

## ABSTRACT

### **PUPPETS AND TROJAN HORSES: INSTRUMENTALISATION OF TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES**

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This paper takes observations from research in Angola and Mozambique as its point of departure. In both countries, “traditional authorities” were delegitimized by the young post-colonialist governments, something which was exploited politically by the insurgent armies. Yet from the 1990’s onwards, the ruling parties – still in power since independence – reversed their policies and started incorporating traditional authorities into local governance and equipped them with salaries, uniforms and the insignia of the state. In return, they were given ever more tasks. This paper looks at two processes related to the new policies.

In the post-war phase of reconstruction the central state power had to expand its administrative grip and jurisdiction, even when disposing of very limited financial and human resources. In this situation it utilised and, to a large extent depended on, the services that “traditional authorities” provided in local governance. The process is here called *administrative instrumentalisation* of traditional authority. This paper also argues that the ruling party, or the ruling party-state, has sought to use the state’s resources to “buy the services” of the traditional authorities to reap political benefits. This process is here referred to as *party instrumentalisation*.

Does the double-edged instrumentalisation mean that traditional authorities are mere puppets of the state and/or the ruling party? The paper argues that they sometimes also take the role of Trojan horses within the party-state, representing alien social forces: Sometimes as opposing political forces, at other times bringing with them practices of law and “governance” partially based on local traditions and therefore hard to incorporate and justify in a democratic state. The paper argues that with respect to democratisation the result is ambiguous, though recent developments indicate that one of the main consequences of the incorporation of traditional authorities in local governance is reduced space for the opposition parties.