism.¹ By analyzing the development model of an international Islamic NGO based in the Gulf, this study extends the scholarly research of famine, development and relief beyond its current focus on mainstream organizations and donor states and addresses the largely ignored phenomenon of Islamic humanitarianism.

In the past several years, an upsurge in attention to issues of food access and availability has accompanied food riots in several developing countries and warnings from various national and international bodies of a global food crisis (Reza et al. 2008). This increase in interest is not surprising in a decade that witnessed controversial humanitarian crises in Sudan, Ethiopia, Malawi and Niger. The question of whether and to what degree famine conditions occurred in these instances has been the focus of considerable academic, news media and even film attention. Unfortunately, the furor over definitions and degrees has had “tragic implications for response and accountability in a number of recent food crises” (Howe and Devereux 2004:353).

Most critiques of humanitarian and development interventions, however, have exclusively focused on what I term here “mainstream” development actors: multilateral, and bilateral agencies and secular non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in the OECD member states. Several authors (Escobar 2001; Townsend et al. 2004; Cumbers et al. 2008; Bano 2008, 2009; Novellino and Dressler 2010; Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003; Kaag 2008; de Cordier 2009) have begun to detail the work of development actors that fall outside of this mainstream category, whether they are termed “Southern NGOs,” “faith-based organizations” or “global justice networks.” Nevertheless, the question of what exactly distinguishes these agencies and organizations from those of the mainstream variety remains a relatively open question. What, if anything, is different about non-mainstream development? This question is a driving force behind the current study. In order to begin the process of answering it, this study confronts a contemporary example of the critical analysis of mainstream development, Duffield’s biopolitics of international development, with a non-mainstream development actor: Qatar Charity, a non-secular, international Islamic NGO based in the Gulf and implementing microcredit interventions in the West African nation of Niger.

The dearth of studies of international Islamic NGOs leaves the question of the characteristics of Islamic humanitarianism wide open (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003; Kaag 2007, 2008; de Cordier 2009). This study uses de Cordier’s (2009:609) definition of Islamic NGOs as NGOs “founded on the initiative of Muslims, that mobilise most of their support among Muslims, and whose action is, to varying degrees and in various forms, inspired and legitimated by the Islamic religion or at least certain tenets thereof.” A limited body of literature has analyzed Islamic NGOs, themselves an extremely diverse category of organizations that emerged onto the international scene at the start of the 1980s (Kaag 2007).

¹ A brief review of the literature on Islamic humanitarianism is included below. A discussion of explanations of famine and food insecurity as well as critiques of international development and humanitarianism is found in Chapter Three. Literature on famine, food insecurity and development interventions in the Nigerien context is treated in Chapter Four.

Most analyses have emerged under heavy scrutiny in the post-9/11 context of such organizations on suspicion of channeling funds to terrorism (Kirmani and Khan 2008; Kaag 2007; de Cordier 2009).

Two central texts, Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan's (2003) *Charitable Crescent* and Ghandour's (2002) *Jihad Humanitaire* provide overviews of international Islamic NGOs' grounding in concepts of Islamic solidarity based on the elements of *ighatha* (humanitarian relief), *da'wa* (the call to Islam) and *jihad* (armed support of the Islamic cause) (Kaag 2007). However, these works focus on Islamic NGOs active in the Middle East and "the well-known hot spots where wars are fought between Muslims and non-Muslims, such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Somalia" (Kaag 2007:86). Importantly, outside of these specific areas, and particularly in Africa, international Islamic NGOs have focused far more on Islamic solidarity as expressed through *ighatha* and *da'wa* alone (Kaag 2008).

Contribution of the study

This study uses empirical findings from an indepth case study of one such international Islamic NGO, Qatar Charity, and its microcredit interventions in Niger's Dosso region to evaluate and refine Duffield's biopolitics of international development. Applying Duffield's work, a critique of development based on analyses of mainstream development actors, to a non-mainstream NGO begins to address the question of what is different about such actors. By focusing on Qatar Charity's interventions in Niger, the study also brings the largely Anglophone critiques of famine, relief and development into conversation with the mostly Francophone research on development interventions in the context of Niger's chronic food insecurity. This study addresses the following research questions:

- To what extent do Qatar Charity's microcredit interventions in Niger's Dosso region reflect Duffield's argument for a biopolitics of international development supported by contingent sovereignty and the promotion of self-reliance through sustainable development?
- To what extent do Qatar Charity's microcredit interventions in Niger's Dosso region suggest refinements of Duffield's analysis of a biopolitics of international development?

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter Two describes the methodology employed, including the conceptual framework, a description of the case and discussions of the data collection and analysis methods. Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework, outlining the aspects of the work of Sen and Duffield most relevant to the study. Chapter Four uses the work of Sen and Duffield and existing academic literature on Niger to describe the nation's context of chronic food insecurity and widespread international development interventions. The empirical analysis is divided between two chapters. Chapter Five analyzes the workings of the internal logic of sustainable development as self-reliance in Qatar Charity's microcredit projects with Dosso women's unions, as well as the union members' instrumentalizations of these projects. Chapter Six addresses Qatar Charity's progression towards participating in contingent sovereignty by focusing on its negotiations with Dosso regional government actors for the provision of veterinary services to project participants. Finally, Chapter Seven provides conclusions on the research questions and discusses the limitations and implications of the study.

2 Methodology

Introduction

The conceptual framework underlying the chosen methods allowed for both realist and Foucauldian analyses, a feature essential to answering the study's research questions. This framework informed the selection of the case as well as the data collection and analysis methods. Taken together, the components of the methodology were the most appropriate for addressing the research problem.

Conceptual framework

The current study's conceptual framework draws on Branch's combination of realist and Foucauldian approaches to analyzing humanitarian relief.

Realist and Foucauldian approach

To resolve the apparent tension between the impacts of discursive formations and the very real lived experiences of relief workers and beneficiaries, Branch (2007) combines a "realist" and "Foucauldian" approach. The realist approach allows for the agency of individual actors and groups by emphasizing the ways in which donor states and local beneficiaries alike "successfully instrumentalize humanitarianism" and development (Branch 2007:2). To this realist analysis Branch (2007:3) adds the Foucauldian approach that focuses on "the internal logic of humanitarianism *qua* humanitarianism," its discursive formations and instrument effects. In identifying development as one among many of the "global humanitarian discursive institutional complexes" most commonly referred to as "global governance," Branch (2007:292) highlights its "local instrumentalization." Along with other aspects of global governance, development is:

"in the words of Michel Foucault, 'tactically polyvalent,' open to the 'local cynicism of power' generally. People on any level can approach global governance institutions as political actors, seeing the resources offered by those governance institutions as tools to be used as part of their own political projects or within their own struggles for power" (Branch 2007:290).

Thus, analyses of local interventions by international actors must attend to both development's "instrumentalist moment" and its internal logic (301). The current study combines these two perspectives, focusing on the discourses "internal" to development as well as the "external" experiences of Qatar Charity's interventions on the part of Qatar Charity staff, women's group members and local state officials.

The case

The current study is a relational case study that explores the relationship between chronic food insecurity in rural Niger, Qatar Charity's microcredit interventions, and the discursive regime that informs Qatar Charity's practices. As Palys (2003:75) notes, relational research calls for a systematic analysis of factors "*relevant to and necessary for explaining and understanding phenomena of interest*" but does not draw conclusions related to causation. In addition, the representativeness of the sample for relational research is often not paramount. Rather, relational studies require a sampling frame that provides an in-depth understanding of the context, characteristics and components of the phenomena alongside valid and reliable methods (Palys 2003).

As a case study, this thesis provides an in-depth treatment of the events, relationships, and processes related to chronic food insecurity in rural Niger and Qatar Charity's microcredit interventions. This study will not make direct comparisons *between* cases, for example between the practices of Qatar Charity and those of Africare. Its special contribution is to extend the literature on development by focusing on the type of development actor it has ignored. Thus, comparisons between organizational policies and practices are limited and based on the already existing literature on mainstream development interventions in Niger and elsewhere.

Qatar Charity

The case itself consists of Dosso region women's group and Qatar Charity staff members' experiences of the organization's microcredit interventions between 2008 and 2009. Active in 42 countries, Qatar Charity began operations in Niger in early 2008 (Qatar Charity 2007).² A non-secular, Islamic organization founded in 1992 and based in the State of Qatar, Qatar Charity operates field offices in Sudan, Pakistan, the Palestinian Territories, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Niger, but also funds projects in Ghana, Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso and Mali (Qatar Charity 2007). Qatar Charity describes itself as an "Islamic institution" and performs a significant portion of its fundraising through individual *zakat* donations from mostly Qatar based Muslims (Qatar Charity 2007). Its self-proclaimed Islamic nature and founding outside of an OECD member country make Qatar Charity significantly different from the mainstream organizations most often analyzed by scholars. An absolute monarchy, Qatar is a high-income and high-human development nation (World Bank 2010; UNDP 2009b). Like many charities in Qatar, Qatar Charity is linked to the ruling Al Thani family through chairmanship of its board (Qatar Charity 2010).

Qatar Charity's Niger office is relatively small. The Niamey office is home to four Nigérien program staffers, two administrators, and four support staff members (Salifou 2008a).³ Four field organizers operate from their assigned area in Tillabéri or Dosso region.⁴ Qatar Charity's programs are divided between the Infrastructure Program, which constructs wells, boreholes, classrooms, health centers and mosques in select communities, and the Income-generating Activities Program.⁵ The current study focuses on the policies and practices of the Income-generating Activities Program, specifically its microcredit interventions in Niger's Dosso region. It is important to note that the level of analysis is at the country office level and below. Relations with headquarters and the Qatari state are outside the scope of this thesis.⁶

Dosso region is an appropriate site for the study due to its location in an area that experiences chronic food insecurity and the range of interventions in which Qatar Charity engages there. As detailed in Chapter Four, residents of much of rural Niger experience chronic food insecurity. Dosso region certainly fits this pattern. Ranked third out of Niger's nine regions in poverty rates, Dosso region also contains mostly agropastoralists, among the most

² Issaka Salifou, Qatar Charity (QC) Income-generating Activities Program Director in Niamey 27/7/09.

³ All QC Niger staff members are Nigérien except for the country Representative, who is Qatari (Field notes 24/7/09).

⁴ Salifou 27/7/09, *op.cit.*

⁵ D. Ibrahim Sani, QC Acting Director in Niamey 24/7/09; Tassa Oumarou, QC Infrastructure Program Engineer in Niamey 24/7/09.

⁶ The possible implications of these relations are, however, discussed in the Conclusion.

vulnerable livelihood groups in Niger (Mousseau and Mittal 2006). In addition, Reza et al.'s (2008) application of Howe and Devereux's famine scale concluded that Dosso region experienced food insecurity during 2005 based on anthropometric malnutrition calculations, mortality rates and employment of coping strategies.

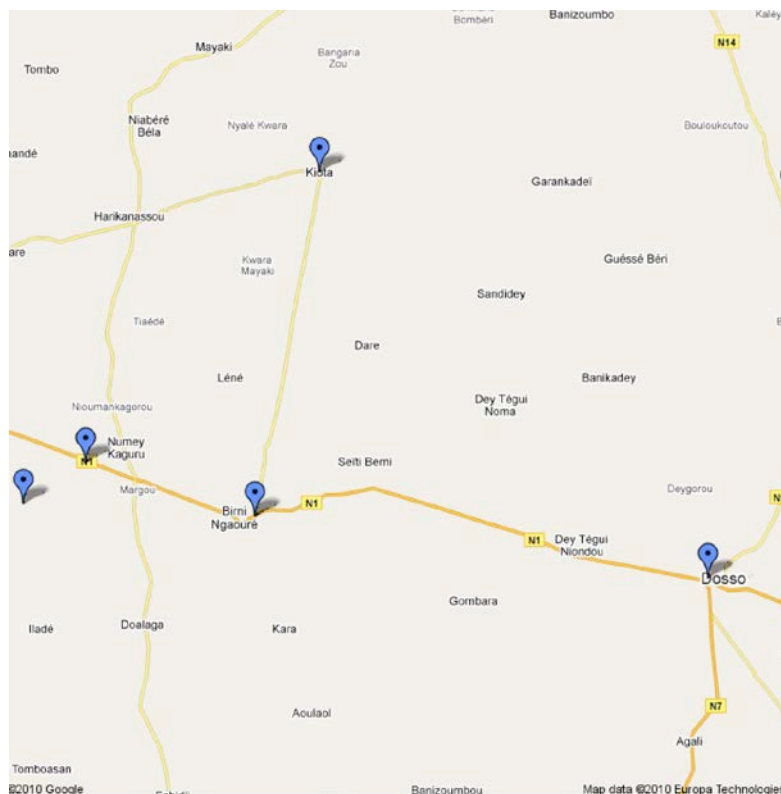


Figure 1: Qatar Charity Dosso Project Sites (from left to right: Koudagande, Wazeye, Birni N'Gaoure, Kiota and Dosso; Google Maps 2010)

Qatar Charity currently has active programs in five sites of Niger's southwestern region of Dosso: the villages of Wazeye and Koudagande, the towns of Birni N'Gaoure and Kiota and the city of Dosso (Figure 1). Wazeye, Koudagande and Birni are all within approximately 10 kilometers of each other. Kiota is approximately 20 kilometers north of Birni and Dosso city is approximately 30 kilometers east of Birni. Residents of the Birni, Koudagande and Wazeye sites are predominantly Fulani and Muslim, while the Kiota and Dosso site residents, also Muslim, include a mixture of Zarma, Hausa, Fulani and other ethnic groups.⁷ Unlike at the smaller sites of Wazeye and Koudagande, at the Birni, Kiota and Dosso city sites Qatar Charity works only with large unions of women with over one hundred members. Each group or union has received a loan for several of Qatar Charity's available income-generating activities. The Kiota union and Birni's Khalifa Union, each maintains a cereal bank, agriculture and breeding supply store, and livestock rearing operations. The Dosso union also operates a mill (Salifou 2008b).⁸

A central element of Qatar Charity's microcredit projects is their consistency with Islamic teachings. This element is a direct result of Qatar Charity having its funding base in the *zakat*, or obligatory charity, contributions of Qatar-based Muslims, a common practice for Islamic NGOs (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003; Kaag 2008; Kroessin and Mohamed 2007). *Zakat*,

⁷ Field notes 8/9/09.

⁸ Salifou 27/7/09, op.cit.

the third of the five pillars of Islam, is considered the duty of all those capable of participating and provides way to purify one's wealth and oneself (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:9).

Because *zakat* contributions provide a component of Qatar Charity's funding all aspects of their interventions must comply with the principles governing *zakat* funds. The question of who among the needy can benefit from *zakat* funds is of central importance. *Zakat* is most often restricted to Muslims alone, although interpretations that include "those who can become Muslims ('those whose hearts are to be won')" have allowed some organizations, such as the United Kingdom-based Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid and Muslim Hands, to include non-Muslims in their programs (Kaag 2007:94; de Cordier 2009). To date, Qatar Charity has restricted its programs to Muslims, although the staff has expressed a willingness to consider working with non-Muslims.⁹

The Quran's prohibition of *riba* (usury) provides an additional restriction of the use of *zakat* funds, one that is particularly relevant to organizations engaged in microcredit projects. Because "*zakat* is the opposite of *riba*... literally the contrary of the practice of paying a reimbursement on a debt with interest" charging interest on microcredit loans can be problematic for organizations with *zakat* funding (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:38). Islamic organizations differ in their approach to this issue, some, such as Qatar Charity, charging no interest at all, and others, such as Agence des Musulmans d'Afrique (AMA), charging nominal rates of two percent or less.¹⁰

This practice runs counter to that of mainstream international NGOs, among whom discussions of interest rates instead center on what levels of interest will remove the need for the subsidies on which microcredit schemes generally rely (Briones 2007; Dehejia et al. 2005; Karlan and Zinman 2008). For Qatar Charity, however, this question is irrelevant; it intends all of its loans to be indefinitely "subsidized" by charitable *zakat* contributions.¹¹

Methods

Data for this study were collected over 10 weeks of fieldwork in Niamey and Dosso Region, Niger. The empirical materials of the study included documentary and interview data. Documentary data included government publications and statistics, national and international newspaper coverage as well as Qatar Charity publications, statistics, meeting records and memos.

⁹ Mbacke Niang, OXFAM GB country director in Niamey, 26/8/09.

¹⁰ Salifou 27/7/09, op.cit.

¹¹ Moutari Malam Adamou, QC Income-generating Activities Assistant Program Director in Niamey, 24/7/09; Salifou 27/7/09, op.cit.

Interview sampling

Women's Union Members	
Birni N'Gaoure, with Qatar Charity	19
Birni N'Gaoure, without NGO	3
Kiota, with Qatar Charity	13
Total	35

INGO Staff	
Qatar Charity Staff	5
Other Islamic INGO Staff	5
Mainstream INGO Staff	3
Total	13

Other Key Informants	
Government Officials	2
Private Veterinarian, Birni N'Gaoure	1
Total	3

Figure 2: Sampling Frame

Interview data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 51 members of three groups or strata: Dosso region women's group members (members of Kiota women's union working with Qatar Charity, members of Birni women's union working with Qatar Charity, members of Birni women's group currently without an NGO partner), INGO staff (Qatar Charity field and country office staff, staff of other Islamic INGOs, staff of mainstream INGOs), and other key informants (government officials and a Birni private veterinarian) (Figure 2). Within each stratum, snowball and maximum variation sampling were used to identify interview participants. The use of maximum variation addressed the potential in snowballing for the first contact to bias the make-up of the entire sample and provided data on the variety of experiences and perceptions of the women's groups' activities within and across strata (Palys 2003). The researcher sought out more deviant or typical cases within each stratum relative to completed interviews through direct questioning of interview participants and informal observation (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the most effective way to obtain information on specific issues related Qatar Charity's interventions while not foregoing the discovery of unexpected observations and interpretations. Interviews followed an interview schedule of major topics to be covered but allowed for flexibility in the order and emphasis of topics (Byrne 2004; Denscombe 2007; Appendix A). This flexibility proved especially useful in putting together a picture of the ways in which corruption played a role in Qatar Charity's interventions, discussed in Chapter Six. Corruption was never an intended or openly stated topic of conversation; instead, like Anders (2005:192), "I came to the most valuable information by chance, often indirectly when talking about other issues."

In situations of “elite interviewing,” such as interviewing government officials, the researcher remained attuned to the shifting nature of “insider” and “outsider” identifications and attempted to emphasize or downplay shared or divergent aspects of identity as appropriate (Lowe 2008). Interviews were conducted only with informed consent and audio recorded with the consent of the respondents.

Interview translation

Where possible, interviews were conducted in English or French without translation. In Birni a research assistant translated interviews with women’s group members between English and Zarma or Hausa. To reduce problems of interpreter bias, I discussed the research question, the interview process and the importance of translating everything said during the interview repeatedly and at length with my research assistant (Meyer 2006).

Data analysis

Documentary data such as newspaper reports, statistics and government documents provided background context to the study. The main objects of analysis were interview data and Qatar Charity documents. Interviews were transcribed, itself a process of selection and analysis (Taylor 2001). Interview transcripts and Qatar Charity documents were analyzed as both resource (indicative of the interviewees’ lived experiences) and topic (indicative of the discourses that inform the interviewees’ understandings), consistent with the study’s combination of realist and Foucauldian approaches (Holstein and Gubrium 1997).

Accordingly, the researcher attended to the content of interviews and texts, attempting to triangulate accounts of specific experiences and events. Meanwhile, the discourse analysis approach attended to the internal logic of Qatar Charity as an organization as revealed in the narratives of women’s union members, Qatar Charity staff and key informants as well as Qatar Charity documents.

The discourse analysis process was iterative and involved reviewing transcripts, documents and audio recordings over several months (Taylor 2001). Fairclough (2001:241) provided a useful model of interdiscursive analysis that “works both paradigmatically in identifying which genres and discourses are drawn upon in a text and syntagmatically in analysing how they are worked together through the text.” Tonkiss (2004) provided three additional tools: identifying key themes and arguments, looking for variation in the text, and paying attention to silences. First, the researcher identified and coded a selection of key categories and terms that “highlight[ed] how meanings are attached to abstract or vague formulations that then become difficult to challenge” (Tonkiss 2004:379). Second, the researcher looked for patterns of variation that revealed inconsistencies in the discourse. Third, the researcher “read *against* the grain of the text... [and] look[ed] to silences or gaps to make conjectures about alternative accounts which are excluded by omission” (Tonkiss 2004:379). During the process of analysis, the question of internal validity, “the coherence and consistency of the evidence base,” remained central (Tonkiss 2004:380). However, the in-depth and bounded nature of the study makes claims of external validity beyond theoretical generalization outside its reach.

Conclusion

By allowing for both realist and Foucauldian analyses, the data collection and analysis methods used in the current study most effectively addressed the complex nature of the

research problem: attention to the lived experiences of both Qatar Charity staff and women's group members as well as the discursive regimes that informed these experiences.

3 Entitlements and biopolitics: A theoretical framework

Introduction

The work of two authors –Amartya Sen and Mark Duffield –are particularly useful for an analysis of the broader development context of Niger as well as the specific interventions of Qatar Charity. Amartya Sen's analysis of the roles of entitlement failure and democracy in famine situations provides the analytical backdrop to the Nigerien context of widespread, chronic food insecurity as well as the specific instance of the 2005 food crisis. Sen's arguments are also critical to revealing the internal logics that inform relief and development interventions across the Republic of Niger, specifically the biopolitics of development. Meanwhile, the implications of the empirical findings on Qatar Charity's microcredit interventions in Niger's Dosso region for Duffield's biopolitics of international development provide this study's research problem.

This chapter discusses the relevant aspects of the work of Sen and Duffield. Section Two presents the leading frameworks for explaining famines, focusing on Sen's entitlement approach and democracy thesis, and later authors' development of Sen's analysis. Section Three traces Duffield's development of Foucauldian writings into an analysis of the biopolitics of international development. It first outlines Foucauldian analyses of power and knowledge, with a specific emphasis on discursive formations, instrument effects, and biopolitics. Then it details Duffield's concepts of sustainable development as self-reliance and contingent sovereignty.

Explaining famine and food insecurity

Sen's work on entitlement decline and democracy is part of a larger body of work on issues of famine and food security. The literature on the causes and processes of famines focuses on three broad areas: social disruption, political disruption, and, finally, Sen's analyses of entitlements and democracy.

Social and political disruption

De Waal (1990) identifies social disruption as the main factor in creating widespread famine mortality. Most famine deaths, he observes, are not caused by starvation or even hunger-related illness but by communicable diseases that reach epidemic levels due to massive population displacement, migration, and concentration in refugee camps. He notes, "it is not the under-nutrition caused by the famine but the social disruption caused by it that is critical in causing excess deaths" (de Waal 1990:481). In this way, famine is a social process, which begets the question of the social responses, framed as "coping strategies" in the literature beginning in the 1980s. Different coping strategies are preferred based on their effectiveness but also in terms of cost and reversibility (Devereux 2001). While some strategies, such as foraging for "famine foods," do not impact future consumption, other strategies, such as selling assets, may "sacrifice future security for present survival" (Walker 1989 in Howe and

Devereux 2004:358). Some authors emphasize the centrality of moral economies to analyses of coping strategies, highlighting the importance of preserving the possibility of a specific way of life into the future, an issue discussed in the context of Dosso region in Chapter Five (Edkins 2000; de Waal 2005).

Keen's (1994) formulation of famine as political disruption begins from the proposition that "states and politically powerful groups may actively promote famine and actively obstruct relief for rational purposes of their own." Through this lens, famine emerges as a political crisis in which political conflict and/or war facilitate the coercive transfer of assets. Keen names a range of beneficiaries of the 1985-89 famine among the Dinka of Sudan. In addition to the traders and merchants who profited from increased grain prices and the militias that raided Dinka cattle and land, Keen identifies the Sudanese government and international donors as significant beneficiaries. The Sudanese government used the militias in its military strategy and acquired Dinka land for commercial agriculture and access to oil reserves (Keen 1994). Meanwhile, international donors ignored their significant "room for maneuver" with respect to managing government restrictions on aid distributions preferring instead to maintain politically expedient respect for Sudanese sovereignty at all costs (Stewart and Samman 2001). The result was the ineffective distribution and open divergence of humanitarian aid meant for the Dinka (Edkins 2000).

Sen's famine corpus

Sen's work on the processes of famines consists of two main parts. First, he pioneered the entitlement decline approach to analyzing famines in a socio-economic context. Second, he proposed a "democracy thesis" that links democratic government to the prevention of famine. Both bodies of work are important to both the overall context of chronic food insecurity in rural Niger and the internal logics that inform international development interventions in Niger, as discussed in Chapter Four.

Entitlement decline

The major contribution of Sen's entitlement approach was a shift away from a singular emphasis on food shortage as a cause of famine. His analysis broadened the focus to include the issue of differentials in groups' access to food by arguing that famines could occur in specific sectors of society even when the overall quantity of food was sufficient to feed the entire population (Devereux 2001; Alkire 2008). As a result, "famine can occur because of shifts in the distribution rather than the availability of food" (Devereux 2001:258). Yaro (2004:25) summarizes, "starvation is thus characteristic of people not having enough food to eat rather than there not being enough food to eat."

Entitlement failure derives from the interplay of three main concepts: endowments, entitlements, and entitlement mapping. First, an individual's endowments are "the combination of all the resources legally owned by a person. Resources include both tangible assets such as land, equipment, labor power and membership of a particular community and intangibles such as skills and knowledge" (Yaro 2004:35). Second, an individual's entitlements describe "the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces" (Sen 1984:497). Importantly, the channels of acquirement include production, exchange and transfers (Devereux 2009). Third, entitlement mapping describes the relationship between the endowment set on the one hand and the entitlement set on the other (Sen 1977).

A critical cause of a change in entitlement mapping is a change in the exchange entitlement – the set of alternative commodities that can be obtained through exchange for the endowment alone (Rubin 2009a). Exchange entitlement decline describes “adverse shifts in the exchange value of endowments for food,” as in the case where wages and livestock prices fall while food prices rise (Devereux 2001:246). This phenomenon can be isolated to specific groups, “the result of fluctuations of exchange entitlements altering the rules of the game on which the survival of different occupation groups depends” (Sen 1977:34). Importantly, Sen’s approach acknowledges the potential role of both production levels and state welfare transfers, such as price subsidies, in ensuring entitlements (Sen 1993; Yaro 2004; Devereux 2009). Although many factors can affect entitlement-mapping, it is the relative impact on the entitlements themselves that is the main focus of analysis (Sen 1977). Entitlement failure occurs when the entitlement-mapping is such that “it is not possible for a person to acquire commodity bundles with enough food to survive” (Rubin 2009a:623). Entitlement failure thus “implies food insecurity” (Yaro 2004:25).

A critical distinction must be drawn between entitlement failure and market failure. Markets may be functioning perfectly well while still not distributing food at accessible prices to all those in need. Two elements are essential to understanding this situation: price behavior and failure in demand. First, as the concept of exchange entitlement decline indicates, the terms of trade faced by households and individuals can prove critical to avoiding famine or food insecurity (Sen 1977). Adverse price movements in staple foods can be a major contributor to entitlement failure. For example, reduced supplies owing to a poor harvest and a subsequent spike in demand can cause rising staple food prices. In some cases, these price increases may be accompanied by “falling asset prices due to ‘distress sales’ of assets to finance food purchases” (Devereux 2009:27). These changes in relative prices –the household terms of trade –can be central to entitlement failure, famine and food insecurity.

Second, failures in demand can also impact entitlements and food security as a result. Devereux underscores, “markets respond to purchasing power, not to needs” (Devereux 2009:27). Several recent African famines witnessed the phenomenon of certain chronically poor regions lacking the purchasing power to attract traders (Sen 1993; Devereux 2009). Without incomes of a necessary level, these regions did not generate enough demand to keep food supplies in the area regardless of need (Rubin 2009a). As discussed in Chapter Four, the two elements of demand failures and price behavior both contributed to the exchange entitlement failure experienced by rural Nigerien households during the 2005 food crisis.

Democracy

Sen has also argued that central institutions of liberal democracies –including regular elections, a multiparty system and a free press – effectively protect against famine (Rubin 2009b; Alkire 2008). Sen’s original theory was based on India’s post-Independence success in averting serious famines. He argues that campaigning opposition parties, free reporting and regular elections make governments accountable to the demands of its citizens (Sen 1993; Devereux 2009). He (Sen 1990 cited Rubin 2009b:281) writes, “democracy and an uncensored press can spread the penalties of famine from the destitute to those in authority. There is no surer way of making the government responsible to the suffering of famine victims.”

Developing Sen's approach

The critical debate over Sen's entitlement approach and democracy thesis has been long running (Devereux 2001; Alkire 2008; Rubin 2009a; Sen 1993). In fact, the frameworks detailed in the previous subsection have incorporated, if not developed wholly from, critiques of Sen's work (Devereux 2001; de Waal 1990; Keen 1994; Edkins 2000). Nevertheless, Sen's work continues to provide useful tools for addressing issues of food security. In particular, recent attention to the implications of two factors –legal forms and weak democracies –makes both entitlements and the democracy thesis particularly relevant to the 2005 Niger food crisis. First, the question of local legal forms is essential to Sen's approach because his original formulation restricts entitlements to those that can be acquired through “formal legal structures” (Rubin 2009a:632). His observation that operational, and legally sanctioned markets can fail to distribute food to all those in need leads to his conclusion that “starvation deaths can reflect legality with a vengeance” (Sen 1981 cited Rubin 2009a:633). However, Rubin (2009a:633) notes,

“Although the formal legal system is indeed an important institution in converting available food to food entitlements[,] it is not the only institution. Legal, nominal access to entitlements may not be sufficient to prevent entitlement failure due to other socioeconomic structures that hamper such access. Entitlement failures and famine could also result from a shift in the practice of law, the customary laws, or be the product of socially enforced rules. [In addition,] the formal legal systems in many African nations... remain inaccessible for the majority of the population.”

Certain populations may be without access to formal markets, or experiencing a sudden shift in land tenure legislation, or excluded from formal employment due to social customs around gender, ethnicity or a range of other variables. As a result, a more expansive concept of entitlements that allows for rapidly changing laws, the potential constraints of social custom, and distinctions between *de facto* and *de jure* rights may provide more appropriate analyses of entitlement failure (Rubin 2009a).

Second, although examples of recent famines in democratic African nations, including in Niger, have been used to challenge to Sen's democracy thesis these examples may in fact suggest a corollary to Sen's argument that democratic processes prevent famine (Rubin 2009b). Devereux makes the essential point that these nations are young democracies. He notes, “in [these] countries, democracy has not yet been consolidated and an effective ‘anti-famine’ political contract is not yet in place...Fully functioning democracies do provide protections against famine, but ... weak democracies might not” (Devereux 2009:31). First of all, the liberal democratic institutions that Sen highlights as essential to the accountability processes that afford protection against famine may be weak or entirely absent in these states. In addition, low-income countries may lack the resources required to respond to a crisis and/or be dependent on international donors whose disproportionate influence on domestic policy may hinder democratic accountability (Devereux 2009).

In sum, this section has argued that Sen's entitlement approach and democracy thesis remain relevant to understanding the workings of famine today. These analyses will prove particularly useful to investigating the Nigerien context of chronic food insecurity, discussed in Chapter Four.

The biopolitics of international development

The analysis of the 2005 Nigerien food crisis and yearly chronic food insecurity that Sen's arguments suggest in turn highlight the internal logics of the resulting interventions of

international actors, specifically the workings of the biopolitics of development in the Nigerien context, as argued in Chapter Four. This study uses its empirical findings on the specific microcredit projects of a newly arrived, non-mainstream international Islamic NGO, Qatar Charity, to evaluate and refine Duffield's biopolitics of international development (Chapters Five and Six).

Duffield's analysis forms part of a broader critique of global humanitarian governance. The most contemporary strands of this critique include the liberal cosmopolitan, associated with authors such as Kaldor, Held and Falk, and the post-structuralist, associated with Duffield as well as Hardt and Negri (Branch 2007; Chandler 2009). Duffield's work is also central to the recent body of scholarship critiquing the development and widespread adoption in policy circles of the concept of "human security," itself an outgrowth of the confluence of "new wars" and growing faith in the ability of liberal democracy and market capitalism to ensure global stability (Christie 2010).

Duffield's analysis is itself a development of Foucauldian writings. For that reason, this section will begin with a treatment of Foucauldian investigations of power and knowledge, specifically on discursive formations, instrument effects and biopolitics, before exploring Duffield's argument for a biopolitics of international development.

Foucauldian analyses of power and knowledge

Foucauldian analyses of discursive formations and, in particular, instrument effects are useful in their own right for understanding the nature of development interventions in Niger by both mainstream agencies and organizations such as Qatar Charity. In addition, Foucault's work on biopolitics provides the basis for Duffield's elaboration of this concept into an analysis of the biopolitics of international development.

Discursive formations and instrument effects

Foucault argues that a variety of discursive event – texts, statements, and modes of conduct – can combine to create a discursive formation. Importantly, discursive formations result only when all these discursive events "refer to the same object, share the same style and... support a strategy... a common institutional, administrative or political drift or pattern," this consistency determining the formation's ability to significantly impact individuals' social lives (Hall 2001:73). Central to Foucault's analysis are the unintended side affects – "instrument effects" – of institutions and interventions. Although institutions may appear to "fail" at achieving their stated objectives, they "succeed" in achieving a range of practical and conceptual goals. For example, although the prison failed to reform criminals and reduce recidivism, it succeeded in the practical matter of maintaining social control through the conceptualization of the delinquent, pathologized subject (Escobar 1995).

Discursive formations produce such "subjects' who in some ways personify the discourse... with the attributes we would expect these subjects to have, given the way knowledge about the topic was constructed" (Hall 2001:73). These subject categories attach to actual people and places and can determine their social and political realities.

Authors such as Ferguson (1994), Escobar (1995) and Edkins (2000) have analyzed the discursive formations and instrument effects of a range of development interventions. In an example clearly relevant to the current study, Edkins argues that although contemporary

humanitarian efforts in famine situations appear to “fail” at preventing widespread mortality and morbidity, they succeed practically in creating situations of “permanent emergency” and conceptually in producing vulnerable Third World subjects as convenient side effects, or instrument effects. The conceptual category of vulnerable Third World subjects also maintains the continued intervention of the developed world in the developing. As Edkins (2000: 102) explains, “[f]ood aid processes... fail to produce development, their apparent aim. However, they succeed in producing a vulnerable group, who are seen to be in need of not justice or political representation but help and assistance.” Chapter Five addresses a related process of the subjectification of Birni women’s’ group members as an instrument effect of Qatar Charity’s microcredit interventions.

Biopolitics

Foucault’s concept of biopolitics describes the modern state’s central concern with regulating human life at the level of the population. Foucault (1991, 2003) locates in the end of the eighteenth century the emergence of a new form of ruling power: biopolitics. He identifies two main forms of power active in biopolitics: disciplinary power and biopower.¹² Whereas disciplinary power acts on individual bodies through institutions such as factories and schools, biopower targets societies as a whole; its “purpose is not to modify any given phenomenon as such, or to modify a given individual insofar as he is an individual, but, essentially, to intervene at the level of their generality” (Foucault 2003:246). As such, while disciplinary power functions in a decentralized, localized manner, biopower relies on a centralized and bureaucratic state that possesses “statistical, demographic, economic and epidemiological knowledge” (Duffield 2007:6). Although the goals of disciplinary power are the “docile bodies” of an orderly workforce and society, biopower serves a different purpose (Agamben 1995:3). De Larrinaga and Doucet (2008:520) explain,

“The strategies and tactics of biopower differ from other technologies of power insofar as they are meant to improve life: its mental and physical well-being, its longevity, its environment, its productivity, its efficiency, etc. In this sense, [biopolitics] creates the health and welfare of the population as a properly political problem insofar as it becomes the administrative purview of authorities under the aegis of the state.”

Through biopolitics, the state incorporates natural, biological life into its realm of influence and control (Foucault 2003).

Agamben (1995:3) identifies this critical shift as “the point at which the species and the individual as a simple living body become what is at stake in society’s political strategy.” The form of life that is the target of the biopolitical state is “bare life” – politically unqualified life, life reduced “to its biological minimum” (de Larrinaga and Doucet 2008:521). The biopolitical state concerns itself with “the biological existence of human beings, not their political organization” (Edkins 2000:37). The state’s conception of the individual as a possessor of bare rather than political life has two important implications. First, the centrality of biological life, its continuance and improvement displaces a concern with the individuals’ political rights and behaviors. Edkins argues,

¹² Foucault and his various disciples use the terms “biopower” and “biopolitics” both interchangeably and in contradictory fashions (Duffield 2007; de Larrinaga and Doucet 2008; Duffield 2008; Christie 2010). For simplicity’s sake, this study treats biopower as a regulatory technique of power that, alongside disciplinary power, comprises biopolitics.

“No longer is politically qualified life the subject of politics, but life itself... In this sense, politics is depoliticized: we are concerned with the preservation of life as such, rather than the continuance of a specific political way of life” (2000: xvi).

Individuals reduced to bare life lose their political life, and, most importantly, their political voice. Chapter Five details the implications of such depoliticization for members of Birni women’s groups.

Second, in addition to its implications for political life, biopolitics has serious implications for biological life, for with the biopolitical ability to improve life comes the possibility for action by omission. The state becomes able to “determine the exceptions, e.g. who is not subject to the biopower whose goal is the improvement of life” (de Larrinaga and Doucet 2008:522). Just as the centralized bureaucracy of the state can devote its energy and expertise to the most minute details of its citizens’ health and well being, it can also choose not to do so for part or all of its population. This implication forms the basis of Duffield’s distinction between insured and non-insured life, discussed below.

In summary, this subsection has argued that Foucault’s concept of instrument effects proves useful to understanding how discourses of famine and food insecurity create vulnerable subjects for development interventions. In addition, his treatment of biopolitics and the reduction of individuals to bare life provide the groundwork for Duffield’s elaboration of a biopolitics of international development.

Duffield’s biopolitics and international development

Based on existing academic research, this study applies two of Duffield’s concepts – sustainable development as self-reliance and contingent sovereignty – to the mainstream international development actors operating in Niger (Chapter 4). In addition, this study uses its empirical findings to evaluate the applicability of these concepts to the work of Qatar Charity, a non-mainstream, international Islamic NGO and determine to whether the case study suggests possible refinements to Duffield’s analysis (Chapters Five and Six). This subsection details the two concepts of Duffield’s that are central to this study: sustainable development as self-reliance and contingent sovereignty.

Sustainable development as self-reliance for the non-insured

Duffield’s concept of insured and non-insured life applies the distinction between those who do and those who do not benefit from the state’s biopower to the global community of residents of developed and developing nations. He argues that residents of developed countries – insured life – benefit from the centralized and bureaucratic social insurance and social welfare provisions of their states as well as private insurance and funds (Duffield 2008). Meanwhile, residents of developing nations – non-insured life – are the exceptions to biopower and instead receive “development,” the bare minimum of “essential public goods” (Duffield 2008:150). Development efforts, then, are central to “the biopolitical translation of development and underdevelopment into the different technologies deemed socially appropriate for supporting developed and underdeveloped life –that is, social insurance and its derivatives as opposed to self-reliance respectively” (Duffield 2007:191).

Duffield argues that the denial of the systems of social protection enjoyed by societies in the developed world to the biopolitically non-insured peoples of the world –residents of developing countries –is not simply the inevitable outcome for capacity-poor state

governments, for a host of international agencies and organizations act throughout these nations with the purported goal of improving the life chances of the local population. The critical issue is the development model that dominates the practice of the aid agencies and NGOs that undertake this task: sustainable development.

Duffield locates the origins of the theory and practice of sustainable development in the 1960s and 1970s. Then posited as the converse of modernization efforts, sustainable development's rise to official policy doctrine accompanied the replacement of state-led development models with neoliberalism (Duffield 2007). Defined by the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," the concept of sustainable development has been critiqued from the beginning as vague and analytically weak (Duffield 2007:67). However, these very attributes may make it more attractive as a policy, for its "tradeability, and the facility with which it could be used to package diverse and sometimes radically opposing concepts" allow it to mediate between divergent experts, interests, and donors (Adams 1993 in Duffield 2007:67; Davies 2002). These attributes have contributed to sustainable development's ascendancy in mainstream development circles and adoption as the official "liberal way of development" (Duffield 2010:56).

Its analytical strength or weakness aside, in practice, sustainable development rejects social protection as inappropriate for the non-insured residents of developing nations and instead operates under the assumption that the population of developed nations "exempts itself from the need for expensive systems of social protection through its own communal resilience"; they simply need less to get by (Duffield 2008:151; Swidler and Watkins 2009). Sustainable development promotes "a highly limited vision of development and social welfare premised on minimal rather than aspirational living standards for the masses" (Green and Hulme 2005:876). Sustainable development's self-reliance credo represents the implementation of the lowest possible grade of biopower; it is barely regulatory and maintains a comparatively minimal influence in the physical, social and economic wellbeing of the population.

As a result, sustainable development's "effect is to confirm the biopolitical distinction between insured and non-insured peoples. [It avoids] reducing the life-chance gap between the developed and underdeveloped worlds... Poor and non-insured communities are expected to live within the limits of their own powers of self-reliance" (Duffield 2007:69). By focusing on changing individual economic behavior and patterns of social organization, sustainable development chooses maintaining the status quo over actual economic or social change. Duffield concludes that "the acceptance of sustainable development by Western governments signals the emergence of a disciplinary and regulatory approach to underdevelopment now conceived of as a homeostatic condition." In addition, this emphasis on self-reliance allows for and promotes a "moral economy of the acceptable," in Jézéquel's (2009:16) words, that distinguishes between the level of suffering – whether in the form of poverty rates, malnutrition, infant mortality or catastrophic famines – deemed appropriate for insured vs. non-insured life (Bradbury 1998; Devereux 2009; Glenzer 2009).

In the context of humanitarian emergencies such as famines and food crises such as that in Niger in 2005, themselves one of the "acceptable" inevitabilities of a non-insured existence, the feasibility of self-reproduction remains unchallenged. Duffield (2010:67) explains,

“...in relation to the generic biopolitical division between insured-life and non-insured-life, humanitarian assistance functions as an international insurance of last resource for the world’s non-insured and erstwhile self-reliant peoples. Humanitarian assistance is mobilized when self-reliance breaks down and former colonial states, never having developed a comprehensive welfare system, prove unable or unwilling to cope.”

Instead of questioning the underlying assumption of the inherent self-reproductive capabilities of non-insured populations, “aid agencies usually infer that the emergency exists because communities and peoples are not self-reliant enough. Consequently, each disaster initiates a fresh developmental attempt to return the population concerned to a new and more resilient condition of homeostatic self-reliance” (Duffield 2007:18). The development organizations that inevitably congregate in a nation following a humanitarian emergency apply themselves to further tweaking and promoting the ever-elusive self-reliance of the local population. Importantly, Duffield (2010:66) concludes,

“...those donor governments, UN agencies and NGOs practicing mainstream development are not attempting to extend the same levels of social protection enjoyed, for example, in Europe to the peoples of Africa. To the contrary, through notions of sustainability, basic needs and human security, the liberal way of development functions to reproduce and maintain the generic biopolitical divide between development and underdevelopment.”

Contingent sovereignty for fragile, developing states

The central role of international agencies and NGOs in implementing sustainable development policies is critical to the maintenance of the biopolitical divide between insured and non-insured populations. Duffield (2008:28) argues that in the case of some developing nations, international actors have assumed the provision of the potentially biopolitical functions of the state, creating zones of “contingent sovereignty” in which external actors respect state sovereignty over territory but “sovereignty over life...become[s] internationalized, negotiable and contingent.” The deployment of contingent sovereignty is based on a “distinction between *effective* and *ineffective* states in terms of how life is supported and secured” (Duffield 2008:149). Failed or, increasingly, “fragile” states characterized by poor economic performance, failure in the provision of public services, political or social discord, and regions of “ungoverned space” are those most likely to become zones of contingent sovereignty. These states represent an impediment to ending global poverty and purportedly threaten international stability as sources of transnational smuggling and trafficking, refugee flows, and terrorism (Duffield 2007). Swidler (2009:3) explains:

“Many African states are deviant with respect to world models of the nation state... The bevy of international NGOs, often performing governmental or quasi-governmental functions, are the main transmission-belts for globally validated institutional models. African states – corrupt rather than transparent; riven by internal conflict rather than stable and unified; exercising only partial sovereignty over the territory they are supposed [to] govern – are the ‘bad boys’ of the global institutional system.”

Many such states, including Niger, as argued in Chapter Four, that do not appropriately perform their internationally sanctioned biopolitical functions have seen these appropriated by international agencies and NGOs.

Concerns over national sovereignty aside, this intervention by international actors is of particular concern due to the type and level of government services with which they intercede. Paradoxically, although the implementation of a zone of contingent sovereignty follows from a state’s failure to perform its biopolitical functions, the international dominance of the

sustainable development model dictates that services provided by international actors will be overwhelmingly basic – in accordance with the supposed (lack of) needs of self-reproducing populations. Here we see the circle of Duffield’s analysis completed. In failing to perform the core biopolitical functions of a state, fragile developing nations present a threat to global security and material advancement. International agencies and organizations intercede by adopting the administration of these biopolitical functions, but, by adopting the doctrine of sustainable development as self-reliance, in fact wield the lowest possible grade of biopower on behalf of the nation’s non-insured residents. As a result, the very intervention of external actors maintains the biopolitical distinction between insured and non-insured populations and their respective life chances.

Criticisms of Duffield

Specific challenges to Duffield’s analysis of the biopolitics of development have yet to materialize. This more recent work is mostly mentioned in passing within larger analyses of biopolitics and/or global humanitarian governance (Schlosser 2008; Chandler 2009; Branch 2007). Chandler (2009:57) includes Duffield in his broader critique of both liberal cosmopolitan and post-structural treatments of global humanitarian governance as conflating “empirical and normative aspirations in the critique of the perceived hierarchies of power.”

Based on an in-depth case study of a specific development intervention, this study contributes to remedying this perceived flaw. Branch (2007: 283) offers an additional criticism of specifically post-structuralist critiques of global humanitarian governance when he notes that they all “posit both a singular global capitalism, North, or United States that resides behind the development of global governance, and a coherence among the practices and institutions of global governance so that they may serve as instruments of that agent’s interests.” Both these presumptions have implications for the current study. First, Duffield’s homogenizing approach to the mainstream international development actors he charges with maintaining the biopolitical distinction between insured and non-insured life is a significant weakness, one that this study addresses peripherally by focusing on a specific development actor. Second, Duffield’s conclusions can tend towards an over-determinacy based in a “fundamental separation between the active institutions and agents of global governance and the passive raw material that is to be governed” (Branch 2007:284). Branch (2007:285) elaborates,

“Any attempt to regulate [the objects of global governance] will necessarily represent an attempt to regulate individuals, groups, and broad social and political processes, and so will involve significant penetration into those local social and political processes and institutions. That individuals and collectivities will respond predictably and conform to such intensive external penetration and steering cannot be taken for granted. Thus, to analyze that kind of intensive penetration and social engineering requires careful consideration of the relation between global governance and the governed, that is, it requires that the governed and the agency of the governed be brought back into the analysis.”

Following Branch’s counsel, this study suggests refinements to Duffield’s analysis by focusing on the tension between the internal logics that inform Qatar Charity’s interventions in Dosso region and the multiple instrumentalizations of Qatar Charity staff, local officials, and project participants.

In sum, this section has traced Duffield’s argument that the biopolitics of international development enlists international agencies and NGOs in maintaining the global divide in life-chances between the insured residents of developed nations and the non-insured residents of developing nations. As discussed in Chapter Four, existing academic literature confirms this

pattern of mainstream international intervention in Niger, specifically with regard to sustainable development as self-reliance and contingent sovereignty.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the aspects of the work of Sen and Duffield most relevant to the current study of Qatar Charity's development interventions in Niger. Sen's entitlement failure approach provides a useful analysis of chronic food insecurity and the 2005 food crisis in Niger that highlights aspects of the internal logic of international development interventions in the nation's territory. Duffield's biopolitics of development is most relevant to this study's analysis of the empirical findings on Qatar Charity's microcredit interventions in Niger's Dosso region. Although, as Chapter Four will demonstrate, the existing academic literature indicates that elements of the work of Sen and Duffield are indeed useful to understanding the context of the 2005 food crisis, chronic food insecurity and mainstream international interventions in Niger, the literature is silent on the appropriateness of Duffield's biopolitics of international development to a non-mainstream, international Islamic NGO such as Qatar Charity. A central question of the current study, addressed in Chapters Five and Six, is whether Duffield's analysis of contingent sovereignty and self-reliance are indeed theoretically relevant to the microcredit projects of Qatar Charity, a non-mainstream, international Islamic NGO newly arrived in Niger. In addition, the current study explores to what degree an analysis of Qatar Charity's interventions – in particular the tension between their internal logics and the multiple instrumentalizations of various stakeholders – can refine Duffield's biopolitics of development.

4 (Bio)Political economy of the *soudure*

Introduction

Sen's entitlement approach and Duffield's biopolitics of development prove relevant to Niger's pattern of chronic food insecurity in the context of highly interventionist international development partnerships. An analysis of the 2005 food crisis provides a useful introduction to these issues. Much of the entitlement failure starkly highlighted during 2005 was in fact a more extreme manifestation of yearly life in rural Niger during the annual *soudure*, or hungry season. In addition, the insights Sen's arguments provide into the food crisis and chronic food insecurity expose the ways in which the resulting interventions of international actors demonstrated elements of the biopolitics of development, especially the workings of contingent sovereignty and sustainable development as self-reliance.

This chapter applies the analyses of Sen and Duffield to existing academic literature on the 2005 food crisis, chronic food insecurity and international development interventions in Niger. Section Two outlines the events of the 2005 food crisis. Section Three analyzes the food crisis and broader context of chronic food insecurity using Sen's entitlement failure approach. Section Four uses Duffield's biopolitics of development, particularly the concepts of contingent sovereignty and self-reliance, to interrogate the patterns of international intervention both during and after the 2005 food crisis in Niger.

The 2005 food crisis

Niger's 2005 food crisis is perhaps most well known for the controversy it sparked over whether and to what degree the Nigerien population experienced famine conditions. Based on a variety of indicators including malnutrition, mortality and coping strategies data,

researchers have since concluded that most regions of the country experienced food crisis, as opposed to famine, conditions (Reza et al. 2008; Egg et al. 2006; de Sardan 2008; Koné 2006). The impact on rural populations was nevertheless pronounced and widespread. In their survey of coping strategies employed across Niger, Reza et al. (2008) determined that caregivers of children under five years of age most widely employed irreversible coping strategies such as selling large livestock, jewelry or farming equipment and purchasing food on credit in all regions except for the capital. On average nationwide, 49.4 percent of caregivers used irreversible coping strategies, 22.6 percent used survival strategies such as selling land and whole household migration, 22.3 percent used no coping strategies and 5.8 percent used reversible coping strategies such as changing consumption levels. Koné (2006), Moha (2008) and de Sardan (2007) report additional coping strategies including: wage labor in agriculture and construction, collecting and selling wood and herbs, selling livestock to butchers for slaughtering and curing, renting out land, and begging. In most cases, strategies were combined and adjusted over time.

Malnutrition rates became the focus of significant attention during the crisis, generating considerable media attention. Much of the international humanitarian mobilization in the summer of 2005 focused on the decentralized treatment of acute child malnutrition, particularly in the regions of Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua and Zinder (Hampshire et al. 2009; Reza et al. 2008). In the years since the 2005 crisis, a consensus has emerged that the 2005 acute malnutrition rates were in fact “an extreme manifestation of a long-term problem,” namely widespread chronic malnutrition in rural areas (Hampshire et al. 2009:132).

The Nigerien government initially restricted state interventions to subsidized cereal and fodder sales, cereal banks, and veterinary care according to the precepts of the food security system it co-manages with major donor countries (HPG 2005). With the summer and fall arrival of dozens of additional international NGOs and agencies in Niger, including the World Food Program, Action Contre la Faim, Mercy Corps, and OXFAM, a range of other programs appeared across the country. These included microcredit projects, free distributions of millet and sorghum, livestock fairs, cash for work programs and child malnutrition treatment units (Koné 2006; Moha 2008; Ali Bako and Guillermet 2008).

The ultimate impact of this range of humanitarian interventions remains a relatively open question. De Sardan (2007), Ali Bako and Guillermet (2008), and Moha (2008) conclude that state and international aid was less important than local coping strategies in households’ survival. Food distributions and other aid were a “resource or complementary opportunity,” but were appropriated in context specific ways and inserted into local strategies (de Sardan 2007:25, author’s translation). Reports in spring 2010 of a developing food crisis in Niger and other Sahelian countries bring something of a second try for the international aid community. Various UN agencies and INGOs are currently readying their humanitarian responses, which so far include plans for food aid, livestock feed and seed distributions, cash-for-work programs, and malnutrition treatment centers for children as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women (UN News Service 2010; WFP 2010; IFCRC 2010; AFP 2010b; Caritas 2010).

Entitlement failure in rural Niger

Early on, the 2005 food crisis was widely billed as the result of poor cereal harvests in 2004 owing to drought and locust infestation throughout the Sahel. Although these factors

contributed to the crisis in a variety of ways, this account relies on a simplistic production failure account of famine and food insecurity. This section argues that Sen's entitlement failure approach provides a more accurate – although not complete – perspective on the 2005 food crisis.

Many rural Nigerien households experienced entitlement failure during the 2005 food crisis (Rubin 2009b). Adverse household terms of trade and widespread failures in demand both contributed to the crisis experienced by rural households. First, cereals, specifically millet and sorghum, provide the main staple food in Niger and most households are net buyers of cereals over the course of the year (Koné 2006). Cereal harvests in many areas of Niger were indeed poor in 2004, down by approximately 11 percent, but were actually better than those in 2001, a year in which no major food crisis occurred (Koné 2006; Rubin 2009a). The unprecedented aspect of the 2005 situation was the enormous increase in cereal prices, both absolutely – with increases of between 200 and 300 percent between 2004 and 2005 – and especially relative to rural families' endowments of livestock and onions (Egg et al. 2006; Devereux 2009). The exchange values between livestock and millet – the household terms of trade – decreased in 2005 to one quarter of 2004 values (Egg et al. 2006; Devereux 2009). Such changes in exchange values had an enormous impact on rural households, particularly those without larger herds of livestock.

Second, widespread failures in demand contributed to the behavior of the exceptionally integrated regional cereal markets, resulting in the pivotal cereal price increases. Over the last decade, Niger has been a net importer of cereals from Nigeria, Ghana and Mali (Egg et al. 2006; Mousseau and Mittal 2006). In the 2005 context of slightly lower cereal production and supply throughout West Africa, the majority of Ghana and Mali's cereal supply was drawn instead into Benin and the other coastal countries with greater purchasing power (Egg et al. 2006; Mousseau and Mittal 2006; Devereux 2009). In addition, Mali and Burkina Faso eventually instituted an embargo on all cereal exports, in violation of West African Economic and Monetary Union regulations (Egg et al. 2006). Nigeria, in turn, actually imported large quantities of cereals from Niger in 2005 (Koné 2006). Although regional supplies were slightly lower than normal, the central problem was a widespread failure in demand in rural Nigerien communities. Niger was the least well situated among its relatively well-to-do neighbors to access the region's cereal supply (Mousseau and Mittal 2006; Devereux 2009). The behavior of regional markets due to failures in demand and the adverse household terms of trade help to explain the 2005 food crisis experienced by rural Nigerien households.

Importantly, food insecurity is common throughout Niger even outside of the crisis year of 2005. The 2009 International Food Policy Research Institute Global Hunger Index (GHI), based on indicators on child malnutrition, child mortality, and calorie deficiency rates, ranks Niger's hunger level as the seventh worst in the world based on data up to 2007 (Von Grebner et al. 2009). This ranking is an improvement over Niger's 2008 GHI ranking, based on data up to 2006, of having the fourth highest level of hunger, behind the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, and Burundi (IFPR 2008). The 2005 food price increases in fact provide an extreme example of a yearly fixture of life in rural Niger, that of the *soudure*. Describing the hungry period between the depletion of cereal stocks from the previous year's harvest and the start of the current year's harvest, the *soudure* traditionally occurs during the rainy season (generally June through September), exactly the period in which large amounts of energy must be expended working in the fields (Cekan 1992). However it can begin far earlier

depending on the previous season's harvest (Cekan 1992). When cereal prices increase during this period, rural households – particularly pastoralists and agro-pastoralists – experience exchange value declines at exactly the time that they might turn to livestock sales in order to procure cereals (Mousseau and Mittal 2006). Meanwhile, subsistence farmers lacking livestock and unable to meet consumption needs on their production alone are trapped in a cycle of debt to traders from whom they borrow during the hungry season and then repay in kind following the harvest at a significant loss (Mousseau and Mittal 2006). The essential point is that this situation is a recurrent feature of rural Nigerien life independent of the behavior of regional markets. It is sometimes more and sometimes less severe, but it is a fixed part of the yearly landscape.

Rural Nigeriens experiences of food insecurity during the *soudure* are also impacted by the informality of legal institutions and weakness of democratic institutions. Formal markets – including those for credit, cereals, and employment – are essentially non-existent in rural Niger, as are formal legal institutions. This lack of formal legal structures only increases rural Nigerien's vulnerability to food insecurity. Changes in entitlement-mapping that might be prevented by the regulation of interest rates and cross border trade, or the prevention of speculation and employment discrimination, for example, can proceed unchallenged and disproportionately impact certain populations (Rubin 2009a; Devereux 2009). Niger's democratic crisis, detailed in Section Four, also indicates that its democratic institutions are sufficiently weak that government accountability to its population for famine and food crisis conditions is negligible (Gazibo 2009; Devereux 2009).

In sum, this section has argued that Sen's entitlement failure approach contributes to an understanding of the 2005 food crisis and yearly *soudure*. This understanding cannot be complete, however, without additional analysis and contextual information; as Sen (1977) himself points out, his approach does not provide a causal analysis. Several other factors, discussed below, played critical roles in the 2005 food crisis and continue to do so during the yearly *soudure*.

Maintaining biopolitical distinctions in rural Niger

A central conclusion of Duffield's biopolitics of development is that mainstream international humanitarian and development agencies and organizations actively maintain the biopolitical distinction between insured and non-insured populations and their respective life chances. Because fragile, developing nations that have failed to perform the core biopolitical functions of a state represent a threat to global security and material advancement, international agencies and organizations intercede by adopting the administration of these biopolitical functions, thereby maintaining the state as a zone of contingent sovereignty. However, by adopting the doctrine of sustainable development as self-reliance, these external actors except the nation's non-insured residents from the benefits of the biopower of bureaucratic social insurance. As a result, the very intervention of external actors maintains the biopolitical distinction between insured and non-insured populations and their respective life chances.

This section argues that the patterns of international intervention in Niger, in crisis and non-crisis years, reflect Duffield's analysis of the "liberal way of development." First, Niger's characteristics of a fragile state have led to its adoption as a zone of contingent sovereignty in which international agencies and organizations perform the biopolitical functions of the state. Second, these international interventions rely on an assumption of the inherent self-reliance

of Niger's non-insured populations that implies a "moral economy of the acceptable" level of suffering for the nation's residents (Jézéquel 2009:16). This assumption persists even as external actors effectively acknowledge the permanent emergency of self-reliance in rural Niger by acting as a form of "insurance of last resort" in crisis years (Duffield 2010:56).

Niger: a zone of contingent sovereignty

This sub-section argues that the Republic of Niger represents a zone of contingent sovereignty, based on its many characteristics of a "fragile state" and the central role of INGOs and multilateral organizations in its government functions.

Niger as a fragile state

The Republic of Niger, currently ranked twenty-third on Foreign Policy's Failed State Index, reflects many of the attributes of a fragile state (2009). Although Duffield resists endorsing any typology of fragile statehood, several key characteristics emerge. These include poor economic performance and a high poverty level, failure in the provision of public services, the existence of "ungoverned space" and political or social discord.

Currently ranked at the bottom of the Human Development Index and second from the bottom of the Human Poverty Index, Niger is one of the most impoverished nations in the world (UNDP 2009a). Niger's current life expectancy at birth is 50.8 years, its adult literacy is 28.8 percent, its combined school enrollment ratio is 27.2 percent and its GDP per capita is \$627 PPP (UNDP 2009a). The Failed State Index and the World Bank's Resource Allocation Index both highlight the nation's weaknesses in the area of economic management (Foreign Policy 2009; World Bank 2008). In addition, Niger's 2005 debt ratio of aid as a percentage of gross capital formation stood at 81.8 percent, down from 101.4 percent in 2000 (World Bank 2007). Niger also became a beneficiary of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) in 2000 and the IMF, World Bank and African Development Fund's Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) in 2006, both indications of its poor economic performance and high poverty level (IMF 2010b).

Failures in the provision of public services in Niger also suggest its position as a fragile state. Niger has received consistently poor rankings in public service provision in the Failed State Index and Resource Allocation Index (Foreign Policy 2009; World Bank 2008). Fiscal shortfalls following the drop in uranium prices in the 1980s were a contributing factor in the withdrawal of state services during the 1990s (Batterbury 2001; Mousseau and Mittal 2006; Gazibo 2009). In addition, Niger's 1986 IMF structural adjustment package and 2000 HIPC debt relief package significantly reduced public spending while at the same time increasing taxes (Batterbury 2001; Mousseau and Mittal 2006; IMF 2010a, 2010b). De Sardan (2009:4, 5, author's translation) reports an overall "retrenchment of the state in terms of state services" and "subsidisation... of the delivery of public goods" to the local level and, increasingly, NGOs. The state's withdrawal from the agricultural sector, and particularly the termination of subsidized veterinary products and services, addressed in detail in Chapter Six, has proved especially damaging. The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food concluded that, due to these changes:

"people can no longer afford the prices of vaccinations, medicines, and vitamins charged by the commercial traders. Although there are still veterinary assistants, they are far from covering the need in Niger and people are required to pay not only for their services, but also for their transport" (Mousseau and Mittal 2006:27).

Niger's health services, particularly in the critical area of child nutrition, are also severely lacking. The 2006-2008 national health plan allocated only \$1.7 million for nutrition services, which are limited to statistical monitoring and education initiatives. The INGO Médecins Sans Frontières alone spent close to 15 times that amount on malnutrition treatment in 2005 (Mousseau and Mittal 2006). Niger's failure in the provision of public services is indicative of its status as a fragile state.

The Sahelian and Saharan zone of Niger, which covers the vast majority of its territory and is also widely held to be an ungoverned zone in which terrorist activity, clandestine migration, and human, drug and arms trafficking are rife, also characterize it as a fragile state. The activities of the Algeria based al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) have received significant attention in recent years (*New York Times* 2010). Kidnappings throughout the Sahel, on the increase since December 2008, have been linked to AQIM, which reportedly purchases kidnapped foreigners from local smuggling gangs (UPI 2010; BBC Worldwide Monitoring 2009c). The most recent such activities reported within Nigerien territory include the April 2010 kidnapping of a French tourist and his Algerian driver, the December 2009 attempted kidnapping and successful murder of four Saudi Arabian tourists and the December 2008 kidnapping of two Canadian diplomats on a UN mission (BBC Worldwide Monitoring 2009c, 2010).

In addition, a large percentage of irregular migration from Sub-Saharan to North Africa and, in some cases, on to Europe is said to pass through eastern Niger, particularly from the Nigerien city of Agadez on to Libya (de Haas 2008). Arms smuggling gangs also reportedly operate near the borders of Niger and Mali and sometimes participate in kidnappings of foreigners (BBC Worldwide Monitoring 2009c). Trafficking in cigarettes and, increasingly, cocaine from South America is also reported in the area (BBC Worldwide Monitoring 2009a; Traub 2010). The United States (US) State Department's 2009 *Trafficking in Persons* report identifies Niger as "a source, transit, and destination country for children and women trafficked for forced labor and sexual exploitation" and lists it as one of seventeen "Tier 3" countries "whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards [of the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act] and are not making significant efforts to do so" (US Department of State 2009:224, 49). In addition to all of these concerns, the Tuareg rebellion restarted in northern Niger in 2006 remains an underlying concern and is often linked to much of the criminal and terrorist activities discussed above, despite the disavowals of the Tuareg leaders (Lacher 2008).

The accuracy of all of these reported activities is in fact less relevant than international opinion on the security of the region. The ongoing international response, paired with attentive news media coverage, reveal that the "ungoverned space" of the Sahel and Sahara are indeed a major point of concern. International attention to the region has combined increased surveillance, targeted development aid and outright policing (Lacher 2008). As early as 2002, the US Department of State launched the Pan-Sahel Initiative allocating \$8 million to "assist Mali, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania in detecting and responding to suspicious movement of people and goods across and within their borders" (Lacher 2008:391). The US launched the \$500 million Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative in 2006, this time aiming to "enhance the indigenous capacities of governments in the Pan-Sahel... and to facilitate cooperation between those countries and our Maghreb partners... in the global war on terror" (Lacher 2008:394). In an attempt to stem irregular migration, Italy's recent "Treaty of

Friendship” with Libya committed to the provision of an expensive satellite surveillance system for Libya’s land borders to be financed by the European Union (EU) (Ronzitti 2009). Most recently, Niger’s participation in a cooperative agreement between seven countries in the region – including Algeria, Chad and Mali – to coordinate their efforts to contain AQIM was warmly received by officials in both the US and Europe (Crowley 2010; Ashton 2010). The perceived implications for regional and global stability of Niger’s “ungoverned” Sahelian and Saharan zones contribute to its status as a fragile state.

The recent political crisis in Niger is indicative of political discord and a perhaps growing lack of social cohesion and has implications for its position as a fragile state. In pursuit of a 2009 referendum to abolish term limits and extend his power beyond the customary two five-year terms, President Mamadou Tandja dissolved the Constitutional Court, dismissed Parliament and arrested opposition and press members (Nossiter 2009). The results of the August 2009 vote in favor of the referendum and the October 2009 parliamentary elections, both boycotted by the opposition, were widely disputed (Nossiter 2009, AFP2009b). Following intermittent union strikes and opposition protests throughout this period, a military junta led by Major Salou Djibo and named the Council for Restoration of Democracy deposed President Tandja in a coup on February 18, 2010 (AFP 2009a, 2009b, 2009d; Nossiter 2010a). The transitional government has vowed to hold elections in which none of its members will run and, in April, ended the house arrests of over a dozen of Tandja’s close associates (AFP 2009c).

The international response to the constitutional crisis and subsequent coup indicates that they are widely seen as a contributor to instability. Entities as wide ranging as the EU, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the UN, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have attempted mediation during the course of the crisis (Saudi Press Agency 2010; AFP 2009b, 2009d; Nossiter 2010b). In general, the international response to both Tandja’s attempts to extend his rule and the later coup has been official condemnation, the revocation of aid and/or sanctions. The October 2009 parliamentary elections resulted in Niger’s suspension from ECOWAS and suspension of budgetary aid by the EU (AFP 2009a, 2009b). In December 2009, the US suspended all non-humanitarian aid, ended trade benefits for Niger under the African Growth Opportunity Act, and imposed travel restrictions on Nigerien officials (BBC Worldwide Monitoring 2009d; Carmichael 2009). The February coup drew condemnation from ECOWAS, the US, France and the EU as well as Niger’s suspension from the African Union (AFP 2010a; Valdmanis 2010; BBC News 2010). Niger’s political crisis and the resulting potential for social discord mark it with another characteristic of a fragile state.

NGO territory

International organizations, and particularly INGOs, in Niger have taken on many of the biopolitical functions and services provided elsewhere by the state. Indeed, throughout Niger one finds “the bevy of international NGOs, often performing governmental or quasi-governmental functions” that Swidler (2009:3) identifies as a core aspect of the African landscape. Although the Nigerien government is reliant on foreign aid for expenditures, the majority of international aid allocated to Niger is channeled through NGOs and multilateral organizations, adding to their key role in governmental functions. A Qatar Charity staff member explains:

“The state lacks the resources. Now, if the state wants these programs, it tells the donors in order to find the funds to make it happen. If a donor somewhere says that it prefers to finance it through an

*NGO, give a contract to an NGO instead of giving financing to the state... The donor wants to see that you've done what you said you would when he gives the money. So between states it's difficult to do.*¹³

Indicative of this preference for channeling aid through NGOs and multilaterals are the patterns in humanitarian aid flows over the last decade. According to Relief Web's Financial Tracking Service data, 55 percent of international humanitarian commitments to Niger between April 2001 and April 2009 went to UN organizations while 29 percent went to international NGOs (Relief Web 2009, Author's calculations). A mere 8 percent went in bilateral aid to the Nigerien government, compared to the 7 percent that went to Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. Through its funding choices, the international community provides essential support to INGOs and other international organizations in their adoption of key biopolitical functions in Niger.

On the ground, de Sardan (2009:24, author's translation) identifies in Niger a "project mode of local governance" referring to the central role of NGO "projects" in daily Nigerien life. He (2009:25, author's translation) argues that this NGO governance "performs certain functions of the state, whether in its place, in competition with it, or in cooperation with it. But the latter is uncommon due to the state's destitution." Jézéquel notes (2009) that health services, particularly child and nutritional health, are significantly bankrolled by NGOs and international agencies such as UNICEF and the World Health Organization. Another telling example of the central role of INGOs in governmental functions is their involvement in the implementation of decentralization at the commune level. The result of a succession of government initiatives implemented in 1996, 1999 and 2000, decentralization in Niger prescribed three levels of local government: the region, the department and the municipality or commune (de Sardan 2009; Mohamadou 2009).

Of these three, however, only the commune level is operational so far and mostly only in urban communes (Mohamadou 2009). A central task of the municipal councils elected by each commune has been the development of a local development plan specific to the needs and interests of the population (de Sardan 2009). However, in many rural communities these development plans are heavily influenced by NGOs and INGOs active locally. De Sardan (2009:21, author's translation) explains that the plans are

"created in trainings the municipal council receives from development projects. They are almost a conditionality for the development institutions' provision of a range of aid and investments. They have thus been drawn up with the help of the donors insofar as the technical experts of a development project have taken charge of them... It is mostly the product of external initiatives, financing, and technical know-how."

In Niger, NGOs play a central role in key purportedly governmental initiatives.

In their approach to the Nigerien government, mainstream INGOs reveal their awareness of their significant role in the day to day operation of many traditionally governmental functions, particularly the implementation of the country's development plan. The director of one mainstream INGO notes:

"There's not much that they'd say no to, let's put it that way... Sometimes they're able to do things they wouldn't otherwise be able to do because we bring them into the action. Just because there's a

¹³ Adamou, op.cit.

[development] plan, doesn't mean there's a how, the methodology at the local level... They're not real prescriptive, maybe because they don't have enough resources to say we'll do this and we'd like you to do that."¹⁴

Another INGO director highlights the level of freedom NGOs enjoy when it comes to making decisions about development plans. He explains, “[w]e understand the national policy... But we do not always do it how the government wants.”¹⁵ The flexibility with which many NGOs treat national policy does not go un-remarked by government officials. One noted, “[w]e have dialogues about conforming to policy with all the NGOs. Only if they don't conform to the rules does it lead to sanctions... Each NGO has its manner... There are those that even now still don't conform.”¹⁶ Indeed, many INGOs active in Niger operate with considerable independence from the state, giving them the freedom to operate as in a zone of contingent sovereignty.

Niger's moral economy of the acceptable

This subsection argues that external actors in Niger rely on an assumption of the inherent self-reliance of Niger's non-insured populations that implies a moral economy of the acceptable level of suffering for the nation's residents even as they effectively acknowledge the permanent emergency of self-reliance in rural Niger by acting as a form of “insurance of last resort” in crisis years (Duffield 2010:56).

Analyses of the central role the “moral economy of the acceptable” in the national and international response to the food crisis are indicative of a larger trend that allows for – and even expects – high levels of food insecurity and mortality in Niger. This moral economy plainly delimits “within what limits and level of need people are required to live” in Niger (Duffield 2010:55). In the operation of the Nigerien food security system, the highly technical and statistics based *Dispositif de prevention et de gestion des crises alimentaires* co-coordinated by the Nigerien government and its major international donors, Jézéquel (2009:16) identifies “a set of economic and political choices that are endorsed by broad consensus, and are seldom debated.” These principles privilege long-term development over short-term needs and both tolerate and expect high levels of suffering in the short term (Mousseau and Mittal 2006). Jézéquel (2009:16) argues that these principles “implicitly [map] out what level of suffering is acceptable and what is not, thus influencing actors to respond to crises with greater or lesser degrees of urgency, vigour and ambition.” Glenzer (2009:83) also identifies the central role of a tolerance for Nigerien suffering in his analysis of the *Dispositifs* “partial success” in 2005. He argues that the pattern of partial success suggests “the embarrassing fact that thousands of lost African lives *are acceptable* to those with the power to do things differently” (2009:101).

Even while effectively acting as the insurance of last resort, humanitarian agencies did not read the food crisis as an indication that self-reliance itself “is in a state of permanent emergency” for rural Nigeriens (Duffield 2010:56). National and international responses instead inferred that the humanitarian crisis was the result of communities not being “self-reliant enough” (Duffield 2007:18). The solution, then, was more “development” of adaptive self-reliance and basic needs for local communities, as opposed to any form of bureaucratic social insurance. Two years following the crisis, Jézéquel (2009) identified a shift in the focus

¹⁴ Christy Collins, Mercy Corp Country Director in Niamey, 30/7/09.

¹⁵ Niang, op.cit.

¹⁶ Abdoulaye Naferi, Dosso Regional Director of Breeding in Dosso, 19/8/09.

of the *Dispositif* from the activity of cereal markets to malnutrition levels, and with the shift a new onslaught of statistical monitoring that produced more statistics on the nutritional status of Nigeriens in those two years than in the fifteen years that preceded it. Jézéquel (2009:34) notes that this new focus does not necessarily represent a change in the moral economy of the acceptable:

“In 2007, the aid system [was] required to take into consideration, and to act forcefully against, the 100,000 annual deaths associated with chronic hunger in children. Yet it [was] once again possible for the food situation to be termed ‘generally good’ when ‘nearly 30% of Nigerien households face food insecurity’ and ‘1,110,000 people face food security classified as severe.’ Here is where the changes in the moral economy of the unacceptable brought about by the 2005 crisis show their limits.”

In both crisis and non-crisis years, high levels of suffering and even mortality remain a feature of Nigerien life that is tolerable for the national government and international donor countries. The structural persistence of the *soudure* itself goes largely unquestioned.

In sum, this section has argued that the characteristics of the Nigerien state and the international agencies and organizations in operation within its borders suggest that Niger is a zone of contingent sovereignty. The interventions of these external agencies reveal an assumption of the inherent self-reliance of non-insured populations and a moral economy of the acceptable level of their suffering. These concepts are able to endure despite international actors’ role as the insurance of last resort for rural Nigeriens experiencing a permanent crisis of self-reliance. These findings suggest that the mainstream international humanitarian and development agencies and organizations active in Niger contribute to the maintenance of the biopolitical distinction between insured and non-insured populations and their respective life chances.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes that Sen’s entitlement failure approach complements an analysis of the biopolitics of mainstream development in the context of food insecurity in rural Niger. Rural Nigeriens’ experience of exchange entitlement decline during the yearly *soudure*, the central role of international actors in performing the biopolitical functions of the state, and the underlying moral economy of the acceptable, all play a role in participants’ experiences of Qatar Charity’s interventions in Niger’s Dosso region. The promotion of sustainable development as self-reliance and the tendency towards contingent sovereignty of international interventions are particularly important to an analysis of the organization’s work. The remainder of this study – Chapters Five and Six – evaluates whether Qatar Charity’s interventions reflect these characteristics of the biopolitics of international development and to what degree an analysis of these interventions can refine these concepts.

5 Qatar Charity’s brand of self-reliance

Introduction

Although its avoidance of interest and espousal of Islamic principles appear to distance it from mainstream development efforts, Qatar Charity’s interventions in Niger’s Dosso Region strongly reflect important trends in the biopolitics of mainstream INGO development interventions. In particular, Qatar Charity supports “the biopolitical distinction between

insured and non-insured peoples” by promoting sustainable development as self-reliance (Duffield 2007:69). Sustainable development as practiced by Qatar Charity and other INGOs consigns Niger’s non-insured populations to living “within the limits of their own powers of self-reliance,” far removed from the regimes of social protection afforded insured, developed nation residents (Duffield 2007:69, 2008; Green and Hulme 2005). These development projects reveal the biopolitical ability to except certain groups from the benefits of biopower. However, a key weakness in Duffield’s analysis is its lack of attention to the role of local contestations, negotiations and appropriations of such interventions. Although it attends to the “internal logics” that inform development practices, it fails to acknowledge that such attempts “to regulate individuals, groups, and broad social and political processes... will involve significant penetration into those local social and political processes and institutions” (Branch 2007:285).

This chapter evaluates the implications of Duffield’s concept of sustainable development as self-reliance for Qatar Charity’s interventions in Niger’s Dosso region. Section Two details the two main ways in which Qatar Charity promotes sustainable development as self-reliance. First, Qatar charity aims to develop an associative form of social organization assumed to facilitate systems of mutual support as a way to encourage “homeostatic condition[s] of self-reliance” (Duffield 2007:115). Second, like other INGOs, Qatar Charity focuses on “changing behavior and attitudes,” specifically shifting existing economic orientations towards entrepreneurialism (Duffield 2007:69).

Section Three notes an important paradox in Qatar Charity’s approach to the women’s union members. It argues that Qatar Charity’s interventions in Dosso region contribute to the foreclosure of the possibility of local political solutions enacted by many mainstream development and humanitarian interventions. Two instrument effects of these interventions are the women’s union members’ subjectification as vulnerable subjects lacking agency and political voice and the rendering of political advocacy approaches to the problem of the *soudure* unthinkable from the NGO’s perspective. Paradoxically, this subjectification persists despite the women’s demonstration of significant agency in instrumentalizing Qatar Charity’s projects, suggesting that Qatar Charity’s interventions exhibit an important tension with “the agency of the governed” (Branch 2007:285).

Appropriate self-reliance, by association

Qatar Charity’s microcredit projects indeed replicate mainstream development’s concern for encouraging self-reliance – and even homeostatic development – for non-insured peoples. Qatar Charity’s projects and staff treat the central problem of the *soudure*, the consistent and repeated period of exchange entitlement decline when food stocks have run out but the harvest is not yet ready, as something to be survived, not changed. The emphasis on cereal banks highlights this focus. One staff member explains, “[t]he period you are talking about here in Niger we call it the *soudure*. The harvest has always been like that. There is a period when food is very expensive. But [the women] can get through that by organizing, by putting something in the cereal bank.”¹⁷ The goal here is to help the women “get through” the *soudure*, to physically survive the season. The emphasis is on the continuance of politically unqualified, biological bare life.

¹⁷ Ibrahim Issa, QC Dosso Organizer in Birni, 25/8/09.

Further, attempting to change the recurrent problem of the *soudure* is considered firmly outside the scope of the women's existence. The staff member continues, "[the *soudure*] is not their problem... The best way is patience, to accept their situation as it is... because they cannot change it... It's not up to them."¹⁸ This staff member exemplifies sustainable development's emphasis on "homeostatic condition[s] of self-reliance" and beneficiaries as bare life without agency, political or otherwise (Duffield 2007:115). Development for the women becomes accepting "their situation" and surviving through self-reproduction without the assistance of the social insurance afforded insured populations in the developed world.

The following subsections argue that Qatar Charity's interventions exhibit two main components of the sustainable development as self-reliance dogma: promoting an associative form of social organization through community based unions and attempting to alter economic behavior through income-generating activities.

Associative social organization

This subsection argues that Qatar Charity's emphasis on forming associative groups shares with mainstream INGOs the underlying assumption that such groups are intrinsically useful for developing the community systems of mutual support that are central to self-reliance. INGOs have encouraged such groups across Niger and elsewhere in Africa over the last two decades. De Sardan (2009:17, author's translation) explains that "the NGOs in effect demanded the creation of an institutional structure based on the western associative model as a form of conditionality for their intervention. [This model has been] spread throughout most African countries and has about the same base elements everywhere, irrespective of region, sector or donor." The associative group has become a kind of panacea assumed to produce beneficial mutual support regardless of community context. As a result, changes in social organization become ends in themselves. A Qatar Charity staff member explains, "[a]lready it contributes. Even the fact that they're together in a group... It's already a good thing because before in Niger that didn't happen. The women weren't organized."¹⁹ The simple existence of an associative group is assumed to encourage beneficial systems of mutual support among participants.

Group formation

These benefits are assumed to accrue regardless of the origins of the group. Working with groups formed specifically to attract an NGO project – whether that of Qatar Charity or another NGO – is completely acceptable for Qatar Charity. In fact, the formation of groups for the purpose of becoming NGO beneficiaries is considered the norm and can be observed across Niger (de Sardan 2009). The Qatar Charity Program Director explains, "[g]enerally, the groups look for NGOs, national or international. They know that they finance projects. When they make groups, it's in order to have their support."²⁰ In addition, the staff is comfortable directly encouraging a group to form by telling site resident's that once they "organize" they can participate in a project. The Assistant Program Director describes:

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Salifou 24/8/09, op.cit.

“Now, we don’t make local groups, for the moment. We tell them, ‘you need to invest also or else you won’t appreciate the value of this activity.’ We say, ‘you consider [forming the group] your contribution’ ... In two or three weeks they make a group for us for the cereal bank.”²¹

De Sardan (2009:17, author’s translation) notes a central problem with associative groups formed specifically to attract NGO projects: “the life of these structures depends on the resources and the support provided by the donors, which are by nature transitory. When a development project closes its doors, and all projects put an end to their activities after a number of years, the associations that they put in place disappear also” along with any benefits of community based mutual support. Nevertheless, like mainstream INGOs, Qatar Charity assumes that associative groups will be beneficial in developing community self-reliance, regardless of the context of group formation.

Group characteristics

The assumption that the existence of an associative group of some form is automatically beneficial for community self-reliance frees Qatar Charity from designing group structures that are actually targeted at encouraging such traits as group cohesion and cooperation. Instead, Qatar Charity calibrates the associative groups’ structure to smoothing the NGOs operations. De Sardan (2009:17, author’s translation) notes this tendency in many mainstream INGO operations across Africa, concluding that associative groups have traditionally been “established by the Northern development institutions.... to insure the functioning and management of the infrastructure that they financed.” Qatar Charity exhibits this tendency most clearly in its requirements for group characteristics, specifically the group’s gender composition and level of “experience.”

First, the type of associative group most encouraged by Qatar Charity is a large union composed of only females rather than mixed or male groups. Collections of groups are combined or “federated” into a union. For example, the Birni union has over two hundred members while the Kiota union has over five hundred (Khalifa Union 2008).²² Staff emphasized the heightened vulnerability of female household members, particularly during periods in which male members engage in labor migration.²³ In addition, they highlighted the value of income going directly to female household members, the direct caregivers for any children, arguing that women are more likely than men to use this income to provide for the family.²⁴ Here, the Dosso women emerge as “the new agents of development...women entrepreneurs with cultural propensities to invest wisely and look after their families and communities” (Rankin 2001:20).

Although this construction of female responsibility is somewhat grounded in the women in development approach of the 1970s and 1980s, some authors suggests that these organizational preferences for female beneficiaries are more related to the perception that women are more “amenable” to the disciplinary tactics used by NGOs to ensure repayment (Fernando 1997:152; Izugbara 2004; Brigg 2001). Indeed, statements from Qatar Charity staff suggested that their preference for women had more to do with the women’s “manageability” than their value as development actors. Male membership in groups reportedly caused

²¹ Adamou, op.cit.

²² Salifou 24/8/09, op.cit.

²³ Adamou, op.cit.

²⁴ Ibid.

“problems” with loan repayment and group cooperation.²⁵ The reasons given for this perception focused on the inherent trustworthiness, cooperativeness and obedience of women compared to the irresponsibility and belligerence of men. The Program Director concluded:

“When you bring activities to the women, especially with microcredit, it works because the women respect the rules. It’s not like the men, who will take the money and just spend it... The women usually manage really well. Last year where we had problems they were mixed groups. But wherever groups were only women [the projects] really succeeded... It’s always the men that start the problems.”²⁶

Although staff espoused the mainstream development confidence in women as superior development actors than men, their preference for female beneficiaries was also significantly related to their perception that working with women made the NGO projects run more smoothly (Townsend et al. 2004).

Second, Qatar Charity privileges associative groups with prior experience working with an NGO project. Experience is sometimes equated with having obtained a signed group constitution from the commune Mayor, known as “papers,” but most often refers to previous engagement with an NGO. Qatar Charity staff often clarified that a community’s poverty level – as determined by national poverty statistics – is more important than experience working with NGOs. Yet, “even if the poverty is high, it’s necessary to have a little experience, meaning to have papers.” Obtaining an agreement qualifies a group as having “a little experience,” whereas having worked with an NGO in the past indicates that a group possesses

“A certain experience. They are accustomed to working with projects... They didn’t start with us... They have a certain consciousness, an ability to put together activities of general interest to develop themselves and help others.... They’re people who already have a familiarity, who have already done some activities before we came. So we really reinforce their capacity.”²⁷

A “certain experience” is so valued that Qatar Charity will even work with a group that has a current project or financing from another NGO. The Program Director explains,

“Even if you have worked [with NGOs] a lot and we find that you have enough resources, that you are not so poor, we can still finance your group a little. We go into the field, see the context, see how the people live. If they have a project already, already have some training, are working with another NGO or have other financing... already have a cereal bank, are already doing embouche, are already doing several activities. We can offer a different activity that seems profitable to us and we can finance it. But we can’t finance it on the same levels as those who are inexperienced, yes, but have no resources.”²⁸

“Inexperience” is something to be avoided. It acts as a counterbalance to poverty. Qatar Charity will work with a high-poverty group with “no resources” *in spite of* their being inexperienced. Working with a group accustomed to working with NGOs is simply easier for Qatar Charity. “Reinforcing” capacity is far simpler than “building” capacity. The experience component of Qatar Charity’s preferred form of social organization is not meant to benefit the project participants but rather to smooth the organization’s operations.

Creating conflict

²⁵ Salifou 24/8/09, op.cit.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Despite their orientation towards smoothing operations, Qatar Charity's associative groups are assumed to encourage mutual support among community members and, therefore, self-reliance. However, these associative groups may actually undermine existing systems of mutual cooperation by creating community conflict. Qatar Charity's response to an incident during the 2009 distribution of food aid for Ramadan (a yearly occurrence) in the village of Wazeye demonstrates well the disruption caused by these associative groups and the NGO's lack of attendance to the underlying issues.

On a Thursday in early September, two Qatar Charity organizers arrived in the village of Wazeye with a truck full of millet, sugar and oil to distribute to group members. The Wazeye group is coed and has fewer than 100 members, with almost every village household having at least one member in the group.²⁹ The organizers carried a list, supplied by the management committee earlier in the month, of members who had paid their membership dues to the treasurer.³⁰ The organizers attempted to distribute the goods to only these members.

A standoff between male villagers whose households had paid their dues and those whose households had not ensued in which the men took out their machetes and prepared to fight. The women present began crying and asked the men to stop.³¹ The two organizers fled the scene, taking the truck of supplies with them back to the capital. The following Monday, the Program Director and several members of the Niamey office staff returned to Wazeye with the goods. They announced that they would distribute the goods to all group members on the condition that those who had not paid dues do so in the coming weeks. Having divided the total quantity of goods by the number of group members beforehand, they separated the goods into those due to males and those to females. For the males, the staff members personally handed out pre-packaged, individual allocations of the goods in the calculated amounts. For the women, the staff left the remaining goods – enough for an equal allocation of goods for each woman as was given each man – with the women assembled for them to distribute among themselves. The Niamey staff members departed as the women began their distribution, leaving the local organizer behind. He later reported that the women's distribution went smoothly.³²

Three main points emerge as most relevant to the issue of social organization from this series of events. First, Qatar Charity delineated the associative form of social organization, membership in the beneficiary group, in specific ways that created conflict. Membership carried the benefit of receiving gifts of millet, sugar and oil at Ramadan. However, membership required payment of dues. This requirement of group membership was contested by other village residents, for whom group membership was based on living in the village, producing conflict between residents. A social structure purportedly intended to build social

²⁹ The exclusion of certain households from the group is instructive. The Program Director attributed the fact that some households do not have a member in the group to “unfortunate antecedents (quarrels, land disputes) between the group founders and the family in question” (Salifou 2009b:1, author's translation). QC staff members were not troubled by these exclusions.

³⁰ These dues are used for group purposes as decided by the Management Committee and the group members. The money does not go to QC.

³¹ The brandishing of machetes in this situation was perhaps especially threatening because the previous week a group of Zarma men a few villages away used machetes to behead eight Fulani herders after a dispute involving cattle grazing in crops (Field notes 8/9/09).

³² Field notes 8/9/09.

cohesion and mutual defense against insecurity may have damaged an existing framework for the same. Second, giving responsibility for distributing the goods among themselves to the women reflected Qatar Charity staff's overall preference for women as beneficiaries. The decision was made based on the women being the "peaceable" bystanders to the conflict and being usually very "disciplined."³³ Qatar Charity staff relied on their preexisting preference for women beneficiaries, discussed above, in addressing the incident.

Third, the staff members did not meaningfully address the immediate cause of the conflict: the definition of group membership as being only those who had paid dues. Although households that did not pay dues did receive the goods in the end, it was on the condition of paying them in the near future. The "solution" reached did not acknowledge village residents' contestation of Qatar Charity's specific associative form of social organization. In fact, the Program Director dismissed the incident as a "passing quarrel, which often occurs when people don't understand each other well" (Salifou 2009b, author's translation). He later used ethnic stereotypes to qualify his explanation, noting, "[t]he Fulani are usually aggressive and very hot tempered, very quick to use a knife in a quarrel amongst themselves" (Salifou 2009b, Author's translation). Qatar Charity staff attributed the conflict to local shortcomings rather than reflecting on the impact of the members-as-dues-payers structure they had instituted.

In summary, this subsection has argued that Qatar Charity makes a point of introducing and encouraging a specific form of social organization, the associative group. This practice reveals an underlying assumption that associative groups will automatically encourage systems of mutual assistance. Along with other components of self-reliance, mutual assistance can then stand in for the social protection afforded insured peoples. The specific nature of the associative groups introduced, however, has little or nothing to do with the best way to encourage even the biopolitical minimum of self-reliance and may undermine existing systems of mutual cooperation by creating community conflict.

Income-generating activities

This subsection argues that the type of activities in which Qatar Charity engages the women's groups, income-generating activities, also reveals its adoption of mainstream development's sustainable development as self-reliance credo. These projects rarely produce a change in participants' standards of living, even when a move out of poverty is the stated purpose of the project. Authors writing about chronic poverty take issue with the income generation focus of such projects, concluding that INGOs predominantly address poverty through "income-based interventions that tend to be biased towards the 'productive' poor, and tend to consolidate less political forms of collective organizations (for example, credit groups become preferred over peasant movements)" (Hickey and Bracking 2005:855). When the goal is instead the actual improvement – rather than homeostatic maintenance – of group members' living conditions, chronic poverty authors highlight the importance of associative groups that focus on political advocacy rather than income generation. Thorp et al. (2005:917) suggest that "groups formed to enforce rights, or improve their economic/social/political position (basically claims groups) have a chance to improve the position of their members by creating and enhancing cohesive identities and enhancing a sense of self-worth as well as by improving their economic

³³ Field notes 8/9/09.

position.” Most INGOs, including Qatar Charity, instead promote income-generating projects that focus on changing participants’ economic behavior.

Changing economic behavior

Qatar Charity focuses on “income-generating activities” designed to change the economic behavior and values of participants. They are meant to provide a measure of income, and in some cases savings, for group members. The women are to use the no-interest loan to purchase a cow or ram, which they fatten and sell for meat three or more months later. The original loan amount – 150,000FCFA (198GBP) for a cow and 35,000FCFA (46GBP) for a ram – is then repaid, and the money remaining from the sale is used to purchase a new animal and start the cycle again. The nine-month duration of the loan allows the most successful participants to complete the cycle up to three times before actually repaying the loan. In the eyes of the NGO, at this point the woman is able to “do the *embouche* on her own,” and in the end she has “nothing belonging to the NGO.”³⁴ The goal here is clearly a form of sustainable development, an activity that can continue into the future without further input from the organization. The especially successful participant “could buy two or three [rams], feed them and sell them. The next year, when she does it again, with the profits she could buy even three, four or five.”³⁵ The cycle is seen as repeating continually, allowing the women to manage ever-larger groups of animals.

The *embouche* project is meant to encourage “appropriate” forms of self-reliance for group members. As Duffield argues, sustainable development privileges some forms of self-reliance over others. He notes:

“a tension between internationally acceptable forms of adaptive self-reliance and, arising from the impossibility (and for many the undesirability) of this form of existence, what could be called actually existing development – that is, those forms of adaptation, legitimacy and survival that exist despite, and often in opposition to, official aid efforts” (2010:68).

This tension between NGO-approved self-reliance and “actually existing” self-reliance occurs in Birni as well. In Birni, a significant collection of animals is an important form of household savings and insurance against food or income insecurity (Egg et al. 2006). The maintenance of herds is often part of the local moral economy and may be accomplished at apparently great cost, both financial and personal. Adams et al. (1998:264) explain:

“Rural Sahelians are engaged in a constant process of balancing competing needs and limited resources in the interest of preserving their livelihood, consumption, health and social status. In the context of crises triggered by one or a combination of catalysts such as drought, civil unrest, or the illness/death of a productive worker, households cope by trading off between these objectives. While some trade-offs and strategies may appear destructive or unsustainable, we maintain that coping is a rational and calculated response to minimise the intensity and duration of crisis, to maximize limited resources, and to preserve long-term livelihood security.”

As Edkins (2000) notes, households may even choose not to sell a remaining animal in cases of famine, privileging the future ability to rebuild their way of life after the crisis on the basis of one remaining asset over present nutritional needs and/or the survival of some family members.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

However, the Qatar Charity model is less concerned with aiding the women in this rational economic behavior than in altering it to fit a different, more “appropriate” economic model: one more in line with neo-liberal values of individualism and entrepreneurship. The women are not meant to be developing a long-term herd that they might turn to as insurance in a future time of need or an asset on which to rebuild after a crisis. The collection of animals they are to develop is rather meant to be a continuously rotating source of income. As in other microcredit operations, the women are reconstituted as market-oriented entrepreneurs (Rankin 2001; Townsend et al. 2004). Brigg (2001:9) explains, “[t]he entrepreneurial subjectivity is elevated above other subjective modalities that... the targets of microcredit programs may already be living or inclined to take up.” In the case of Qatar Charity, the NGO attempts to change an economic behavior that they perceive as backward, irrational and, above all, inappropriate. The Program Director evinces the same understanding of the “bovine mystique” noted by Ferguson (1994) among Lesotho development workers:

“When you take the example of last year’s crisis... the people even if they have the means – sometimes they have cattle –they don’t sell them to feed themselves... [It’s] socio-cultural behavior... You can find a family that has a cow to sell but they don’t do it because of a certain intimate closeness between the animal and the person that means that they don’t sell it to feed their children.”³⁶

Here the Director attributes household economic decisions around the sale of cattle to an “intimate closeness between the animal and the person.” In this way, the NGO positions itself as engaged not in changing participants from one economic mode of decision-making to another but merely discarding backward belief systems to join the ranks of the rational and entrepreneurial. Predictably, the tension between these “appropriate” and “inappropriate” economic behaviors persists throughout project implementation. Many of the more successful *embouche* participants in fact use the income they earn from selling the cow or ram purchased with the Qatar Charity loan to purchase another animal that they then add to the household herd. The majority of women, who make far less of a profit,³⁷ use the money to pay household expenses such as clothing, food and school uniforms and fees.³⁸

In sum, this section has argued that Qatar Charity’s Dosso region microcredit projects exhibit the internal logic of sustainable development as self-reliance that Duffield identifies in mainstream development interventions. The income-generating activities that Qatar Charity offers project participants highlight the organization’s emphasis on changing participants’ economic behavior. Existing economic decision-making processes are to be cast aside for

³⁶ Salifou 24/8/09, op.cit.

³⁷ For the 100 Birni women who raised rams in 2008, QC reports a total profit of 2,310,000FCFA (3,050GBP), making the average profit for each woman 23,100FCFA (31GBP). For the 30 women who raised cows, the total profits were 1,383,750 (1,827GBP) for an average profit of 46,125FCFA (61GBP) each. Importantly, these average profits are less than is required for the purchase of a replacement goat, ram (35,000FCFA) or cow (150,000FCFA) (although a participant in the cow *embouche* who earned this average profit could afford to buy a goat or ram). Although this calculation of “profit” accounts for the repayment of the loan, it does not account for expenses encountered in the course of the nine months, such as food and veterinary services for the animal(s). Interview data indicate that a handful of women (who succeeded in completing the cycle several times in the nine months) earned profits well above the average, heavily skewing the distribution (Salifou 2008b).

³⁸ Anonymous 4, President of Khalifa Union (KU) in Birni, 20/8/09; Anonymous 5, Member of KU in Birni, 21/8/09; Anonymous 6, Member of KU in Birni, 21/8/09; Anonymous 7, Member of KU in Birni, 19/8/09; Anonymous 35, Member of KU in Birni, 20/8/09.

more appropriate, liberal economic practices of entrepreneurialism. In addition, although the associative group is assumed to encourage the social cohesion and mutual assistance central to community self-reliance, the parameters for this associative form of social organization are established to advantage the NGO. In some cases, this new social organization may weaken existing forms that do encourage mutual assistance and even cause conflict.

Instrument effects and instrumentalizations

This section argues that the women's union members exercise political agency in instrumentalizing Qatar Charity's microcredit projects even though an instrument effect of Qatar Charity's interventions is the women's subjectification as vulnerable subjects and politically unqualified bare life. This example of the tension between "global governance and the governed" (Branch 2007:285) represents a key paradox in Qatar Charity's work. In addition, it suggests a possible refinement to Duffield's at times overdetermined analysis of the biopolitics of international development.

Antipolitics

This subsection argues that Qatar Charity's microcredit projects in Dosso region exhibit depoliticizing effects similar to those of mainstream interventions. The depoliticizing effects of humanitarian interventions have been noted in a range of settings. De Waal (1997) argues that the main instrument effect of humanitarian interventions in developing countries is the foreclosure of the possibility for local political solutions. Humanitarian agencies intervene "at the cost of weakening the forms of political accountability that underlie the prevention of famine" (de Waal 1997:4). Because of its immobilization of local political processes, humanitarianism actually prolongs and worsens famine (de Waal 1997). Branch (2009:16) agrees, noting that "humanitarianism... tends to stifle the autonomous political organization and action that is precisely necessary for the assertion and expansion of the rights it claims to uphold." Edkins (2000:102) extends this critique, arguing, "[f]ood aid processes... fail to produce development, their apparent aim. However, they succeed in producing a vulnerable group, who are seen to be in need of not justice or political representation but help and assistance."

Qatar Charity's development efforts have similar effects to the humanitarian interventions discussed by de Waal, Branch and Edkins. Qatar Charity regards the women's union members as lacking agency, unable to change the yearly problem of the *soudure*. The staff contends that "[the *soudure*] is not their problem... The best way is patience, to accept their situation as it is... because they cannot change it."³⁹ The organization subjectifies project beneficiaries as Edkin's "vulnerable subjects" – bare life without agency, political or otherwise.

Accordingly, Qatar Charity prefers that its associative groups focus on income generation, at the expense of other approaches such as political advocacy. For Qatar Charity, political activities are firmly outside the realm of the possible for project participants. One staff member explains, "[w]e don't talk politics. We are apolitical. We avoid that with the women."⁴⁰ The women are seen as politically unqualified bare life and in "need" of a technical, apolitical fix to credit market failure. As bare life they are subject to the two main implications of this reduction to the biological. First, they lose their political life, and, most

³⁹ Issa, op.cit.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

importantly, their political voice. Second, they are excepted from the benefits of biopower, in this case deployed by INGOs rather than the state.

Instrumentalizing subjects

The analysis of Qatar Charity's projects thus far has focused on its "internal logic," specifically the ways in which Qatar Charity's practices maintain the biopolitical distinction between insured and non-insured life by adopting the sustainable development as self-reliance model. This analysis cannot be complete, however, without an analysis of the instrumentalist moment of Qatar Charity's development intervention, an analysis that Duffield's biopolitics of development currently lacks. This subsection argues that the paradox of Qatar Charity's subjectification of the women's union members as lacking agency is the women's clear demonstration of strategic instrumentalizations of the organization's projects. The women in fact approach Qatar Charity "as political actors, seeing the resources offered by [the organization] as tools to be used as part of their own political projects or within their own struggles for power" (Branch 2007:290). The women most clearly demonstrate their instrumentalizing abilities in dealing with Qatar Charity and other INGOs around two main issues: taking the required steps to attract an NGO project and determining which projects they find most attractive, based on the type of "benefits" provided.

Gathering NGO projects

Their experiences with the comings and goings of projects has taught the women of the Khalifa Union and other Birni women "a contingent, opportunistic orientation" that encourages "something closer to hunting and gathering, a kind of unpredictable supplement to the marginal subsistence agriculture that sustains daily life" (Swidler and Watkins 2009:1183, 1188). The women's groups seek to optimize their attractiveness to potential projects, a tactic employed in rural communities across Niger (de Sardan 2009). First, in alignment with Qatar Charity's selection criteria, the women organize into groups. Most women in Birni belong to some form of women's group, although regular meetings or work with a project are often intermittent. In some cases, a group may disband if they are consistently unsuccessful in attracting an NGO project.⁴¹ The former Mayor of Birni noted that "no projects will come help if the women aren't organized."⁴² As a result, commune officials facilitate the formation of groups and furnish the necessary paperwork.

Second, women's groups that combine to form large unions are more attractive to projects, including Qatar Charity. The women of Wahida Union,⁴³ still looking for a project, explain:

"All the projects that come they like to see many women. They like to see that women come together, understand each other. That's why we came together. Because they like to see a lot of women together instead of working with small groups."⁴⁴

Qatar Charity is specifically known to prefer working with unions. The Khalifa Union president encouraged Wahida Union to form out of several groups in the first place so that she could arrange an introduction for them to the Qatar Charity staff.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Field notes, 30/7/09.

⁴² Mme. Boubacar, Former Mayor of Birni in Birni, 25/8/09.

⁴³ A pseudonym.

⁴⁴ Anonymous 1, 2 and 3, members of Wahida Union in Birni, 26/8/09; Anonymous 4, op.cit.

⁴⁵ Anonymous 1, 2, and 3, op.cit.

Third, success with previous projects is key to attracting future projects, a point that Qatar Charity includes in its criteria for choosing groups. As the Khalifa president explains, “[b]ecause the work we are doing with Qatar Charity is going well, any project that comes they will always come to us.”⁴⁶ Indeed, attracting and obtaining projects is a process that is expected to continue indefinitely. The financial outcome of any one project is not seen as having a lasting impact. Rather, working with future projects is taken as a given. Once the contract period with one project ends, the management committee will take their group documents to a collection of other projects and repeat the process.⁴⁷

Fourth, the women’s union members appoint a well-connected “honorable president” who is instrumental in making initial contacts with NGOs such as Qatar Charity. The honorable presidents of the Birni, Kiota and Dosso city unions partnered with Qatar Charity are local elites named as the ceremonial head of the union who play no actual role in the management or activities of the group once the project has been secured. By bestowing this title upon the patron, the group members – clients – increase her social capital both outside the community – in the form of the requisite contact with NGO staff and any visiting donors – and within it. The patron, in turn, supplies the contacts, visibility, and access necessary for developing a partnership with an NGO.⁴⁸ In Dosso city, the honorable president is the wife of a powerful local politician. The Kiota Union’s honorable president is the daughter of the late Sheikh Moussa Aboucar and now the spiritual leader of the Niass Tijaniyya, a major Sufi brotherhood in West Africa (Barnes 2009). In Birni, the connection between the honorable president and Qatar Charity was even more direct: she is the mother of Qatar Charity’s former Director of Projects and Programs.⁴⁹

Fifth, the literate members of the groups themselves, often elected as the union’s management committee, manage the process of acquiring the group constitution that Qatar Charity and other NGOs require of all potential partners.⁵⁰ In order to be successful in acquiring a project, the Khalifa and Wahida Unions only considered including groups that already possessed these documents for without them “you are not recognized. You are nothing.”⁵¹ In fact, these documents are a kind of “birth certificate” for the group.⁵² Completed documents proved the group or union’s trustworthiness to potential projects.⁵³ Importantly, these documents come at the not insignificant cost of 2,500FCFA (3GBP) per member.⁵⁴ Further, obtaining papers also requires access to the local officials who must sign these documents.

⁴⁶ Anonymous 4, op.cit.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ It is important to note that the involvement of the honorable presidents can sometimes have negative results for group members. In the summer of 2009 the Dosso city union’s honorable president actually intervened in the group’s *embouche* activity, collecting the check for the loans herself and then failing to distribute the money to the group members, a fact repeatedly denied and hidden by the group members in an attempt to protect their powerful patron. Issa, op.cit.

⁴⁹ The Director’s niece is also a member of KU. Such connections between NGO administrators and project beneficiaries are not uncommon in Niger (Delville and Abdelkader 2010).

⁵⁰ Anonymous 1, 2 and 3, op.cit.; Anonymous 4, op.cit.

⁵¹ Anonymous 4, op.cit.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Anonymous 5, op.cit.

⁵⁴ Anonymous 1, 2 and 3, op.cit.

The Wahida Union members explain, “[o]ur leaders play a big role because if you have a leader that knows the doors to knock on they will easily get what you’re looking for.”⁵⁵

Community members with this type of access, termed development “brokers” by Bierschenk et al. (2002) are well known in Birni. The Khalifa Union secretary, a retired school teacher, is still known by the nickname “Mme. ANPIP” after the World Bank funded NGO, Association Nigérienne de Promotion de l’Irrigation Privée (ANPIP), that she “brought” to Birni almost a decade ago. She predicts that she will soon be known as “Mme. Qatar.”⁵⁶

Calculating ‘benefits’

The main point of comparison among projects is the type and level of “benefits” they provide. “Benefits” most commonly denotes goods shared among the women, but sometimes also refers to credit. Obtaining benefits is the reason given by all the women for forming a women’s group and joining a women’s group. Project benefits are seen as a straightforward and commonplace supplement to household income. Union members are quite clear on this point. The women of the Wahida Union explain:

“The most important thing is to be able to get benefits from all those projects that will come across us. Because anybody that comes and starts helping you he will really help you. Because you may need help to send your children to school, to eat. And this is the kind of thing we like to have happen.”⁵⁷

A member of Khalifa Union notes,

“It’s all about benefits... Everybody wants to have their own group so they can go and collect benefits from everyone who can give it. If you cannot join this group, you will go to another group. Maybe you will get there.”⁵⁸

Another Khalifa Union member adds, “I see that people are getting benefits and then I join. If you are in a group you get if you are not in a group you will not get anything.”⁵⁹ Izugbara (2004) also observed the critical role of non-beneficiaries’ perception of the positive outcomes beneficiary women achieved through involvement in microcredit groups in southeastern Nigeria. In Birni, the women form and join groups not for any intrinsic value they find in being “organized.” The group itself is merely a means to an end.

The centrality of benefits is of special importance to the women’s relationship with Qatar Charity. When conceptualized as goods, benefits most frequently referred to Qatar Charity’s free distributions during major Muslim holidays: millet, sugar and oil during Ramadan and cows for butchering during Eid/Tabaski. As one woman explains, “these are things that you usually have to buy and they give it to you for free.”⁶⁰ Although an unexpected surprise the first year they worked with Qatar Charity, the women now anticipate the distribution schedule, explaining at the start of Ramadan, “even now we are waiting.”⁶¹ Further, other NGO projects are widely seen as providing fewer goods than Qatar Charity; “the other projects don’t bring many things.”⁶²

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Field notes, 29/8/09.

⁵⁷ Anonymous 1, 2 and 3, op.cit..

⁵⁸ Anonymous 6, op.cit.

⁵⁹ Anonymous 7, op.cit.

⁶⁰ Anonymous 6, op.cit.

⁶¹ Anonymous 7, op.cit.

⁶² Anonymous 6, op.cit.

The second category of benefits the women used to evaluate projects, credit, is also important to the women's relationship to Qatar Charity because the organization does not charge interest. Like the topic of distributed goods, the lack of interest came up in every interview with a union member. One woman compares Qatar Charity to other projects at length, explaining that although there are many projects:

*"As you can see it will never be like the credit the Qatar people are giving us because they never ask for any interest. And you know that if those other projects are asking for interest people will never go to them... Even now I know that there are many projects that want to come here to Birni but because of that interest that women are afraid of they will never come... Any project that is asking for interest I will never join it."*⁶³

Interestingly, the former Mayor of Birni, instrumental in securing the Qatar Charity project for the Khalifa Union, noted that she had not initially sought credit for the group members. She explains:

"The first time, I went to see them for aid. It was afterwards that I learned that they give credit. I didn't go to them to get credit. No, I went to get aid for the population. It was not to get credit."

Having learned Qatar Charity's terms, however, she quickly adapted her request and facilitated the women's application for credit-based projects. This process of modifying requests and goals was a perfectly palatable and familiar one for the Mayor: "[b]ecause usually, it's the NGO that says in what sector it works: 'Here's what I bring, now which groups would like to work in this way?'"

In sum, this section has argued that women's union members demonstrate significant agency in both attracting and evaluating potential INGO projects. Although Qatar Charity's internal logic of sustainable development as self-reliance subjectifies them as vulnerable subjects and politically unqualified bare life excepted from the benefits of biopower, they in fact behave as political actors in instrumentalizing Qatar Charity and other INGOs' projects.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter concludes that, despite the differences between its operations and those of other INGOs engaged in microcredit and other development interventions, Qatar Charity's adoption of the sustainable development as self-reliance model reveals significant convergence with mainstream INGO practices that suggests the applicability of Duffield's biopolitics of development to this organization's policies and practices. However, although an instrument effect of Qatar Charity's interventions' is the women's subjectification as vulnerable subjects and politically unqualified bare life, their strategic approach to attracting and evaluating NGO projects suggests a refinement of Duffield's analysis, which tends to treat these instrument effects as overdetermined. Indeed, in this case, the clear agency demonstrated by the women suggests that the tension between "global governance and the governed" is central to Qatar Charity's Dosso interventions (Branch 2007:285).

⁶³ Anonymous 8, KU member in Birni, 21/8/09.

6 Qatar Charity's progression towards contingent sovereignty

Introduction

Duffield's biopolitics of international development argues that states deemed ineffective in performing within their territory the biopolitical functions necessary for maintaining global security – i.e. fragile or failed states – see these functions adopted by international actors. This process creates zones of contingent sovereignty where:

“While respect for territorial integrity remains, sovereignty over life within ineffective states has become internationalized, negotiable and contingent...It is a ‘human security’ state in which the core economic and welfare functions of population are now designed and managed by international actors and agencies” Duffield (2007:28).

Critically, because these international agencies and organizations adopt the doctrine of sustainable development as self-reliance, they in practice wield the lowest possible grade of biopower on behalf of the nation's non-insured residents and by their very intervention maintain the biopolitical distinction between insured and non-insured populations. However, Duffield's analysis moves swiftly from antecedents – fragile, ineffective states – to outcomes – zones of contingent sovereignty – without addressing the process through which international actors adopt these biopolitical functions. Duffield tends to treat contingent sovereignty as an event rather than a process, where “‘a process’ concerns the means by which a phenomenon progresses in a specific context, [and] ‘an event’ concerns only the fact of its having happened” (Sykes 1982 cited Hendrie 1997). Although attentive to the ultimate internal logic of development interventions, Duffield's analysis neglects their local and contextual “multiple instrumentalizations,” in Branch's (2007:300) words. In particular, he fails to provide an account of the interactions between international and government actors during this process.

Chapter Four argued that the Niger represents a zone of contingent sovereignty based on its many characteristics of a “fragile state” and the central role of INGOs and multilateral organizations in its government functions. Indeed, many of these international actors are long established in Niger, and in their adoption of government functions. As an organization newly arrived in Niger, and a non-mainstream international Islamic INGO, Qatar Charity presents a unique opportunity to both evaluate Duffield's concept of contingent sovereignty in terms of outcomes and provide the missing account of the process by which an international actor takes on a governmental function.

This chapter argues that Qatar Charity's interactions with Nigerien government actors complicate Duffield's analysis in two main ways. First, Qatar Charity's negotiations over the provision of veterinary services to project participants reveal its progression towards participating in contingent sovereignty as a complex and iterative process of engagement with local norms and interests – specifically the local “corruption complex” – rather than a straightforward, once-off appropriation. Second, Qatar Charity's eventual version of contingent sovereignty does not consist of an independent adoption of government services but instead relies on a collaboration with several other NGOs and a private sector actor, suggesting the centrality of the organization's own instrumentalization of the legitimizing properties of organizational “partnerships” to this process.

Section Two provides a brief introduction to contemporary literature on the role of corruption in Africa, with special emphasis on the work of authors such as Blundo and de Sardan that is particularly relevant to Qatar Charity's Dosso interventions. Section Three details the series of negotiations between 2008 and 2009 for the provision of veterinary services to Qatar Charity *embouche* participants. Section Four analyzes Qatar Charity's navigation of the official and unofficial rules of a central feature of the local corruption complex: the informal internal privatization of veterinary services. Section Five argues that Qatar Charity's eventual shift away from accommodating local norms of informal internal privatization and towards a preference for the official rules of national policies came as a result of its strategic partnership with the mainstream INGO *Vétérinaires Sans Frontières*.

Analyzing corruption

Both popular and academic treatments of corruption in Africa tend to portray it as widespread, voluminous and detrimental to development, whether economic or otherwise (Mwenda and Tangri 2005; van de Walle 1994; Bähre 2005; Mbaku 2007). Scholars from a variety of disciplines – including political science, anthropology, sociology and economics – have approached this topic from varied perspectives.⁶⁴ Most relevant here, however, is the thorny centrality of issues of “culture” in much of the literature. Many studies have focused on the role of purportedly “African” cultural traits in contributing to the prevalence of corruption in the region. Studies by Bayart (1989) and Médard (1982) describe an uncomfortable and dysfunctional hybridization of modern bureaucratic structures and the “African” tendency towards “patronage and tribalism – in other words ‘primordial’ ties of affection” (Anders 2005:15; Blundo 2006; Erdmann and Engel 2007). Another approach reconfigures these same basic assumptions in order to celebrate “the subversive and creative appropriation of the bureaucracy by ethnic and tribal networks” (Anders 2005:15). The question of culture also informs the debate over the degree to which contemporary corrupt practices are indicative of continuity with pre-colonial practices or a rupture caused by colonialism and post-colonial transition (Chabal and Daloz 1999). In the ensuing backlash against “outdated ‘cultural’ interpretation[s] of present-day Africa,” some authors now attempt a more nuanced explication of social, moral and institutional norms and attitudes that are implicated in processes of corruption (Chabal and Daloz 1999:101).

Blundo and de Sardan's (2006a, 2006b) work on the West African nations of Benin, Niger and Senegal provides an example of this more nuanced approach. They (2006b:6) employ the term “corruption complex” to describe “all practices involving the use of public office that are improper – in other words illegal and/or illegitimate from the perspective of the regulations in force or from that of users – and give rise to undue personal gain.” They include in this concept:

“nepotism, abuse of power, embezzlement and various forms of misappropriation, influence-peddling, prevarication, insider trading and abuse of the public purse, in order to consider what these various practices have in common, what affinities link them together, and to what extent they enter into the same fabric of customary social norms and attitudes” (de Sardan 1999 cited in Bähre 2005).

Other authors (Bratton 1989; Chabal and Daloz 1999) note that INGO projects do not operate outside of such “customary social norms and attitudes.” Blundo (2006:62) holds that projects such as Qatar Charity's are necessarily “embedded in complex social and political realities, in which actor strategies are implemented which tend towards the appropriation of the symbolic

⁶⁴ See Mbaku 2007 for a detailed summary.

or economic resources of external intervention, which, as a result, becomes an entirely separate local political factor.” As I argue in Section Four, Qatar Charity’s incorporation into these local processes had significant implications for the provision of veterinary services to project participants.

Blundo and de Sardan (2006b) also present a detailed typology of corrupt practices prevalent in West Africa. Their typology covers everyday transactions as well as examples of extortion and the misappropriation of public resources for private gain (Blundo and de Sardan 2006a). The types most relevant to Qatar Charity’s Dosso region interventions, however, are unwarranted fees for public services and the “sideline.” When charging an unwarranted fee for a public service, “the official forces the user to pay for the implementation of an act associated with his office” (Anders 2005:190). Although the service itself is not illegal, “it is a service that is normally provided free of charge, on which a private charge is imposed” (Blundo and de Sardan 2006a:75). When an individual operates a sideline “work premises or resources are used for private ends, either during or after working hours” (Blundo and de Sardan 2006a:77; Delville and Abdoukader 2010). The sideline provides the individual with “a supplementary income outside of that arising from their official job, which is earned either on top of or in conjunction with their official salary” (Blundo and de Sardan 2006a:78).

Blundo and de Sardan’s broader concept of “informal internal privatization” is central to Qatar Charity’s negotiations for the provision of veterinary services. Through informal privatization:

“The formal process of delegation of state functions to private actors is... joined or substituted by an informal phenomenon involving the private appropriation of procedures and means which remain the prerogatives of the state in appearance more than in reality. Thus what we are witnessing here is the de facto informal privatization of administrative action, which can be triggered either internally, by being carried out on the initiative of state agents, or externally – that is, arising from interference of an economic or political nature in the machinery of the state by external actors. It is also the result of localized negotiations and arrangements that are relatively autonomous with respect to the centralized power, although widespread throughout the territory” (Blundo and de Sardan 2006a:102).

These processes of informal privatization “originate in sporadic agreements facilitated by the recourse, shared by different public, private and intermediary partners, to ‘practical rules,’ behaviors and logics that are alien to the public arena” (Blundo and de Sardan 2006a:104). The navigation of official and unofficial rules is central to this process. Anders highlights:

“The co-existence of different sets of norms or legal pluralism within the bureaucracy. In other words, adherence to one set of norms may contribute to or entail violation of another one. Official rules prohibit bribery and corrupt practices but do not account for the extensive obligation towards kin, for example. In turn, kinship or patron-client relationships have no separate rules concerning the distinction between public and private; the civil servant is expected to grant access to all resources he controls or is thought to control to kith and kin. This discrepancy has contributed to the development of an informal clandestine set of rules among civil servants which is different from other rules such as official regulations and kinship obligations” (2006:5).

Local social norms interact and sometimes conflict with official national regulations to produce parallel “unofficial,” “practical” or “real” rules of civil servant behavior (Chabal and Daloz 1999:100; Blundo and de Sardan 2006a:97). Negotiations for the provision of services by INGOs, then, are necessarily shaped by the navigation of these parallel structures. As I will demonstrate in Section Four, Qatar Charity’s negotiations for the provision of veterinary services to project participants was significantly impacted by the process of informal internal

privatization and its recourse to both official and unofficial rules. First, however, I will outline the phases of the negotiations themselves.

Providing veterinary services

Qatar Charity cooperated closely with the Ministry of Breeding technical service to ensure the provision of veterinary services to their project participants. As discussed in Chapter Four, rural Niger suffers from a major failure in the provision of public services in the area of veterinary care. Although prior to the 1990s the Nigerien government provided significant veterinary services to rural residents free of charge, in the last two decades the state has significantly withdrawn from this area of service provision, as have many states across Sub-Saharan Africa (Bratton 1989). The Dosso Regional Ministry of Breeding still employs state breeding agents charged with providing vaccinations, regular check-ups and emergency care to all of the livestock in their assigned area, but there are far fewer agents than needed and users are now officially charged for the cost of vaccinations, vitamins and other medications (de Sardan 2009; Mousseau and Mittal 2006).

Qatar Charity's agreements with the Dosso Regional Ministry of Breeding between 2008 and 2009 gradually shifted responsibility for providing veterinary services to project participants from state veterinary agents to a private, mainstream INGO sponsored veterinarian. Qatar Charity played an instrumental role in this "subsidisation" of the delivery of this public good to a portion of the population – Qatar Charity beneficiaries – to a private, mainstream INGO-sponsored actor (de Sardan 2009:5, author's translation). In this way, Qatar Charity came to participate in contingent sovereignty.

The stages of negotiation

The provision of veterinary services for *embouche* participants in Dosso region proceeded in four stages.⁶⁵ In all four stages the provided services were the same: vaccinations prior to the rainy season, regular check-ups, and responding to participant call-outs in case of animal injury or illness. The series of negotiations that accompanied these four stages involved a range of parties: Qatar Charity, state breeding agents, the Dosso Regional Director of Breeding, the mainstream INGO *Vétérinaires Sans Frontières* (Veterinarians Without Borders – VSF), the regional INGO *Centre d'Études Économiques et Sociales de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (West African Center for Economic and Social Studies – CESAO),⁶⁶ the local NGO *Projet d'Appui à l'Élevage dans la Région de Dosso* (Project for the Support of Breeding in Dosso Region – APELDO), and a private veterinary clinic, *Cabinet Vetoprox*. Importantly, the private clinic was installed and partly funded by the local NGO APELDO, itself created and funded by the mainstream INGO VSF and regional INGO CESAO (Figure 3).⁶⁷

Stage One: Spring 2008

Soon after its arrival in Niger in the spring of 2008, Qatar Charity encountered a situation faced by all NGOs that request services from the state veterinary or agricultural agents. The agents demand a 10,000FCFA *per diem* or "allowance" for each field visit to project sites.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ These stages are delineated here for analytical purposes. QC staff did not refer to them as such.

⁶⁶ Headquartered in Burkina Faso, CESAO does not qualify as a mainstream INGO for the purposes of this paper. Either VSF or APELDO staff represented CESAO in all negotiations.

⁶⁷ Baza Issoufou, APELDO Director in Niamey, 7/8/09.

⁶⁸ Hassane, op.cit.; Salifou 5/8/09 and 24/8/09, op.cit.

Allowances and *per diems* are a central feature of civil service activities in Niger (Delville and Abdoukader 2010). Although in principle the allowances are intended to cover additional expenses incurred as a result of the work, NGO “missions and the culture of *per diems* allow [civil servants] to supplement their salaries,” considered to be below a living wage (Delville and Abdoukader 2010:43, Author’s translation; Anders 2005). The allowances referred to in this case are closely related to the unwarranted fees for public services of Blundo and de Sardan’s (2006a) typology and represent a component of the informal internal privatization of government services. Instead of the users of the services – the project participants – paying the unwarranted fees, the NGO does so on their behalf. The Program Director summarizes this aspect of NGO work well when he says, “[s]ome NGOs won’t pay [the *per diem*]. They say it’s the agent’s job to go. So if they call [the technical service], the agents won’t go.”⁶⁹

Qatar Charity circumvented the issue of ad hoc fees by agreeing to generous verbal contracts with the agents working in the vicinity of their project sites to ensure their availability for field visits.⁷⁰ In the case of Dosso region, this included an agent based in Birni convenient to the Birni, Wazeye and Koudagande sites and another agent based in Kiota convenient to the project there.⁷¹ The agreed-upon fee for each agent was calculated based on the number and type of livestock being raised by the participants and divided over the nine months of the *embouche* loan. For each ram, the agent received 250FCFA and for each cow he received 500FCFA for the nine months.⁷² Thus, for caring for the 170 rams and 50 cows total in Birni, Wazeye and Koudagande, the Birni agent was to earn 67,500FCFA for nine months of work in 2008, or 7,500FCFA per month. For his care of the 170 rams and 75 cows in Kiota, the Kiota-based agent was to earn 80,000FCFA for nine months of work in 2008, or 8,889FCFA per month (Salifou 2008b). With the negotiation of these “allowances,” the veterinary agents moved along the continuum of corrupt practices from charging an unwarranted fee for a public service to engaging in a sideline.

Stage Two: Summer 2008

However, several months into the 2008 *embouche* period, Qatar Charity negotiated a new verbal agreement for veterinary services, this time negotiated by the Dosso Regional Director of Breeding on behalf of the agents. The Regional Director instigated the renegotiation after learning that the agents were working privately for the organization –operating a sideline. The Qatar Charity Program Director explains:

*“We made agreements with [the agents] individually to follow the animals... But this could bring problems... So three or four months after we started working with the agents, it was formalized so there wouldn’t be problems... So now their superiors know so there aren’t problems.”*⁷³

Indeed, state breeding agents are prohibited from signing private contracts for veterinary services – operating a sideline.⁷⁴ However, the Regional Director indicates that his concern

⁶⁹ Salifou 5/8/09, op.cit.

⁷⁰ It is important to note, however, that the initial negotiated fee earned for each month of the contract by the Dosso agents actually totaled between 7,500 and 8,889FCFA, less than the standard requested *per diem* of 10,000FCFA for a single field visit. The breeding agents appear to have prioritized the stability of the income over the amount. The eventual increase in these fees is discussed below.

⁷¹ The Dosso city project did not begin until 2009.

⁷² Salifou 27/7/09 and 5/8/09, op.cit.

⁷³ Salifou 5/8/09, op.cit.

⁷⁴ Naferi, op.cit.

was less with the legality of Qatar Charity's contract with the agents and more about his lack of "involvement" in the process. He asserts that Qatar Charity's engagement with the breeding agents "lacked tact because they came in and started working in the region without informing the service, meaning the regional [headquarters]. In the beginning, they went directly to the agents."⁷⁵ He continues by adding, "[a]n NGO is not supposed to give work to state agents." However, the Regional Director of Breeding's response was not to forbid the agents' continuing their sideline but rather to negotiate a nine times increase in the agents' fees, making their Qatar Charity "allowance" equal to almost a third of their monthly government salary.⁷⁶

Stages Three and Four: Summer 2009 and Summer 2010

In Stage Three of veterinary service provision, which began in summer of 2009, *embouche* participants' animals in Birni, Wazeye and Koudagande were cared for by the Cabinet Vetoprox private veterinarian.⁷⁷ The *embouche* animals in Kiota and Dosso city were cared for by two state veterinary agents, each based in the respective location (Salifou 2009a). The private veterinarian and the two state agents received the same fees as the state breeding agents in Stage Two: 250FCFA for each ram and 500FCFA for each cow monitored *per month* for nine months.⁷⁸ In Stage Four of veterinary service provision, set to begin in summer of 2010, the private veterinarian based in Birni will care for all Qatar Charity *embouche* animals in Dosso region: those in Birni, Wazeye, Koudagande, Kiota and Dosso city (Salifou 2009a).

The negotiations that produced Stages Three and Four emerged in three broad steps. First came the December 2008 signing of a Partnership Protocol between Qatar Charity and VSF. The Protocol stated that the Cabinet Vetoprox veterinarian would begin providing the veterinary services for all Qatar Charity *embouche* participants' animals in all of Dosso region in summer of 2009. In addition, Qatar Charity beneficiaries would be included in trainings on livestock breeding performed by APELDO in the region. Second came the state breeding agents and the Regional Director's discovery of the new protocol between VSF and Qatar Charity and resulting objection. Third, came a series of three meetings that concluded in June 2009 and resulted in agreement on Stages Three and Four.⁷⁹

Negotiating the corruption complex

This section argues that this series of negotiations over the provision of veterinary services to project participants reveals Qatar Charity's progression towards participating in contingent sovereignty as a complex and iterative process. The character of this progression was significantly determined by the organization's engagement with the local corruption complex, specifically the informal privatization of government veterinary services and the navigation of both the official and unofficial – or "practical" – rules of the regional Ministry on which this process relies (Blundo and de Sardan 2006a:104).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Salifou 5/8/09, op.cit.; although all interview participants were silent on this issue, it is plausible that a portion of the agents' improved fees was diverted to Dosso Regional Ministry of Breeding operations and/or the Regional Director himself.

⁷⁷ Issoufou, op.cit.

⁷⁸ Salifou 5/8/09, op.cit.

⁷⁹ Nafeiri, op.cit.; Issoufou, op.cit.; Salifou 24/8/09, op.cit.; Dr. Issifi, Private veterinarian in Birni, 18/8/09.

Qatar Charity staff indeed operated within and between these sometimes conflicting sets of procedural and behavioral rules, adeptly playing “the game between official and parallel unofficial rules” (Anders 2005:200). In detailing their original agreements with the individual veterinary agents, different staff members provide conflicting justifications for the payment of these fees, and in some cases contradict their own statements in previous conversations. For example, the Assistant Program Director explains the fees awarded in the contracts as necessary to cover a given agent’s travel expenses “so that he can easily travel and do his work while also doing our work.”⁸⁰ In contrast, the Program Director on one occasion insisted that the agents performed Qatar Charity work “on their own time, on weekends.”⁸¹ Later, he termed the fee a *prestation* or allowance, describing the agents as “not paid, but not volunteer.”⁸² The variability in justifications for the fees suggests the degree to which Qatar Charity staff moved between unofficial and official registers regarding the negotiations.

Qatar Charity staff members appear to be aware that their payment of these unwarranted fees conflicts with the official, national rules governing the technical service agents.⁸³ The Program director explains, “[o]ther [mainstream] NGOs won’t pay the technical service to come out. They have a real focus on the rules. The Islamic NGOs are more flexible, closer to the population. They have a better understanding of the socioeconomic situation.”⁸⁴ Here, he implies that paying state breeding agents for veterinary care is indeed against “the rules,” meaning the official, national regulations. However, the Program Director attributes Qatar Charity’s willingness to pay the fees to a better understanding of the social and cultural context in which the veterinary agents operate, a context in which unwarranted fees and sidelines are morally and institutionally acceptable according to the unofficial, practical codes of civil servant behavior.

The second stage of veterinary service provision, in which the Regional Director renegotiated the fees paid to the state agents, also demonstrates the selective application of official and unofficial rules in accommodating local norms of the informal privatization of government services. From the perspective of the civil service regulations, the Regional Director of Breeding’s negotiation of a nine times increase in the agents’ fees simply increased the monetary value and number of people involved in the illicit transaction. Nevertheless, in the eyes of both the Regional Director and Qatar Charity staff, this new agreement was of a wholly different character than that with the individual agents. The Regional Director notes, “[i]t formalized the work of the agents because before it was all informal... It was not at all legitimate. Now the agents represent the government in their work.”⁸⁵ Although the government agents are performing the same work, work that is in theory already contained in their government duties, the mere fact of supervisory “involvement” makes it legitimate. The “rules” being obeyed here are those of accommodating local officials’ informal internal privatization of government services. For the Qatar Charity Program Director, the nine times increase in the fees paid to the breeding agents is justified because now the relationship is

⁸⁰ Adamou, op.cit.

⁸¹ Salifou 5/8/09, op.cit.

⁸² Salifou 24/8/09, op.cit.

⁸³ It is interesting to note that there is in fact no single document that contains a complete code of conduct for civil service members. Instead, the relevant material is sprinkled among the 1989 and 1998 General Statutes of the Civil Service, other ordinances and various penal codes (DPADM 2005).

⁸⁴ Salifou 5/8/09, op.cit.

⁸⁵ Nafari, op.cit.

“official, with a contract and everything.” Here the “official,” like the “legitimate,” reflects a very local register of the norms of the informal internal privatization of government services, norms that Qatar Charity readily accommodates.

With the negotiations of Stages Three and Four of veterinary provision for project participants, Qatar Charity’s progression towards participating in contingent sovereignty took an important turn, a turn strongly influenced by Qatar Charity’s new partner VSF’s perceived unwillingness to engage with the local corruption complex. From accommodating the unofficial local rules of informal internal privatization of veterinary services, Qatar Charity moved towards a preference for the official rules of government regulations and formal external privatization by way of the involvement of a mainstream INGO-sponsored private veterinarian. Although, like informal privatization, the Stage Three and Four agreements were negotiated at the local level, Qatar Charity made recourse to official, national state policy and regulations regarding the role of formal privatization in rural development.

In agreeing to the terms of Stage Three, Qatar Charity maintained a degree of accommodation of the Director and his agents’ informal internal privatization. Instead of insisting on moving forward with the Partnership Protocol with VSF that all the parties agreed was endorsed by the national rural development policy, the *Stratégie de Développement Rural (SDR)*, Qatar Charity agreed to divide the care of the Dosso *embouche* animals between the private vet and the state agents for 2009. The Program Director clearly attributes this acquiescence to the personal interests of the involved officials:

*“We agreed to wait... because they raised problems.... ‘Why are you taking everything away from us and giving it to them?’... What you have to understand is that always in this type of thing there are personal interests. The personal interests mean that they don’t want to give it up. You win something, and then we take it all back.”*⁸⁶

The private veterinarian even more directly identifies the conflict with the technical service as due to the allocation of the contract fees, or the *prestation*, noting:

*“When the public service found out [about the Protocol] it did not please them because it’s a form of competition. But they should not be in competition. It’s not their prerogative. It’s the private veterinarians’...It’s true that it annoyed the agents. But they don’t have the right as members of the public service... In principle all of the prestation should be done with the private workers.”*⁸⁷

The central role of the “allowances” is also clear in a staff member’s recounting of the reaction to the conclusion of negotiations on Stage Three by the Birni-based state breeding agent, who is also the supervisory agent for the area. The supervisory agent received Qatar Charity’s *prestation* for the Birni, Wazeye and Koudagande *embouche* animals in 2008 but was replaced by the private veterinarian in 2009. As a result, he demanded that he and the Kiota breeding agent share the Qatar Charity *embouche* work in Kiota. The Dosso region organizer explains, “[i]t was because of the contract, because there’s a salary for the one that does the work. He wanted it.”⁸⁸ His aggressive response was also likely informed by his supervisory status as more senior civil servants often consider the more lucrative allowances their due (Anders 2005). Qatar Charity, however, was unwilling to meet his demands. In agreeing to Stage Three of veterinary service provision, Qatar Charity demonstrated a continued but slightly

⁸⁶ Salifou 24/8/09, op.cit.

⁸⁷ Issifi, op.cit.

⁸⁸ Issa, op.cit.

lesser degree of willingness to accommodate the local officials' informal internal privatization than in 2008.

The terms of Stage Four, however, in which all Qatar Charity *embouche* animals in Dosso region will be monitored by the private veterinarian in Birni, represent a clear shift in orientation from the local unofficial rules of informal internal privatization toward the official rules of national government policy and formal (external) privatization. The Program Director is firm on this point, noting:

*“Always in this type of thing there are personal interests... But that’s not the point. We signed a Partnership Protocol with [VSF]. We made this concession this year so in Kiota the state agent will do the work. But next year in 2010 it will be VSF.”*⁸⁹

The best indication of Qatar Charity's reasons for aligning itself with VSF, APELDO and the private veterinarian over the technical service comes from the private veterinarian himself. He explains that “Qatar Charity preferred working with us because it is more credible... It's a formal, legal office.”⁹⁰

The concepts of formality and legitimacy are indeed central to Qatar Charity's change in approach. Although Qatar Charity staff and the Director of Breeding considered the Stage Two agreement more formal and legitimate than the Stage One agreements with individual breeding agents, this legitimacy prevailed only within the local context and according to the unofficial rules of local officials' informal internal privatization. These rules are morally and institutionally legitimate according to the Regional Ministry's unofficial norms, but run counter to the legal legitimacy of national regulations. By Stage Three, Qatar Charity began to demonstrate a preference for the official rules of national government policy. The following section addresses why Qatar Charity's progression towards participating in contingent sovereignty changed in this way.

In sum, this section has argued that the iterative and contextual nature of Qatar Charity's gradual progression towards contingent sovereignty is attributable in part to the organization's engagement with local norms of informal internal privatization. Qatar Charity consistently accommodated these norms in its negotiations with the Dosso Regional Ministry of Breeding, navigating adeptly between the official and unofficial rules of the technical service.

Shifting priorities

This section argues that Qatar Charity's move towards disengagement with unofficial and engagement with official rules is indicative of the organization's strategic decision to enter into partnerships with other organizations as a way of augmenting its legitimacy as an international development actor. Two aspects of these partnerships were important to Qatar Charity's pursuit of national and international legitimacy: the positive rhetoric of “partnership” itself and the specific partner organization VSF.

Since the 1970s, the pursuit of “partnerships” by national and international NGOs has become an important and prominent aspect of development practice (Lister 2000). Particular emphasis has been placed on the importance of such relationships in the arena of sustainable

⁸⁹ Salifou 24/8/09, op.cit.

⁹⁰ Issifi, op.cit.

development, even despite the concept of partnership’s “slipperiness in terms of definition, distinction and containment” (Davies 2002:190; Lister 2000). The concept has become broadly used to describe diverse types of relationships – including sub-contractual arrangements, mutual exchanges of knowledge and expertise, and “piggy-backing” on existing government structures – between diverse types of institutions – including INGOs, national NGOs, state agencies, multilateral agencies, as well as national and multinational corporations (Fowler 1998; Morse and McNamara 2006; Bratton 1989:582). In fact, Fowler ranks the term “partnership” as second only to “participation” as an “over-loaded and abused concept in the development lexicon” (1998:140). Nevertheless, like the concept of “sustainable development,” the very contested and flexible nature of the “partnership” model makes it useful for its symbolic value as a positive rhetoric of effective INGO operations (Davies 2002; Duffield 2007). Critics of the rise of the partnership dogma argue that INGOs often use its rhetoric and practice merely to provide legitimacy to their own continued interventions (Lister 2000; Fowler 1998). They argue that these organizations enter into partnerships together in order to “promote their own institutional survival rather than as a way of advancing common objectives” (Lister 2000:229).

The elaborate paths of funding and service provision of Qatar Charity’s partnerships with VSF, CESAO, APELDO and Cabinet Vetoprox indeed suggest the self-reproducing nature of partnerships (Figure 3). By entering into these agreements, Qatar Charity engaged in “intricate bureaucratic networking” among organizations acting as “both implementers and also donors to other agencies” (Zetter 1995:1662, 1663). In this case, VSF and CESAO financed the operations of APELDO, while APELDO financed the operations of the private Cabinet Vetoprox veterinarian, to whom Qatar Charity paid an additional salary for veterinary services. Qatar Charity paid APELDO fees for implementing trainings for *embouche* participants, while Qatar Charity ensured a steady supply of trainees for APELDO and clients for Cabinet Vetoprox. By entering into partnerships with VSF, CESAO, APELDO and Cabinet Vetoprox, Qatar Charity benefited from the partnership model’s rhetorical legitimizing and reproduction of their interventions in Niger.

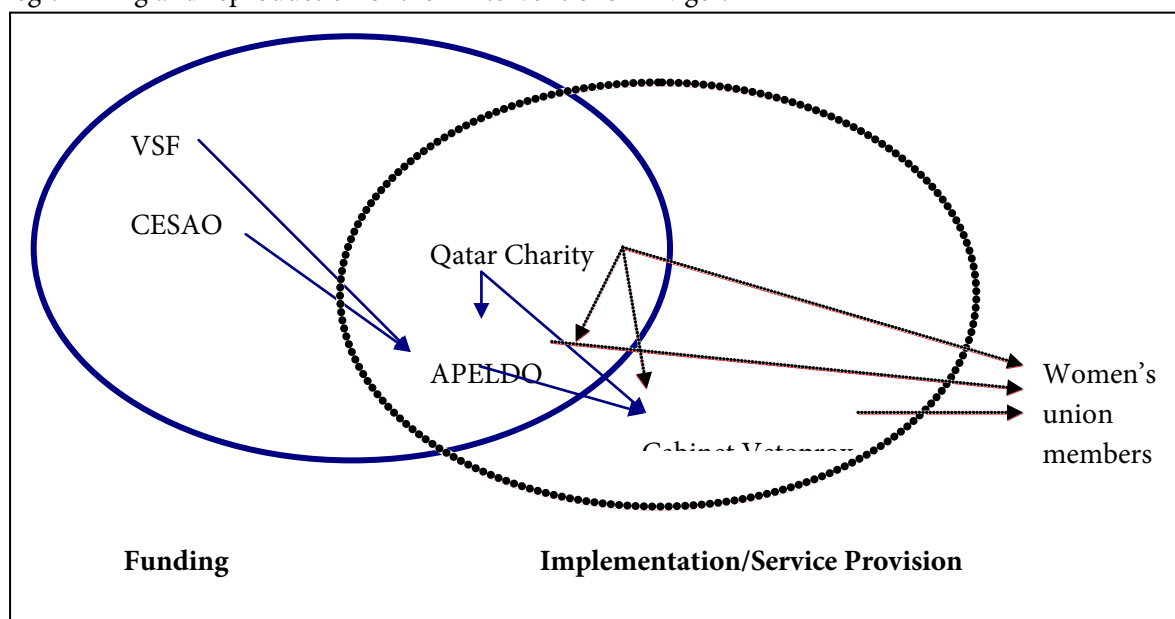


Figure 3: Funding and implementation connections in Qatar Charity’s partnerships (Solid arrows indicate flow of funding; dotted arrows indicate flow of services)

Although Qatar Charity’s negotiations engaged with multiple NGOs and a private actor, the

mainstream INGO VSF was the most important component of the partnerships from the perspective of the Qatar Charity staff. Qatar Charity staff members consistently highlighted their involvement with VSF when discussing the veterinary service provision. Indeed, Qatar Charity's original December 2008 Partnership Protocol was signed with VSF alone. However, in the end, representatives from VSF and APELDO as well as the private veterinarian himself all signed separate work contracts with Qatar Charity. In addition, the VSF representative was not even present for the joint negotiations between Qatar Charity, the Dosso Regional Director of Breeding, and the APELDO director.

Nevertheless, staff members consistently repeated that "VSF" was monitoring the *embouche* animals. The Program Director refers to the animals "taken care of by VSF," and "the workshops that VSF is doing" and states that "according to the contract, [VSF are] the ones who, in all of our zones of intervention, according to the contract, they're going to look after the health of the animals."⁹¹ In addition, Qatar Charity's annual report has an entire chapter – albeit a very brief one – devoted to "partnerships with international NGOs" (Salifou 2008b:28, author's translation). Predictably, this section does not mention the partnership with CESAO, based in Burkina Faso, but focuses on the agreement with VSF. This pointed emphasis does nothing to change the actual working relationship between Qatar Charity, VSF, CESAO, APELDO, and the private veterinarian. However, the elision of the three latter parties to the relationship in staff members' descriptions suggests that the relationship to VSF is far more important to the organization.

This preference is all the more suggestive given that Qatar Charity stressed the importance of formal privatization to the Nigerien state in its negotiations with the Regional Director. A central point in the negotiations, in fact, was whether Qatar Charity had the right to sign a contract assigning veterinary services and the associated fees to a private veterinarian. The parties concluded that it did, based solely on the inclusion among over 60 recommendations in a chart titled "Logical Framework of Program 12" in the SDR Action Plan the phrase: "[f]acilitate the installation of private veterinarians" (Comité Interministeriel de Pilotage de la SDR 2006:128, author's translation).⁹² As a result, the Director of Breeding agreed that the technical service was

"required to encourage this type of initiative [between Qatar Charity and VSF], meaning the installation of private veterinary clinics for animal health in Dosso region, his area of responsibility. Therefore, the Cabinet Vetoprox veterinarian indeed has the right to carry out the contract that he plans to sign with Qatar Charity" (Salifou 2009a, author's translation).

In the end, Qatar Charity's ability to move forward with its proposed contract rested on the involvement of the private veterinarian. For this reason, his consistent elision from discussions of the agreement is all the more suggestive of an intentional emphasis on the relationship with the mainstream INGO VSF.

In order to secure this partnership with VSF, however, Qatar Charity needed to move from an orientation towards accommodating local unofficial norms of informal internal privatization towards the official, national policies of formal privatization. From the perspective of Qatar Charity staff members, mainstream INGOs such as VSF avoided engaging with the unofficial

⁹¹ Salifou, 27/7/09.

⁹² It is noteworthy that the invocation of the SDR Action Plan, a development policy rather than a legal statute, was sufficient recourse to the "official" to win agreement from the Regional Director.

norms of informal internal privatization. In reference to paying the technical service agents unwarranted fees, the Program Director notes, “[o]ther [mainstream] NGOs won’t pay the technical service to come out. They have a real focus on the rules.”⁹³ The legitimizing and self-reproducing partnership with VSF, then, turned on Qatar Charity’s reorientation towards the official rules of national government policies. This factor was central to the eventual shifting of responsibility for providing veterinary services to project participants from state veterinary agents to a private, mainstream INGO-sponsored veterinarian, resulting in the subsidisation of the delivery of this public good to Qatar Charity beneficiaries.

In sum, this section has argued that Qatar Charity’s disengagement with the local norms of informal internal privatization in favor of the official rules of formal privatization was driven by the strategic pursuit of a partnership with a mainstream INGO. Through this partnership, Qatar Charity sought to increase its legitimacy and ensure its continuity as an international development actor in Niger. Qatar Charity’s instrumentalization of legitimizing partnerships played an important role in determining the outcome of Qatar Charity’s progression towards contingent sovereignty.

Conclusion

This section concludes that an analysis of Qatar Charity’s negotiations for the provision of veterinary services for project participants suggests further refinements of Duffield’s biopolitics of international development. Importantly, Qatar Charity’s progress towards the contingent sovereignty mode is a process, rather than an event, a nuance that Duffield’s analysis fails to capture. Multiple instrumentalizations by both civil service agents and Qatar Charity staff impacted Qatar Charity’s progression towards contingent sovereignty. First, Qatar Charity engaged with the Dosso Regional Ministry of Breeding’s norms and unofficial rules of informal internal privatization throughout much of these negotiations. Second, Qatar Charity disengaged with these local norms in order to pursue a strategic partnership with VSF and several other organizations in order to augment its legitimacy and continuity as an international development actor. These instrumentalizations were central to the process by which Qatar Charity shifted responsibility for veterinary services for project participants from government agents to a private, INGO-sponsored veterinarian and began participating in contingent sovereignty.

7 Conclusion

Introduction

Based on existing academic literature, this thesis concluded in Chapter Four that Duffield’s concepts of contingent sovereignty and sustainable development as self-reliance are reflected in much of the interventions of mainstream development actors in rural Niger. Development responses to both crisis and chronic food insecurity caused by entitlement failure and decline are based in the appropriation of state biopolitical functions by international actors and a moral economy of the acceptable that allow for and expect extremely low standards of living and even intermittent catastrophic events for Niger’s purportedly self-reliant rural residents (de Sardan 2009; Jézéquel 2009; Glenzer 2009; Mousseau and Mittal 2006; Duffield 2010).

⁹³ Salifou 5/8/09, op.cit.

With regard to its first research question, this study concludes that, despite their alternative approach to interest rates, Qatar Charity's microcredit interventions in Niger's Dosso region also strongly reflect Duffield's argument for a biopolitics of international development supported by contingent sovereignty and the promotion of sustainable development as self-reliance. Chapter Five traced the centrality of the internal logic of sustainable development as self-reliance in Qatar Charity's emphasis on associative social organizations and changed economic behavior. Chapter Six detailed Qatar Charity's progression towards contingent sovereignty in the form of shifting responsibility for the provision of veterinary services from the state to a private, mainstream INGO sponsored actor.

With regards to the second research question, this study concludes that an analysis of Qatar Charity's microcredit interventions indeed suggests further refinements of Duffield's biopolitics of international development. Importantly, these findings do not refute or challenge the overall conclusions or structure of Duffield's biopolitics of development. Instead, by allowing for a realist analysis of multiple instrumentalizations by various actors, the case study reveals important social and political factors that influence the process and outcome of these interventions.

As Chapter Five argued, although an instrument effect of the internal logic of sustainable development as self-reliance reflected in Qatar Charity's work with the Dosso women's groups is their subjectification as vulnerable subjects and politically unqualified bare life, the women in fact behave as political actors in instrumentalizing Qatar Charity and other NGOs' projects. The women's strategic approach to attracting and evaluating NGO projects reveals the tension between "global governance and the governed" as important to Qatar Charity's interventions (Branch 2007:285).

As argued in Chapter Six, the negotiations that colored Qatar Charity's progression towards contingent sovereignty by shifting responsibility for the provision of veterinary services from state agents to the Cabinet Vetoprox veterinarian were also characterized by multiple instrumentalizations by both civil service agents and Qatar Charity staff. First, Qatar Charity engaged with the Dosso Regional Ministry of Breeding's norms and unofficial rules of informal internal privatization throughout much of these negotiations. Second, Qatar Charity disengaged with these local norms in order to pursue a strategic partnership with VSF and several other organizations to augment its legitimacy and continuity as an international development actor. The important role of these multiple instrumentalizations by the women's union members, regional civil service agents and Qatar Charity staff in Qatar Charity's Dosso region interventions support Branch's contention that analysis of the internal logics of global governance complexes such as international development requires attention to the lived experience and social context of its targets and implementers (Branch 2007; Palys 2003).

Limitations of the study

The current study has two main limitations. First, the interview sampling exhibits a bias towards INGO staff and Dosso project participants with government officials strongly underrepresented. This bias is particularly important to the discussion of the negotiations for veterinary services undertaken in Chapter Six. To address this bias, the analysis and conclusions in Chapter Six addressed the perspectives, strategies and practice of Qatar Charity

as an organization in engaging with government officials, rather than attempting to authoritatively represent those of government actors. A clear path for additional study involves a focus on the perspective of the government officials in their dealings with Qatar Charity or indeed other INGOs.

Second and more broadly, as a case study, the generalizability of its findings are extremely limited. This study addresses a very specific phenomenon: Qatar Charity's microcredit interventions in Niger's Dosso region in 2008 and 2009. The specificity of this case means that its conclusions may not apply to even very similar contexts. In particular, this study concluded that highly localized and contextual factors impact the implications of the internal logics of contingent sovereignty and sustainable development as self-reliance. As a result, similar conclusions about interventions or organizations of a different type and/or in a different location cannot be drawn without additional research. A similar study in a different sub-Saharan African nation – perhaps with higher levels of food security, stronger democratic institutions or different patterns of corrupt practices – might produce vastly different conclusions. Similarly, an organization engaged in water and sanitation or health rather than microcredit interventions might exhibit different internal logics.

Implications of the study

This study suggests several important implications for future research into the role of discursive formations in development interventions as well as the broader question of the particularities of non-mainstream development. The implications for future research are two-fold. First, by bringing Anglophone critiques of international development and humanitarianism into conversation with Francophone analyses of development interventions in Niger and Francophone West Africa, this study highlights a possible disjuncture in current theorizing on development. I have applied a critique of international development articulated by Duffield in reference to mostly Anglophone developing nations – or more precisely former British colonies – to a Francophone developing nation and former French colony. I have concluded that Duffield's analysis is indeed theoretically relevant to Qatar Charity's interventions in Niger, but this example may not hold for other interventions in Niger or other former French colonies. In fact, contemporary authors identify significant differences in the patterns of colonialism perpetrated by France and Britain and their contemporary repercussions (Gallois 2008; Butchart 1998; Vaughan 1991). Might not these subtle differences also apply to the operations of France- and UK-based INGOs and the internal logics that inform their practice? Additional comparative research might in the end prove Duffield's analysis "Anglo-centric" or simply overly homogenizing of mainstream development actors.

Second, this study highlights three factors that mediated the impact of the internal logics of contingent sovereignty and sustainable development as self-reliance: INGO engagements with local corruption complexes, INGO formations of legitimizing partnerships and local communities' strategic approaches to INGO projects. These three factors in Qatar Charity's interventions may well play important roles in other development interventions in Niger and elsewhere. For example, more attention to the intersection of corruption complexes and development interventions – particularly with regard to "the culture of per diems" – would be a useful development of the corruption literature. In addition, in-depth analyses of NGO partnerships and networks may support or challenge current arguments that such

partnerships are exercises in legitimacy and self-reproduction rather than efficiency and effectiveness.

Micro-politics

It is worth pausing here to elaborate on the last of these factors: local communities' strategic approaches to NGO projects. This factor falls under the umbrella of what Branch (2007:286) terms the "micro-politics" of such interventions. Indeed, it is essentially micro-politics that I have argued Duffield's analysis fails to capture. The centrality of the local, the contextualized and the specific – the "micro" – emerged throughout this study. First, the instrumentalizations of Qatar Charity's projects on the part of the women's union members and Ministry of Breeding staff proved key to the course of these projects. Prime examples of these instrumentalizations include the women's strategic accommodation of Qatar Charity's preferences regarding group characteristics and their appropriation of organizational resources to their own needs, as well as Ministry of Breeding staff members' charging of unwarranted fees for public services and engaging in (and fighting to protect) sidelines.

Second, the operations of local norms, in all of their specificity, were also important to Qatar Charity's interventions. In the case of the negotiations for veterinary services, these norms were the official and unofficial rules of informal internal privatization. Among the women's union, the practice of appointing a powerful patron as the honorable president and some members' determined use of their *embouche* proceeds to increase their household's livestock herd also reflect specific local norms (Adams et al. 2008; Swidler 2009; Bierschenk et al. 2002).

Third, the development of Qatar Charity's operational preferences and procedures was a process, one strongly embedded in these local micro-politics. This is most clearly the case in the organization's negotiations for veterinary services. Contingent sovereignty was not an immediate or automatic mode for Qatar Charity. Rather, it emerged over the course of years as Qatar Charity staff negotiated the local politics of working with the Ministry of Breeding. All of these examples of the impact of the varied micro-politics surrounding Qatar Charity's interventions are illustrative of the "different modes of contestation, instrumentalization, accommodation, and integration that make up the local politics" of development interventions (Branch 2007:286). Together, they contribute to a refinement of Duffield's biopolitics of development.

Non-mainstream development

In broader terms, this study has contributed to addressing the question of what, if anything, is different about non-mainstream development actors, meaning multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental agencies based outside of the OECD member states as well as non-secular NGOs. Using a case study of an international Islamic NGO based in the Gulf to evaluate and refine Duffield's biopolitics of development, this study concluded that this example of non-mainstream development exhibits significant characteristics of mainstream development. Specifically, Qatar Charity's interventions indeed reflected the internal logics of sustainable development as self-reliance and contingent sovereignty for fragile, developing states. What implications do these findings have for considerations of non-mainstream development actors?

As discussed above, a significant limitation of the study is its lack of basis for generalizability. I can draw no conclusions here as to whether the patterns exhibited by Qatar Charity in Niger

are representative of other Islamic INGOs operating in Niger and/or other Islamic INGOs based in the Gulf, much less the extremely diverse field of non-mainstream development actors. Nevertheless, the study does provide some indications of possible avenues for future study of these phenomena. For example, can all non-mainstream international NGOs be construed as participating in South-South development? To what degree can specific non-mainstream actors be seen as intervening counter to, in cooperation with or simply independently of mainstream interventions and their internal logics?

Although this study addresses the specific lack of research on international Islamic NGOs, the field of development actors based outside of the OECD member countries is wide and extremely diverse and future research must attend to these differences. Patterns in the adoption of development policies and practices may diverge according to the region, human development or income level, former colonial power, or political regime of the country in which the organization is headquartered. Indeed, an important question left unanswered by the current study, which focused on Qatar Charity country office operations alone, is what implications Qatar Charity's host country has for its operations in Niger. How might Qatar's status as a high-income and high-human development monarchy affect the operations of Qatar Charity, itself linked to the ruling Al Thani family through chairmanship of its board (Qatar Charity 2010; World Bank 2010; UNDP 2009b)? To what degree, if any, are its operations directly influenced by the Qatari state? To what degree do Qatar Charity's operations in Niger and elsewhere reflect Qatari geopolitical interests, whether in reference to the host countries themselves or other international actors? These questions remain unanswered.

Conclusion

I will conclude by framing the issue of the potential particularities of non-mainstream development actors in terms of Duffield's purported "normative aspirations" (Chandler 2009:57). Duffield's critique of the role of international development in relegating the non-insured residents of the developing world to self-reliance absent the social insurance enjoyed by insured populations rests on an assumption of international responsibility for the living standards of the population of the entire world. This concern with "a community of broader humanity" is characteristic of the cosmopolitan turn that broadly informs mainstream development and humanitarianism (Chandler 2009:53; Branch 2007). Through his critique of mainstream development Duffield implies – even calls for – an alternative model or framework, one more egalitarian than cosmopolitan. If his ambitions for such a framework rely on non-mainstream development actors assuming this mantle of a more radical construction of international development, he may well be disappointed. In the case of Qatar Charity at least, international development remains business as usual.

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D. Ibrahim Sani	Qatar Charity Acting Director	24/7/09	Qatar Charity Offices	Niamey
Ibrahim Issa,	Qatar Charity Dosso Region Organizer	11/8/09 and 25/8/09	Home of Ibrahim Issa	Birni N'Gaoure
Issaka Salifou	Qatar Charity Income-generating Activities Program Director	27/7/09 24/8/09 and 5/8/09	Qatar Charity Offices	Niamey
Tassou Oumarou	Qatar Charity Infrastructure Program Engineer	24/7/09	Qatar Charity Offices	Niamey
Idi Hassane	Agence des Musulmans d'Afrique Micro Project Unit Director of Operations	6/8/09	AMA Offices	Niamey
Idi Hassane	Agence des Musulmans d'Afrique, Micro Project Unit Director of Operations	25/7/09	AMA Offices	Niamey
M. Kerbiche	Agence des Musulmans d'Afrique Interim Representative	24/7/09	AMA Offices	Niamey
Moulaye Zeidane	Agence des Musulmans d'Afrique, Micro Project Unit Technical Assistant	6/8/09	AMA Offices	Niamey
Ibrahim Chalare	Islamic Relief Tillaberi Field Coordinator	14/7/09	Islamic Relief Offices	Niamey
Rachid El Krouty	Qatar Red Crescent Representative	22/7/09	Qatar Red Crescent Offices	Niamey
Christy Collins	Mercy Corp Country Director	30/7/09	Mercy Corps Offices	Niamey
Mbacke Niang	Oxfam Great Britain Country Director	26/8/09	Oxfam GB Offices	Niamey
Baza Issoufou	APELDO Director	7/8/09	Qatar Charity Offices	Niamey
Dr. Issifi,	Private veterinarian	18/8/09	Cabinet Vetoprox	Birni N'Gaoure
Abdoulaye Naferi	Dosso Regional Director of Breeding	19/8/09	Office of the Regional Director of Breeding	Dosso

Mme. Boubacar	Former Mayor of Birni N’Gaoure	25/8/09	Home of Mme. Boubacar	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 1, 2, and 3	Members of Wahida Union	26/8/09	Home of Anonymous 1	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 4	President of Khalifa Union	20/08/09	Home of Anonymous 4	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 5	Member of Khalifa Union	21/8/09	Home of Anonymous 5	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 6	Member of Khalifa Union	21/8/09	Home of Anonymous 6	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 7	Member of Khalifa Union	19/8/09	Home of Anonymous 7	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 8	Member of Khalifa Union	21/8/09	Home of Anonymous 8	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 9	Honorable President of Khalifa Union	19/8/09	Home of Anonymous 9	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 10 and 11	Member of Khalifa Union	19/8/09	Home of Anonymous 9	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 12	Member of Khalifa Union	19/8/09	Home of Anonymous 12	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 13	Member of Khalifa Union	19/8/09	Home of Anonymous 13	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 14	Member of Khalifa Union	19/8/09	Home of Anonymous 14	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 15	Member of Khalifa Union	20/8/09	Home of Anonymous 15	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 16	Member of Khalifa Union	20/8/09	Home of Anonymous 16	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 17	Member of Khalifa Union	21/8/09	Home of Anonymous 17	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 18	Member of Khalifa Union	22/8/09	Home of Anonymous 18	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 19	Member of Khalifa Union	22/8/09	Home of Anonymous 19	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 20	Member of Khalifa Union	22/8/09	Home of Anonymous 20	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 21	Member of Khalifa Union	22/8/09	Home of Anonymous 21	Birni N’Gaoure
Anonymous 22 and 23	President and Secretary of Kiota Union	10/8/09	Kiota Pharmacy	Kiota
Anonymous 24	Member of Kiota Union	10/8/09	Kiota Pharmacy	Kiota
Anonymous 25	Member of Kiota Union	12/8/09	Kiota Pharmacy	Kiota
Anonymous 26	Member of Kiota Union	12/8/09	Kiota Pharmacy	Kiota
Anonymous 27	Member of Kiota Union	12/8/09	Kiota Pharmacy	Kiota
Anonymous 28	Member of Kiota Union	12/8/09	Kiota Pharmacy	Kiota
Anonymous 29	Member of Kiota Union	12/8/09	Kiota Pharmacy	Kiota
Anonymous 30	Member of Kiota Union	13/8/09	Compound of	Kiota

			Sheikh Moussa	
Anonymous 31	Member of Kiota Union	13/8/09	Compound of Sheikh Moussa	Kiota
Anonymous 32	Member of Kiota Union	13/8/09	Compound of Sheikh Moussa	Kiota
Anonymous 33	Member of Kiota Union	13/8/09	Compound of Sheikh Moussa	Kiota
Anonymous 34	Member of Kiota Union	13/8/09	Compound of Sheikh Moussa	Kiota

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