



ATTACHMENT AND DETACHMENT

LIVING WITH THE NIGERIAN STATE

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I explore how the Nigerian state is encountered in various places and how it is experienced as an active force in the making and remaking of peoples' habitable worlds. I am concerned with how people come to know the state through everyday encounters with state agents, practices, and narratives about the state, and how the idea of the state itself is socially constructed. I draw on phenomenological perspectives to explore the state as a phenomenon, coming to existence in the lifeworlds of people in Katsina.

I draw on the works of Michel Foucault (1982; 1986), and anthropologists Michael Jackson (2013) and Eric Mueggler (2001), to explore how disciplinary power of the state works through the everyday actions of individuals, constituted in and through them, and their actions in place and time and history. I use the notion of the state as a constitutive force (Mueggler 2001) as a trope throughout my thesis to explore the ways in which people in Katsina understand and experience the Nigerian state, and how, specifically, they balance the tension between attachment and detachment to the state apparatus and the Big Men in the state apparatus.

I argue that social changes are primarily *felt* in localized worlds; in bodies, houses and hometowns. I am concerned with how the formation of knowledge through intersubjective relations shape the ideas one has of the state, of society and of self. My thesis is thus an exploration of how the Nigerian state is increasingly encountered in spheres of social, familial and corporeal production and reproduction, and it is precisely the management of distance to and intimacy of power in relation to one's Being-in-the-world that becomes the primary mechanism through which people experience the Nigerian state as a constitutive force. As I explore how people come to know both the state and their Selves in the "time of politics", I argue that this knowledge is both a product of power relations, as well as the foundations of individual agency.

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INTRODUCTION

In writings on political institutions there is a good deal of discussion about the nature and the origin of the State, which is usually represented as being an entity over and above the human individuals who make up society [...]. The State, in this sense, does not exist in the phenomenal worlds; it is a fiction of the philosophers. RADCLIFFE-BROWN 1940:XXIII

This thesis is about people and the state in Katsina, North-Western Nigeria. It is an exploration of how the state is encountered in various places and how it is experienced as an active force in the making and remaking of peoples' habitable worlds. I am concerned with how people come to know the state through everyday encounters with state agents, practices, and narratives about the state, and how the idea of the state itself is socially constructed. This is an attempt at dismantling the unitary state, and look at the *how* of the state (Foucault 1982). That is, to not take the state as a given entity, but rather as a *process*; and a relational process as such. This might seem like a futile task. The state exists; it has institutions, employees, leaders and budgets, it enters relations with other states and has ways of regulating the lives of its citizens. My study is not to negate these facts, but rather to explore how the state is experienced by and come to be known to people in Katsina.

I explore *how* people and 'state' meet, and how people see and experience the state in and through such encounters. Hence, the thesis is influenced by Krohn-Hansen and Nustad's (2005) solicitation to study the state through the ethnographic encounters individuals and social groups have with their state. Their concern, and mine, is with the *everyday state*; that is, understanding "how [...] the historical field of power relationships and cultural forms that we call the state built, rebuilt and transformed in everyday life?" (2005:11). Essentially, these are questions concerning *knowledge*. Knowledge of the state, how to approach and interact with it, how to get services and support, but also how to avoid the state and how to challenge its power.

A vital mode of state power is the ability to shape and 'reorder' the foundations of lifeworlds: place and space, time and history, knowledge and conduct (Mueggler 2001; Jackson 2013; Nugent 2010; Foucault 1982, 1986). As Mueggler argues from China, the socialist state had become a "constitutive force at the heart of the social world" (2001:5). I will use the notion of the state as a constitutive force as a trope throughout my thesis to explore the ways in which people in Katsina understand and experience the Nigerian state, and how, specifically, they balance the

tension between attachment and detachment to the state apparatus and the people of power connected to the state. Mueggler (2001) uses songs and rituals in combination with historical accounts to understand *how* the state moves into the realm of human life. My data material can be seen as less concrete; I am primarily concerned with the everyday life, understood as the "ordinary acts of washing, dusting, tidying, burning, eating, killing or cooking, and social relations between men and women, the old and the young – the stuff of quotidian life [...]" (Jackson 2008:104). However, this material is imperative. Through the creation of knowledges a state can relate to, the management of movement and space, the state enters into people's everyday lives, and, as a result, it comes to be imagined and constructed, with certain qualities and powers. Thus, I am concerned with how the state becomes part of the intersubjective.

As will become clear, the work of Michel Foucault has inspired my approach to the state, and I hold that states, in efforts to establish themselves as governing hegemony, employ techniques of power seeking to increase the legibility of a population. James Scott argued in his book *Seeing like a state* that the state simplifications of the population "represented only that slice of [society] that interested the official observer [... which] when allied with state power, would enable much of the reality they depicted to be remade" (1998:3). What exactly Scott means with the "state power" referred to here, is not quite clear. However, his focus on legibility of a population through creating knowledge regimes, concerning bodies, space and history; that is, the central elements of human lifeworlds, and the governmentalization of society through the production and application of such knowledges, is insightful. Nevertheless, it might be argued, as Nugent (2004) does for the Peruvian state in the mid-1900s, that the state in Nigeria ultimately has been unsuccessful in its statecraft. The country is plagued with chronic political instability, high levels of corruption and unemployment, regions with entrenched violent conflicts and a state apparatus labelled 'weak' and 'insignificant' to people's lives (Bayart, Ellis and Hibou 1999; Rotberg 2003; Meagher 2012). However, such perspectives say little about what is actually happening in the lives of Nigerians as they attempt to live with the Nigerian state.

I therefore turn to questions of how people in Katsina experience their state as a present force in everyday practices, places and times. It is as such a phenomenological exploration of the state, arguing that a state *has* institutions, policies and employees, but it comes into existence as *an actor, an entity and a social force* through the everyday experiences people have with the state in various times and localities. I will argue that social changes are primarily *felt* in localized worlds; in bodies, houses and hometowns. This is where knowledges about such extra-local phenomena are produced to make them understood. I am concerned with how the formation of knowledge through intersubjective relations shape the ideas one has of the state, of society and of self. My thesis is thus an exploration of how the Nigerian state is increasingly encountered in spheres of

social, familial and corporeal production and reproduction, and it is precisely the management of distance to and intimacy of power in relation to one's Being-in-the-world that becomes the primary mechanism through which people experience the Nigerian state as a constitutive force.

ENTERING THE FIELD

With a population of 190 million (July 2017 estimate), one of the continent's largest economies and a central position in the African Union and ECOWAS (CIA 2017), Nigeria has deservedly received the title of "the giant of Africa". Internally, it is a country of contrasts, with over 200 ethnic groups and languages (Falola and Heaton 2008), multiple religions, and large contrasts between rich and poor. The country is home to the richest man in Africa, Aliko Dangote (Forbes 2017) and had a high economic growth rate in the 2000s (Alemu 2015). At the same time, it is estimated that over 20 percent of the population are unemployed and over 60 % live in extreme poverty (CIA 2017; Watts 2018). The economy and state budget is highly dependent on oil revenues (Houeland 2017; Watts 2018), but a majority of the population is employed in agriculture, small-scale trade and the civil service (Falola and Heaton 2008). Politically, the current two parties at federal level are the APC led by current President Muhammadu Buhari, and the former ruling party PDP. Historically, the political tensions in the country have had important ethnic and religious dimensions; between the largely Muslim north and Christian south; between the three major ethnic groups (the Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani and Igbo); and, between the majority groups, and the minorities (Falola and Heaton 2008; Maier 2000; Paden 2008).

The country was a British colony, amalgamated from a northern and southern protectorate in 1914 and up until independence in 1960 (Crowder 1966; Falola and Heaton 2008). Since independence, the country has had a bloody civil war, and experienced several internal violent conflicts, most recently in the oil-producing southern Delta region, and in the north-east where Boko Haram and its affiliates have wrecked havoc (Watts 2018; Smith 2007; Falola and Heaton 2008). Since 1999, Nigeria has been a multi-party democracy, with the elections in 2015 marking the first peaceful transition from one political party to another, as former military Head-of-State Muhammadu Buhari and the APC won over the incumbent PDP and Goodluck Jonathan. Between 1966 and 1999, Nigeria was plagued with military coup d'états; seven coups and two failed attempts (Falola and Heaton 2008). The military ruled the country authoritatively, using violent repression and imprisonment as tactics (Falola and Heaton 2008). Today, there are still strong connections between the military and the civilian political elites,

with the current president as the prime example. Furthermore, the north-south dimension has since colonial times been highly relevant to political conflicts, with a small elite primarily from the north dominating high positions within both the state and military apparatus (Yahaya 1980; Smith 2007; Olukoshi 1995; Paden 2008).

Current President Buhari, along with several other prominent figures, like former president Umaru Musa Yar'adua, hail from Katsina state, where I have conducted my thesis. Nigeria is a Republic, with a federal government located in Abuja, 36 federated states with state governments, and local governments within each state. Katsina is the capital of Katsina state, established in 1987 by then military head-of-state Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (Lugga 1993). The state is located in the north-west geopolitical zone of Nigeria, bordering Zamfara, Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa States, as well as Niger Republic. Agriculture is the largest occupation in Katsina state (interview with HE Governor Masari), with the northern and driest regions of the state mostly sustaining subsistence farmers, whereas the areas to the south seeing more rains also have developed commercial farming. In Katsina and a few other cities, there are some registered private companies, but most salaried white collar jobs are provided by the state apparatus. The major ethnic group in Katsina city is Hausa-Fulani, but several other ethnic groups are present. The religion of Islam has a large presence in the cityscape, and most people adhere to Sunni Islam, with the major cleavage being between the two traditional sufi sects Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya, and the more conservative Saudi-backed Izala (Miles 2000; Paden 2008). There are quite a few religious minority groups present, including the Shia-inspired Islamic Movement in Nigeria, as well as various Christian churches. The people known as Maguzawa; non-Muslim ethnic Hausa adhering to traditional religions, have for the most part converted to some form of Islamic practice.

Katsina is an historical emirate and the city has a long history as a centre of trade and knowledge. Around year 1000AD, legend has it the grandson of a warrior, Bayajidda¹, established the Katsina emirate, one of the seven 'real' Hausa states (Hausa Bakwai) (Lugga, 1993; Usman 1981). The warrior was a prince from Baghdad, who came to Daura, north of Katsina. There, he killed a snake guarding the city well, an act for which the Queen was so thankful that she married him. With the queen he had a son, Bawo, who fathered six sons. The seven of them then founded, or took over, seven kingdoms: Daura, Kano, Katsina, Zazzau (Zaria), Gobir, Rano and Biram (Hadejia) (Last 1967; Whitaker 1970). These seven Hausa emirates, along with seven 'illegitimate' emirates (*Banza Bakwai*) make up the core of *kasar Hausa* – "Hausaland". This refers not to a 'country', nor to a distinct ethnic group. As Smith (1964) and

¹ Loosely translated to 'he who cannot make himself understood'. I was told this is what the children had shouted at him when he came to Daura, without knowing a word of Hausa.

others have argued, Hausa is first and foremost a language, and the Hausa people are thus a linguistic category of people, rather than an ethnic group. 'The Hausa' (or Hausa-Fulani, acknowledging the historical intermarriage with royal Fulani clans), are however imagined as an ethno-political group in the socio-political landscape of contemporary Nigeria. Beyond language, people living north-west and central Nigeria share important historical, religious and cultural practices and traits, to such an extent that it today is meaningful to speak of *hausawa* - 'the Hausa people'. It was Bayajidda's grandson Kumayau who became the first ruler of Katsina, and established the Kaumayau dynasty, which lasted up until the 14th century (Hodgkin 1960; Lugga 1993).

Through trans-Saharan trade, Islam was brought to the region from around the 1300s (Last 1967). In 1806, Shehu Usman ḍan Fodio and his army conquered Katsina as part of his jihad to revitalize Islam in northern Nigeria (Lugga, 1993; Last 1967). Katsina was then incorporated into the Sokoto Caliphate, and the former rulers were forced to flee to Maradi (across today's border to Niger republic). When the British colonial powers arrived one hundred years later, they de-throned the then ruler and installed a British-backed Emir, Muhammadu Dikko, who is still highly regarded by people today and whose great-grandson is the present Emir (Lugga 2006; 1993). Historically, the rulers have been of Fulani ethnicity, whereas their subjects were mainly Hausas. Today, there is still talk of the 'royal Fulani'² families and the common Hausa, although in practice, the ethnic dimension has diminished, something people also acknowledge, stating "we are one people". The question of nobility and class, however, is as relevant today as before.

The neighbourhood (*unguwa*) where I settled down is located in the centre of the city, right on the outskirts of the oldest parts of town and close to two of the old city-gates. It was one of the first neighbourhoods being built up outside the old *unguwanni* (pl.) during the colonial times, and was used as residential quarters for government officials and employees up until the 1990s. The neighbourhood is well-connected by roads and there are several shops, mosques, schools and a market within walking-distance. The houses are of varying size and standards, the most common being small, gated family-compounds made from cement blocks and corrugated metal sheet roofs. The streets are unpaved and sandy, with open gutters and provisional dump-sites. Some of them have large trees planted outside houses, providing shade for people and green leaves for the many goats roaming around. Except on the paved main road leading to the east, the streets of the neighbourhood are not very busy. Once in a while a car, motorcycle or rickshaw will pass, but much more common are uniformed children to and from school, mothers

² Note that Nigerians distinguish between *Filanin gida*, the 'settled Fulani', and *Filanin daji* or *bororo*, in English 'bush Fulani', who live pastoral nomadic lives

in floorlength hijabs carrying food from the market, men chatting with their neighbours, and groups of young *almajiri* children scavenging the streets for tiny treasures. Over the walls of the houses, one can hear noises of the daily lives going on. Tools stirring food in large pots and grain being pounded in large wooden mortars. Laughter and chatting or a child being scolded. The coughing of a generator as it is started up, or the cheers and claps of children when *light* (electricity) comes back. Five times a day the *muezzins* call to prayer from the many mosques around town, and during the day and early night some of the mosque imams and scholars hold sermons and speeches from the mosque loudspeakers. It is a relatively calm and safe neighbourhood, and the only crime I witnessed there was some of the young guys selling *ganja* (cannabis) and other cheap drugs. It is this neighbourhood, Katsina metropolis, and neighbouring villages, all located in the north-western area of Nigeria, that make up my field-site.

METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Ethnography [...] is a practice that values the idea that to know other humans the ethnographer must do as others do, live with others, eat, work and experience the same daily patterns as others. – Madden, *Being Ethnographic* 2010:16

In his book *Being Ethnographic*, Raymond Madden (2010) provides a thorough guide on conducting ethnographic research. His approach to fieldwork echoes two concepts that influence this thesis, namely Michael Jackson's (2013) use of Husserl's concept of lifeworlds and Lila Abu-Lughod's (2016:264) use of the Arabic word *'ishra*, meaning living together. It is the profound realization that our world is constituted through intersubjective relations. As Kirsten Hastrup puts it, we do not conduct fieldwork in "the unmediated world of the 'others', but [in] the world *between* ourselves and the others" (1992:117; also quoted in Müller, 2000:17). This project is developed with these perspectives on anthropological methods in mind.

As will become evident, my voice and experiences in the field are present throughout my thesis, because I hold that the situations, people and places I describe have been affected by my presence. Furthermore, through being present in the field, my body and bodily experiences was an important tool when it came to exploring the unfolding events I took part in. I learned about what was going on, not simply through my informants accounts in English or Hausa, and observing encounters, but also through attending to my own body (Pink, 2009; Delaney 2011). This tension is productive in anthropology; between being an observer and a participant, between outsider and insider, and between the holistic and the particular. As Hastrup (2010:

409-411) has argued, intersubjectivity can be part of an anthropological methodological strategy, and I have consistently used myself and my positioning of becoming (Müller 2000) a social being in Katsina as a tool during my fieldwork, and in the writing of this thesis. I very much emphasize with Jackson's description of ethnography as

the kind of controlled experimentation on myself that might enlarge my understanding of what it means to be human. Ethnography throws one into a world where one cannot be entirely oneself, where one is estranged from the ways of acting and thinking that sustains one's accustomed sense of identity. (2013:10)

In the following sections I will go through the planning phase of this project, methodological considerations during the fieldwork, especially concerning access and ethics, and then provide some comments on the writing process.

The project proposal I developed in the beginning of this degree was a continuation of a previous thesis I have written at SOAS. In the SOAS thesis (Baann 2015), I wrote about the militant group known as Boko Haram, operating in the areas around Borno state in Nigeria. I looked at their rhetoric of violence and anti-state discourse in their relationship with the Nigerian state, to argue how they experienced the state as committing subjective violence against themselves, drawing on the work of Žižek (2008) and Bourdieu (1977). The literature study I did for this thesis, made me interested in exploring notions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity more thoroughly, as well as move beyond the existing literature to conduct my own ethnographic fieldwork. This master thesis is therefore informed by my previous knowledge and interests, and although the phenomenological focus I maintain in this thesis on peoples' everyday lifeworlds goes far beyond the work in the SOAS thesis, my concern with the experience of the state, is a continuation of the concluding points from 2015.

In the preparatory period, I established contacts at the office of the Registrar at the Umaru Musa Yar'adua University (UMYU) in Katsina, and was allowed to register as a research student. I took one semester leave of absence from the master's programme to do a preparatory course in the local and regional language Hausa at UMYU. Consequently, my stay in Katsina and fieldwork period lasted for both spring and autumn semesters in 2016, ten months in total. With UMYU as a starting point, I got in touch with a wide network of people from the very beginning of my stay in Katsina. Some became important informants, some acted as translators or as gate-openers, whereas others were interesting discussion partners regarding both academic research, and the local context and current affairs in the region. One professor taught me the *sunan rana*; the names given to children based on the day they were born. I am born on a Friday, and thus my *sunan rana* is Jummai, which I became known as in Katsina.

It was at UMYU I met Hajiya, who became my closest informant and gate-opener, my landlady and master of the house, and, most importantly, my local support and "adoptive"³ Hausa mother. Hajiya is a respectful title for older women and women of higher social rank. It comes from Arabic, meaning a female who has performed the hajj (Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca), with Alhaji being the male form. In the house I lived, my adoptive mother normally went by Hajiya in daily conversations. She told me I could use her real name in my thesis, but I have chosen to simply use Hajiya as her name is irrelevant. Those who know her will be able to recognize her in my writings and from knowing 'which' Hajiya the *baturiya* (white woman) in Katsina lived with. The rest of my interlocutors are anonymized in the thesis, although some may be able to recognize themselves in the accounts.

Living with Hajiya was both enabling and constraining. She was my gate-opener to the inner workings of the neighbourhood and her extensive network put me in touch with many people I would have otherwise never met. She taught me how to cook good *tuwon semovita*⁴ and *miyar kubewa*⁵ and how to properly hand-wash my white clothes (although, I never truly mastered the art). She laughed encouragingly at my broken Hausa, told me openly about her life experiences and perspectives, and always brought back news from town and from family near and far. Without Hajiya I would not have been able to conduct the fieldwork I have done, and for that I am forever grateful. Hajiya is a hardworking and resourceful woman of around 65 years. She is outspoken and has extensive knowledge on several topics, especially regarding religion and Islamic practices. For this, as well as for her family background and late husband, a senior civil servant, she is respected and often consulted with family or religious matters, by people in the neighbourhood and by those who know her. She is also highly respected for being a righteous and well-behaved Muslim woman, a reputation I did not want to taint in any way. This meant I had to adapt to accepted behaviour by Hajiya and other *Katsinawa* (people of Katsina). Young women especially are not supposed to go wandering around in public places. Going to school, the market, or a neighbour is accepted and expected, but not to 'hang around' on the streets without a mission or a place to go. Furthermore, an unmarried woman should ideally not meet with men who are not part of their own family without supervision. Since I did not have male (or female) relatives in Katsina, this was of course impossible. My research often brought me in contact with men who gave me valuable information, or who offered to act as introducers to other contacts, which I am glad I did not refuse. However, I did adapt my behaviour in other ways. If I went out of the house, I always made sure to have a reason for doing so, even if it was

³ Not in the way of Briggs' (1986) adoption on Greenland, through a formal process or ritual and public discussion, but rather through the ways our relationship developed over the time I was there.

⁴ Semolina pudding

⁵ Okra stew

just to buy oranges, or to visit a fellow UMYU student at her house. Trying to assimilate into the neighbourhood, and to gain peoples' trust, decreased the wiggle room to seek out some dissenting voices and marginalized communities (eg. Broch, 2003). One example is the religious organization Islamic Movement in Nigeria, otherwise known as the Shia, although they contain elements of both Sunni and Shia Islam. They are present in Katsina, and their activities were often discussed by majority-religion Katsinawa in negative terms. I could have done more to include their voice in my research, however, as this was not central to my research theme, I decided not to compromise the rapport I had already established in the neighbourhood.

Everyone present in this thesis knows I was conducting research in Katsina, and during data collection, I made it a personal policy to ask for their consent to recount our discussions and the things we did together in my project. That is not, however, a guarantee for everyone understanding what it actually meant to be part of the research. I may have made mistakes, introducing my project and later in interpreting and analysing situations and data. Sometimes, I had lengthy conversations or did un-eventful activities, like going to the market, and only afterwards realized that it contained interesting facts and nuances for my research. In such circumstances, I have always asked the people involved afterwards if I could make use of what they taught me in my research. The large majority of people I met were happy to contribute, and many of my informants sought me out with information. They know that the image held of Africa as a whole, and Nigeria especially, in the West, is a tragedy of violent terrorists, malnourished children and e-mail scams. The lengths to which some of the people I met went to provide me with a different picture, with the "real deal", still amazes and impresses me. Beyond romanticized notions of Hausa culture and tradition, they showed me the full range of activities they did, as if they had innate knowledge of what ethnographic fieldwork is all about. My informants have taught me how to cook food for Eid celebrations, as well as locally produced rice with palm oil, because "this is what we eat when there is no money." I have met with hard-working teachers, nurses and civil servants, whose everyday seemed far from the stories I heard on the "fantastically corrupt"⁶ country Nigeria. This multi-faceted Nigeria is the one I have lived, and will try to portray. Nevertheless, or maybe because if this, there are some stories that will remain untold, some things I have not understood, and some aspects written about, that people may not be happy about or agree with.

One time I was told a lengthy story on corruption in Nigeria, but when I asked if I could retell the story in my thesis, the person winced. 'Is that the story you want to tell about Nigerians?' he asked me, and then proceeded to tell a different story about hard-working and honest

⁶ As the then-Prime Minister of the UK, David Cameron said before an anti-corruption summit in London in 2016 (Chan, 2016)

bureaucrats he had met through his job. Another time, I was chatting with some young men from central Nigeria, who told me several intricate stories of rituals and 'juju'. When I asked them to use these stories, one of them said that "your teachers will not agree". After chatting a bit back and forth, it turned out they were concerned that I might fail if I wrote about witchcraft, since they knew Europeans do not believe in witches and magic. These two cases illustrate the pride Nigerians take in telling the story of their own country, as well as highlight some concerns about impression management of the interlocutors, and their ascription of roles to a foreign ethnographer. Staying for such a long time in the community, I do believe many of them got to know me so well that first impressions and stereotypical ideas of what a "white person" is like and believes, were back-grounded in our everyday interaction.

Beyond being respectful in my presence, I tried during my whole stay to give something back to my informants, to the community and, most importantly, to Hajiya and her family. After she lost her husband, she has been working hard to make ends meet economically, and, although she refused to collect rent from me, I helped with food and bills. To my informants, I sometimes brought food or small gifts of snacks or fruits. This was not done to 'buy' their time or attention, but because giving small gifts and reciprocating favours, as will become clear from the following thesis, are considered signs of trust and affect in Hausa society. In the house I took my share of the chores, and helped the grandson with homework. Sometimes I was also able to establish contact between some of my informants who did not know each other prior to knowing me. Nevertheless, I am fully aware that I am the one indebted to Hajiya, her family, and everyone who has helped me during my stay in Katsina. I also know that having this master thesis dedicated to them, will not help them in their daily lives and struggles that have continued on since I left Katsina in 2016. I can only hope that my account can be an example of a tale they could have told about their own community and society. A tale nuancing and diversifying the story of a Nigerian life, a Muslim community, an African country. A tale showing the compassion, hard work and skills of "the other", encourage empathy through showing shared humanity. As the Nigerian author and feminist activist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) asks for in her TED-talk, I hope to provide a tale standing against the single story.

A NOTE ON THEORY

The theoretical grounding of this thesis is based on phenomenological perspectives, seeking to explore the "phenomenon" of the Nigerian state as it appears in the "lived experience" of people in Katsina (Desjarlais and Troop 2011:88). This entails recognizing temporal, spatial and embodied conditions of human existence, in an effort to explore the ways in which both subject and object, Being and Other, and distinction between these come into being through embodied engagement with the world. Phenomenological approaches are concerned with how phenomena appear in human consciousness (Desjarlais and Troop 2011:8), consciousness phrased by Merleau-Ponty as "no longer[...] a constituting consciousness and, as it were, a pure being-for-itself, but as a *perceptual* consciousness, as the subject of a pattern of behaviour, as being-in-the-world or existence[...]" (2005[1945]:409, my emphasis). Several anthropologists have drawn on phenomenological perspectives, and my thesis is especially informed by the work of Michael Jackson (2013; 2008), and Paul Stoller (1995).

Although this study is built upon much of the existing literature from Nigeria and West Africa, the scope of the thesis does not make room for a proper exploration of these perspectives. The work by Jane Guyer (1997; 2004) and Janet Roitman (2005) on economic practices, commercial 'cultures' and networkal manoeuvring by middle-men resonates with much of my material. Furthermore, the work by Jean and John Comaroff (1993; 2006) on problematic modernities, the colonial history and money and commoditization is seminal. There are many aspects of everyday life in Katsina that are not dealt with in their complexities, including religion, gender, ethnic relations and economic activity. Being a study of a state, concerns of sovereignty, nationhood, and legitimacy are nevertheless left unaddressed. The scope of the thesis is limited, and I have chosen to focus squarely on the state as an experiential phenomenon; how people come to know and experience the state as an entity of resources and power, as well as how the state is entangled with generative social processes and experiences of contemporary society and own being.

A STUDY OF THE STATE

From the 1970s, political anthropology grew as a sub-field (Lewellen 2003), and quite a few anthropologists argued in the 80s and 90s for a new paradigm change, as "we too" discovered the state, migration, and integration into world economies of the villages we had studied. Together with 70s feminism and post colonialism, there was a growing interest in the complex manifestations of all-encompassing institutions like the state, and many imagined that anthropology now took a big step from its isolated communities to study the integrated, modern

world. Many of the themes and focus areas that were considered new and groundbreaking at this time, however, have a longer history in the discipline. Several of the classical anthropological works, like Mauss' *Gift* (1995[1925]), Levi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind* (1966[1962]) and Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's *African Political Systems* (1940), were concerned with many of the questions we are still asking ourselves. How are societies around the world governed? In what ways do people constitute themselves through social relations? How are questions of power interlinked with the spiritual or immaterial? At the same time, much has changed. Our interlocutors are no longer the subjects of colonial states; states distant or even left out of anthropological accounts, and we do not search for internal coherency in bounded cultural units, where the function of witchcraft, or other "exotic" elements, can be deduced from a structure. Nevertheless, many of the elements studied in the early anthropological work, will also be explored in this study. In many ways, my thesis is not an original portrayal of an African state and its subjects. But it is a unique study of some peoples' lives, and it is (an attempt at) a contribution to a holistic view of human life, "extended to the global" (Okely, 2012:20).

I began my degree with a wish to study the state, and was in the first semester introduced to a monograph that was to come back to me several times during the fieldwork and in the process of writing this thesis. Writing from Southwest China, anthropologist Eric Mueggler presents a thought-provoking account on the entanglements of self, identity and body, community, history and the Chinese socialist state. He writes: "The state [his informants] imagine is not external to the fundamental concerns of daily life, nor does it penetrate this intimate sphere only from the outside. It is a *constitutive force* at the heart of the social world" (Mueggler, 2001:5, my emphasis). Mueggler's account is what he calls an 'ethnography of place [...seeking to] understand how people *inhabit* particular places' (Mueggler, 2001:10). Tracing his informants experiences right from their very own bodies, through their houses, to the village and valley and out to the whole nation, Mueggler's account is one about how humans inhabit, and struggle to make and remake our natural, social and corporeal worlds. He writes about a community's "efforts to shape a habitable place [...] in a time when ordering space was a principal mode of state power." (2001:4). His approach to the state is one that holds it a part of "social imaginary", which, following Castoriadis (1987, in Mueggler, 2001:4), concerns questions of society's identity, ideas of who we are and what we do. Defining states as "loosely coordinated systems of institutions, policies, symbols and processes[, with a] capacity to affect events, produce meanings, or work themselves into the bodies of their subjects depend[ing] on how they are imagined collectively as unitary entities" (Mueggler 2001:4), Mueggler's perspectives provide guidance throughout my whole thesis.

Mueggler uses historical records, poems and narratives of the dismantling of a local institution known as *ts'ici* (2001:8,164) following the establishment of the new socialist state in the 1950s, seeing these as constitutive history-making where the state is transformed "from a personified external Other into an abstract internal Other" (2001:8). Through dismantling the *ts'ici*, the community no longer had any practices for understanding and controlling the new state power. From the 1950s, the Chinese state established new programmes and measures to control the population and create progress and modernization. Central in Mueggler's account are the birth planning campaigns and the introduction of communal labour. These are central activities for both individual and social reproduction of a society, and as the state changed its policies, it drew nearer to people, right into their very bodies, experienced as a force taking control over the very foundation for social reproduction. These changes are not remembered happily, and Mueggler argues that the actions of the state, as it forced itself into women's wombs, family relations between parents and children, and between people and their land as land was collectivized, created wounds that today are visible as illness, both somatic and psychological. Healing, then, happened through exorcising the ghosts who had come to occupy human bodies, and who need to be driven out with rituals, which follow local symbolic actions of flow and obstruction. These rituals had both semantic and bodily contents, as they through coherent narratives of the past recreated a practice of time in opposition to the official state history, and addressed the wounds of the community through healing the relational bodies of individuals. Mueggler's account, although not directly addressing it, is in some ways concerned with the same problematic as me, namely how do people come to know the state? My concern is thus with the creation of knowledge of Self and Other through embodied encounters between state agents and practices, and Nigerians. I will explore how the state enters into people's everyday lives, and, as a result, how the state itself comes to be imagined and constructed, with certain qualities and powers.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The first chapter provides a more thorough background to the place and the social structure, using the concepts of lifeworlds and intersubjectivity (Jackson 2013), in combination with Müller's (2000) study of vocational work and Mueggler's perspective on the state (2001).

Chapter two is about the Big Men, and the ways in which they perform their status through *distancing*, and how the 'old' and 'new' elites are increasingly dis-embedded from their localities and incorporated into the economy of oil, which the Nigerian state is so dependent on.

The third chapter explores how people attach to Big Men and the state, and how they participate in, experience, as well as criticise, practices of corruption and clientelistic distribution of money and services.

In chapter four, I explore how people come to know both the state and their Selves in the "time of politics", and argue that this knowledge is both a product of power relations, as well as the foundations of individual agency.

The final conclusion is short and on point, giving an overview of the individual concluding remarks from the chapters as well as the overall arguments of the thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

LIFEWORLDS: PLACE, SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SELFHOOD

It is like we were living in two different worlds, even though the city was the same. SENIOR POLITICIAN REFLECTING ON LIFE IN HIS CITY

When Nuredin and his friend taught me how to plough a field, anthropologist Hanne Müller's work on welding was immediately brought to my mind. Tacit knowledge, Müller writes, is more than that which cannot be expressed with words. It is knowledge as experience-near, integrated and embodied, knowledge as an aspect of Being (2000:14-15, my translation). In May, the first rains had arrived in Katsina, and in the areas around the city, people had begun to ready their farms for planting. In her village, Hajiya had a plot of land where she grew millet, beans, and groundnuts, and this year as every year, she arranged with Nuredin, the husband of her sister-in-law's granddaughter, to come and plow the fields. After a night of heavy rains, the ground would be easy to plow, so we went after the midday prayers to the village. Once at the field, the boys started plowing right away, but were soon stopped by a curious and eager anthropologist. Hajiya told them laughingly to let me try. Nuredin stepped away from the plow and I picked it up, while his friend continued to rein the two cows. The handles on the plow were surprisingly easy to lift up, so I told Nuredin's friend to start walking. The first furrow I tried to make, or rather, the beginning of the first furrow, was developing into a disaster when Nuredin stopped me, laughing, telling me I was supposed to make a straight furrow next to the others, not some kind of snake-shape across them. I asked him how I should balance the plow to make it go straight. *Kamar haka* – like this, he said, and picked up the plough and begun to plough like it was the most natural thing in the world. And for Nuredin, it probably was; the knowledge of how to do so embodied after years and years of ploughing. Through our bodies, we amass knowledge. This can be concrete knowledge about how to do certain jobs, and operate given tools and machines, but as Müller argues, the relationship between knowledge and bodily conduct, is not a case of knowledge as "an abstract unit" (2000:6 my translation) out-there, ready for human appropriation.

Müller draws on Simone Weil (1990 in Müller 2000) concerning the existential experience through manual work, to argue how "work produces knowledges of the existential conditions of the individual" (2000:7 my translation). In other words, the work we do, the bodily practices

needed to conduct a vocation and mundane tasks, shape our existence and experience of Self in place and time. This chapter is concerned with how the everyday bodily practices of individuals in Katsina and the tacit knowledge involved in guiding such practices, shape experiences of self, of time and of place. They make up the human intimate lifeworlds, and enable and shape engagements with what is more distant to self (Jackson 2013). Following the work of Foucault (1982;1986) and Mueggler (2001), concerning how state power is intimately tied to the ordering of time and space, and to shaping individuals into state subjects through disciplinary mechanisms, this chapter will provide the backdrop to my analysis. First, I will draw on Michael Jackson's (2013) use of Husserl's concept *lifeworlds* to explore how body, knowledge and landscape comes together to form intersubjective basis of existential experience. Then I will go through some central aspects of the social structure and sociality in Katsina, before I explore place and space, with a stress on corruption practices, drawing on Mueggler's (2001) perspectives. Lastly I will use Foucault (1982; 1986) and Müller's (2000) work to discuss subject formation and knowledge creation in embodied encounters with other social actors and places in Katsina.

LIFEWORLDS

"It is like we were living in two different worlds, even though the city was the same," the senior politician told me, on our way to a royal wedding at the palace in Daura. It was late at night, and we were in his brand new, leather-seat air-conditioned Mercedes. I had been invited to the wedding by a former diplomat and family member to the current Emir of Daura, and all evening I had hung out at his house, chatting with his friends and connections. The men often asked questions about my research, and offered their opinions and experiences from inside the Nigerian political life, although most of their accounts were quite generalized and platonic, possibly because of my lack of knowledge about them and their positions, and therefore my inability to properly prepare questions. In the car, however, one of the politicians offered some reflections from his earlier career. He, too, had once been a researcher, and one time he had to write a report on drug addiction in his hometown. Coming from a good background, as he put it himself, he was shocked when he learned of how widespread drug use was. I told him that I knew people in Katsina who both sold and used drugs, and that they often felt they had few other opportunities. "Exactly!" he replied excitedly, but then added a further nuance: They may not know about reading or writing, but they know the city and everyone who is there, they have "all the knowledge" about life outside his office; about how to navigate socially, economically

and spatially, to simply get by. All this *knowledge*, in combination with the challenges they faced, he said, *made their world so different from his own*.

These reflections were echoed in an interview I later did with the Chief Superintendent of Prisons in Katsina. Talking about unemployment and criminality in Katsina city, he said:

Many criminals have grown up in bad surroundings. [...] One lecturer took us on an excursion to compare Kofar Kaura area with one influential area. And even me, I knew the town, but there in Kofar Kaura, walking around in those small alleys, I got lost. Completely lost.

The concept of lifeworlds, as applied in Michael Jackson's (2013) existential anthropology, establishes human practices as intersubjective modes of being, placing individuals "in a world of intersubjective relationships" (2013:xii, original emphasis), and not taking subject and place as given entities with which relations can be made. Intersubjectivity refers to how human life and being are constantly changing, and that "our own world (*eigenwelt*) is inextricably tied up with the world of others (*mitwelt*) and the physical environment of which we are also vitally a part (*umwelt*)" (Jackson 2013:5). To start from a perspective of lifeworlds, and human life as intersubjective, is to explore the "temporal and embodied structure of human experience" (Desjarlais and Throop 2011:90), that is, to place human bodily practice and agency within a material, temporal and historical framework produced and reproduced through and by social practices. It is to acknowledge, as Desjarlais and Troop continues; "the existential fact that we are emplaced in a world that always outstrips the expanse of our being" (2011:90). Following Jackson, this entails an exploration of relations between and involvements in the "intimate and immediate" type of lifeworld, and the lifeworld "more abstract and remote". (2013:xiii-xiv). This dualism between experience-near and experience-far, between intimate and distant, between inside and outside, is productive, because it can be grounded in the existential experiences people have. We all have places we know intimately, but we are not restricted to these places. We have knowledges, ways of knowing and practices through which we feel 'at home' or at 'ease', as if our habitus creates a stable experience of self through the ways we act in relation to the other. Every day, we meet aspects of that which is new, unknown or unfamiliar to us. The remote lifeworld is no less real, and no less influential on our being and on our conceptualization of society around us. The intimate lifeworld of the politician and Chief Superintendant, were different from those of the street boys they talk about, who have their own intimate lifeworlds. However, the conceptualization of an abstract and remote lifeworld through the meetings between different individuals, different places and different 'technologies' and knowledge

regimes, is as influential to one's being-in-the-world as that experienced as intimate and near. To illustrate better, I will draw up an episode from an afternoon in my neighbourhood.

One day in June, my shoes needed to be repaired, again. Despite the sun still casting short shadows, I decided to leave the house right after *dhuhr* (midday) prayers. The light breeze would make a stop by Sule's repair stall, located under a big neem tree, more comfortable than staying inside a tin-roofed building without any prospects of having electricity to run the fan, since NEPA (National Electric Power Authority, also known as Never Expect Power Always) had given us a couple of hours earlier that morning. I put on my shawl, slippers on my feet, and left for Sule's stall. *Hajiya Jummai*, they greeted me, and laughed when I said my shoes needed to be repaired, again. One of Sule's friends said jokingly that a Big Woman like me needs to have many pairs of shoes to go with all my Big Meetings. I told him that if the cost of a tier of rice had not been as expensive as the *kayan daki*⁷, I could have had all the shoes I wanted. We laughed. Under the auspices of having to wait for my shoes, I hung around the stall for a while and chatted with the guys there. It was a calm early afternoon, the traffic of people leaving their offices and shops, in their battered Peugeots or shiny new Toyota SUVs, in a shared rickshaw or on motorbike, not yet having hit. School would soon be over for the day, but currently everything was quiet over at the brightly painted government primary school across the road from where we were sitting. Some of the street-hawkers passing by the stall, stopped to greet the shoe-shiners or to tell news from around town. As Sule was about to finish with my first shoe, a young man I had seen once or twice in the neighbourhood before, came running up the street. As he approached the stall, the shoe-shining boys greeted him with laughs and jokes. He laughed back at them, as they exchanged jokes in Hausa, speaking too fast for me to follow, and using words my academic linguistic classes had not taught me. The approaching friend pulled up his shirt to show what he was hiding. An old tin of powdered milk, with new contents. *This guy banza*⁸ ne, *madman*, Sule said laughingly to me when the guy left, running down the street towards his compound. *He sells this ganja*. I laughed and said that one day the '*yan sanda*⁹ will catch him if he keeps showing off like that. One of the other guys laughed and beat the air with a pretend-stick. Sule shook his head, and said " they [the police] are just useless."

As the boys continued to chat in Hausa, Sule brought out my second shoe and a box of glue with a strong solvent smell to it. I asked if it ever made him dizzy, to which he replied that this is his job, and it is not easy to get a job these days. "So when you take this ganja, it go make you happy,

⁷ Literally, things for the room/hut: the house items a bride's family provide for her as part of her wedding celebrations. They are costly, and the bride and her mother save up for many years to provide the bride with good, both quality and quantity, *kayan daki*. It can be used in everyday speech by females as an expression for something expensive.

⁸ Useless, crazy

⁹ The police, but directly translated it means the 'men of/with the sticks or batons'

but this glue only make you happy because you know you have a job?" I teased him. He laughed and asked if Hajiya had told me. I gave him back my most street-smart look, trying to say with my eyes that Hajiya did not need to tell me that he smoked weed. A small pause, then Sule said "*almajirai kawai wadanda suke sha gulu ne*" – it is only the street boys who inhale glue. They have nothing, parents send them here to the town, and they sniff glue which makes them go crazy. He continued to say it is difficult for everyone these days "to even get food", and that if nobody brings shoes to his shop, he will not eat, only "chew cola nut or this thing" - a common term meaning everything and nothing, but here possibly implying weed. "This is Naija¹⁰, Jummai," one of the other guys broke in. "We have our certificates, all these papers, but no job." Sule put down my shoe, now done with the glue, and neatly removed some of the things from one side of the table to the other. Under the table-cloth he had a folder with several pieces of paper and a book. The documents carried his name, and were certificates from secondary school. The book was an introduction to entrepreneurship and IT. Pointing at the documents, he told how they all had the qualifications they needed, the proof was there. But there were no jobs. He was not a lazy man, Sule said. When he did not have any shoes to repair, he would read in the book he had. He told me how they had started using this book in class, but now he wanted to study it properly, because all the solutions were there. He spoke lengthily about the book, and even read excerpts from the first page, all the while casting glances at me, as if to seek recognition from the university researcher.

The significance of this episode, as in the introductory example in this chapter when Nuredin taught me how to plough, is the easiness, the confidence and naturalness of acts in certain places, with certain tools and in certain contexts. The chat between friends, the habitual work of repairing shoes, and the know-how evident in the ways the street-boys joked and teased with each other, was in stark contrast to the insecurity and staccato use of the IT book and documents. Their knowledge of how to get around on the streets was intimate and embodied, not because they had 'freely' chosen to become street boys, but because to make a living from being a street boy is to embody the knowledge needed to survive, just like the farmer will embody the knowledge needed to plough his field. The objects symbolically placing them into the "modern world", as defined by the developmental postcolonial state, where books and papers define your "worth", had to the street boys rather become symbols of their exclusion from this world, how they had tried but failed, or rather; the promises they had been given turned out to be hollow lies. The remainder of this chapter focuses on these distances between 'near' and 'far' lifeworlds, on relatedness, knowledge originating on both experience-near

¹⁰ Nigeria

settings, and from the more abstract lifeworld, to provide a background to how northern Nigerians, in relation to the state, shape their being-in-the-world.

A HISTORY OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND RELATEDNESS IN KATSINA

SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND THE HAUSA ARISTOCRACY

The historical social structure of the ancient Katsina emirate is still relevant today, with there being a hierarchical relation in socio-political power, and often economic wealth, between the royal elites and the commoners. The division between *talakawa* (commoners) and *masu sarauta* (aristocrats) still figure in everyday speech, as well as in the ways people conceptualize the basic social structure of Hausa society:

There is a distinction in our society, between the ruling elite and the, I can say, proletariat, the ones being ruled. [...]Here we have a ruling class and everyone outside. Like in Britain they have the middle class, the lower classes, the upper class - all these things, but here we don't have these distinctions. There is just the basic distinction between the rich and the poor, the leaders and the followers. INTERVIEW IN ENGLISH WITH RELIGIOUS SCHOLAR MALAM ISAH AUGUST 2016

Historically, the distinction between the nobility and the commoners was the basis of the political system in the Hausa city-states. Through the hierarchy of traditional rulers and title-holders, resources were distributed in client networks, on the basis of which the rulers obtained support and loyalty from their subjects (Miles 1994:57). In the period before ʿdan Fodio's jihad (1806), there was a growing contempt against the Hausa rulers perceived as increasingly despotic and greedy (Yahaya 1980; Usman 1981; Last 1967). Whereas the theological justification for the jihad was the high presence of un-Islamic practices and beliefs in the Hausa emirates, the popular support came from a wish to overthrow unjust rulers (Miles 1994; Masquelier 2001; Last 1967; Yahaya 1980). However, with the establishment of the loosely organized Sokoto Caliphate, the new Fulani rulers did not turn out to be much better than their Hausa counterparts (Last 1967; Usman 1981). The *talakawa* have therefore always had a strained relationship with their elites, and their feelings of being cheated by the elites find resonance in history.

In the old emirates, the *talakawa* were stratified further according to their occupation (*sana'a*). In each town and district, every profession had a chief (*sarki*), who would represent the workers

in dealings with the political apparatus. *Noma* (farming) was not considered such a profession, but rather a necessity for survival, and all families had farms where they either worked themselves or used slaves (Madauci, Isa and Daura 1968; Masquelier 2001; Usman 1981). In addition to farming, a majority of Hausa men had a profession, incorporating them into a socio-economic position. Outside vocational occupations, education and religion provided pathways to prosperity, and Katsina was for long known as a centre of religious education and scholarship (Usman 1981; Interview with Malam Ibrahim, Interview with HE Governor Masari). Today, recruitment to traditional occupations has dwindled, although some, especially the older generations, can still recall the areas of town where people practiced certain professions. Family names can also bring back memories of the past, as certain names used to be associated with different 'occupations, including slavery. Whereas the barriers of old were known and visible, manifested in names, clothing, neighbourhood, as well as bodily conduct and posture acquired throughout many years of apprenticeship and work, the hindrances one has to overcome to prosper today are less clear. Like before, education, both Islamic and western¹¹, is considered a pathway to success; however, many experience the educational system as unfair, and skewed by the elites. The public schools at primary and secondary levels are underfunded and understaffed, 'all because of politics', as one teacher put it. He pointed to how the extensive clientage system and politics had infested decision-making in the public schools system. This has obscured and hidden the 'rules of the game' governing the allocation of funds and resources, and the procedures for hiring new staff and handing out scholarships. Although this division between the 'clear structures' of the historical regimes, and the 'hidden networks' of today is much idealized, the experiences of alienation from the political system are important. It connects to the distance people experience between themselves and the Big Men who control access to the state apparatus, which will be explored in chapter two, and the ways in which people both use their knowledge to attach to elites and people of power, but also how they criticize these practices and structures, which is the topic in chapter three.

FAMILY AND GENDER

Hausa society is patrilineal, and as Usman (1981) shows, the descent groups which were made up of several patrilineal households played an important role historically, providing individuals with political, social and economic support. Still significant today, and the source of as many

¹¹ These two forms of education have always been differentiated in northern Nigeria, in name and in practice. Children attend western schools in the morning and Islamiyaa or madarasa in the afternoon. Those educated in western knowledge are called 'yan boko or 'yan turawa

conflicts in the present as in the past (Usman 1981), the extended kinship network is seen as extending out from the marriage between a man and a woman (Tucker 2008; Popenoe 2004). Polygamy is quite common, and a man can, following Shari'a, have up to four wives. One of the first things that met me in Katsina, was how people conceptualized gender relations. "Women have no power here," a male student once told me. "We treat our women like queens," they are "not even allowed to work" was another common lecture given by men. These ideas are, of course, refuted through the myriad of practices and strategies used by men and women to further their own situation, to expand on their power in and outside the home¹². However, the idea builds upon the historical memory surrounding the institution of *kulle*, or female seclusion, linked with the coming of Islam to the region, and 'symbolic' logics concerning the male and female body and gendering of space. To start with the former, *kulle* means 'to lock', but it is also the noun used for 'wife seclusion' or religious *pardah* (Hill 1972; Miles 1994). The narrative goes that before the advent of Islam, men could have as many wives as they wanted, and he could force them to work his farmland, while he sat and rested. With the coming of Islam, men were 'civilized' into treating their wives with respect and care, to "cloth her and feed her," and only marry a maximum of four *if*, and only if, he could treat them equally without favouritism (which is much debated). Although *kulle* is far from as widespread as it was when Polly Hill (1972) conducted her studies in Batagarawa directly south of Katsina metropolis in the 1960s, it is still practiced in certain households, and many women in Katsina spend most of their time inside the house. "Some women are only allowed to go out of the house once a year to see the Emir," Hajiya told me once as the Emir and his entourage passed our street on horseback for the bi-annual durbar parade. Hajiya herself is by no means confined to the house; even when her husband was alive, she was known as an active woman in the community and she started her university degree on encouragement from her husband. None of the women I interacted with were in *kulle*, but their engagement outside the house varied from family visits with permission from the husband, to working full-time jobs or studies at the university.

Spatial practices, and the knowledge of power relations through conceptualizations of space, are gendered and the ways in which contact, access and distance is managed in the home and especially to the females of the house, feed into the understandings of control through distancing and accessing. The old houses of the central neighbourhoods of Katsina, as well many of the newer concrete houses where space can afford it, have a traditional Hausa architectural layout. The houses vary, but at the most basic the property is fenced by a mud-brick (now often plastered) wall, with the first entrance leading into a small, covered passage (*azure*), with a second entrance to the front courtyard located at an angle so by-passers can't see straight into

¹² See for example Smith (1981[1954]), Callaway (1987) and Schildkrout (1983)

the house. In this entrance room, male visitors who are not related to the females in the house are to announce their presence and wait for a reply before entering. Women and children, on the other hand, can simply announce themselves while entering. In this space in-between the outside street, and the inside home, the gendered spatial logic is reproduced through the everyday practices; the male visitors announce themselves and wait, women take off their hijabs as they enter the house, and put them back on when they go out. Echoing Pierre Bourdieu's work on spatial practices and Kabyle houses (1977) when he writes how "[...] the world is read with the body, in and through the movements and displacements which make the space within which they are enacted as much as they are made by it" (1977:90), the covered doorway to houses in Katsina produce and is produced by a symbolic logic of inside-outside and open-closed. This will be further explored in the last section of chapter three.

Hausa society, and northern Nigeria at large, is to a western observer a conservative society. A majority of grown-up women work primarily in the domestic sphere with household chores and raising children. Girls have lower school attendance than boys, at all educational levels (British Council 2014) and are more likely to marry at an early age. The women in northern Nigeria have, as elsewhere in the Sahel, followed the customs of covering their head and body, but in recent years, the floor-length jilbab have become very popular. With the influx of Wahhabi-missionaries and financial support to mosques from Saudi-Arabia¹³, conservative interpretations of Islam like the one provided by the Izala, currently the largest sect in Katsina, have brought debates about proper Islamic dress and behaviour to the very forefront of public discussions. However, it also deserves mention that the jilbab is an incredibly practical garment. In the Harmattan season, when the winds from the Sahara blow, wearing a simple shawl as a cover means you will have your hands occupied at all times holding on to the shawl, not to expose your hair or shoulders. It is almost impossible to do any physical work that involves bending with a shawl, (including picking tomatoes at the market), without it falling off. And, if you need something at a neighbour's house or a nearby shop, and the children, whom a Hausa woman would normally send for such errands, are out of the house, it is very easy to just put on a jilbab without having to change your inside-the-house-trousers for a proper dress and matching headscarf. That being said, with the growth of wahhabism and salafism in the region, women are less free to choose when to don a jilbab and when to wear other types of clothing.

The relationship between men and women, male and female, masculine and feminine, is continuously debated in both politics, in religious settings and in everyday conversations in northern Nigeria. I was repeatedly told of how men and women are inherently different in both body and personal attributes. Some gave a story, similar to the Genesis creation narrative in

¹³ Thurston 2016; Paden 2008

Christianity and Judaism as their example, of how Hawa (Eve) was created out of one of Adam's ribs¹⁴, so naturally, women are "weaker" than men. Others told me that women are very precious because we "get exhausted very easily", and hard work can damage the female reproductive organs. One man told me the analogy of women being like candy; very sweet, but if it is not covered up properly, it will attract flies and lose its tastiness. Popenoe (2004:61) argues from Niger how men and women are understood as different, but not unequal in worth or to God. As will become evident in chapter three, the conceptualization of genders in terms of gendered bodies and symbolic logics of 'openness' and 'closedness' (Popenoe 2004), have important implications for spatial practice and spatial representations of power relations, as well as one of the most debated practices concerning the Nigerian state, namely corruption.

ZUMUNCI – GOOD RELATIONS

"In Hausa society we have many ways of making a relationship strong," I was told by a lecturer at the University. *Zumunci* means good relations, but also the practices and rituals individuals can do to make and maintain good relations. It stretches from *taimako*, meaning everyday help or aid, to more structured "rituals" like *citare* and *degiya*. *Citare* used to be common in the villages, and it was a daily or weekly event where every *mai gida* (head of the household) would bring food from the house to be shared in the community, both "to bring people closer", as well as to see the financial situation of the families in the community, I was told. If someone brought less than normally, the village head would in secret find the reasons, and if it was debt, the debt would be paid by kinsmen without the indebted family knowing. *Citare* is barely practiced any more, and only those with knowledge of history, and the *tsofafi* (the old) have knowledge of it. *Degiya*, in the other hand, is still practiced to a certain extent. I was told it is 'for women,' and without the 'public' aspect. *Degiya* is the female practice of exchanging food during visits, and sending food with the children over to the neighbours' or kin's houses. I have noted in my fieldnotes how there seemed to be an almost obsession with the exchange of food items between women. Going somewhere with Hajiya, we would bring something from our kitchen, like the left-over's from last night's dinner, a small bag of grains from the farm, or a bottle of *zobo*, a sweetened infusion made from hibiscus flowers. On our way back, or at the next visit, we were given something to take home, be it a container of *awara* (a tofu-like snack), *tuwon ruwa*, or some Maggi stock cubes. It was never described to me, nor did I hear the word *degiya* in conversations other than when I was taught about "Hausa customs" at the university and

¹⁴ This is highly debated amongst the Islamic schools, and not mentioned in the Qur'an, only in some hadiths (Brown 2007)

museum. Although *citare* is not practiced any more, men have other ways of establishing *zumunci* that does not involve food. The distribution of money and goods between family members and neighbours, of helping out with work and individual skills, and through sharing contacts and networks, are some of the most everyday ways men help each other and the families of other men. These *zumunci* practices tie into other forms of relation-making, including what is often labelled as straight-forward corruption, and will be explored in detail in chapter three.

THE CITY LANDSCAPE

The city landscape is a productive space for sociality and subjectivities. Moving through Katsina, one is struck by the large differences between different *unguwanni* (neighbourhoods) in terms of architecture, spatial arrangement, and human activity there. In the old city centre, surrounding Kofar Soro and northwest towards the old Gobarau tower, most of the streets are narrow pathways and alleys between one-storey houses, many of them mud-brick with a small layer of plaster on the outside. Moving south from Kofar Soro, one passes Inwala and Sabon Layi, both relatively new and unplanned neighbourhoods with most concrete houses, and quite a few shops selling western clothing, technical appliances and cell phones, and pirated movies. Sabon Layi, meaning 'new lay-out' has an extensive non-Hausa community, and it is known for night-time prostitution and illegal bars. East of Sabon Layi lies Kofar Marusa, with its street market and old city-gate. Some years ago, the Katsina state government wanted to tear down the old Marusa gate to widen the road, but the people in the neighbourhood stopped the demolition. As the story goes, there was once conducted a ritual there with a sacrificial animal buried underneath the gates, and because of *campi*, the belief that evil can harm you if you do certain things, like sully a ritual place, the gate was spared. Now the road is wide enough for two cars, a rickshaw and a couple of motorcycles to pass at the same time, except for the crossing through Kofar Marusa, where there is barely space for two cars to pass at the same time. Continuing east and north from here, one passes through semi-planned neighbourhoods with cement houses, and a mix of paved and sand roads, until one reaches the Government Reserved Area, known as GRA. GRA is calm and breezy, but closed off, behind high gates and walled compounds. The compounds in the city centre also tend to have high walls, but the streets are busy, and walking through the neighbourhoods, one will always hear voices, from behind the walls, the sounds of pots and pounders, a generator running. GRA is quiet.

This city-landscape is not a 'dead' background upon which people move and work. Rather, it is produced through spatial practice, by the habitual movement of bodies in 'temporal places' (see Ingold 1993), effected and affecting by human activities over time. Mueggler draws on Henri Lefebvre's (1991 in Mueggler 2001) concept of representational space in his analysis of the Zhizuo houses, with *lived* representational space as the combination of "spatial practices" and "representations of space" and therefore "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants'" (Lefebvre 1991:39 in Mueggler 2001:54). To understand the city landscape as representational space is therefore to emphasize how the city becomes a "habitable place [...] made in language and the material world and [made] foundations for social being" (Mueggler 2001:10). The landscape and architecture, the movement of people and objects, and the natural environment cannot be understood purely in terms of their physicality, but are rather the building blocks of space as lived, as experienced through symbolic logics and embodied practices. A 'dwelling-perspective' as developed by Tim Ingold (1993) sees the landscape as 'a story', perceived through continuous engagement "with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past" (1993:153). Ingold argues how landscape is incorporated and how, through engaging in this embodied landscape, past memory is engaged and experienced. Ingold's landscape is, in his own words, 'not space' (1993: 154), likening space to a birds-eye map, with 'meanings *attached to the world*" (1993:155). The landscape where humans dwell is the landscape we move through and with. Lefebvre's representational space and Ingold's landscape are conceptually similar in terms of the ways in which they understand how landscape is embodied. However, whereas Ingold (1993) stresses the engagement between form and process in the landscape, Lefebvre (1991) and Mueggler (2001) explore the existential aspect, the realization of Being through movement in place and time.

In contemporary Nigeria the spatial dimensions of corruption practices and the representation of space through discourses on corruption are important for understanding images of state power. Phenomena of corruption are produced in space, but is also productive itself of spatial practice and representation of space, including topographies of power relations (Ferguson 2004), which will be explored further in chapter four. First of all, corruption happens in real places. It happens at the police checkpoints, in the offices of politicians and bureaucrats, and it happens in homes. Through knowledge of corruption, Nigerians learn about the landscape in their city and country, and how to navigate in this 'corruption landscape'. Secondly, practices of corruption produces social relations, and as such also images of how these relations map out in space. For many Katsinawa, government buildings, like public schools and hospitals, were daily reminders of the corrupt governments of the past and present. I was reminded of this by Audu, a student who had gone with me to arrange some interviews in central Katsina. As we passed the central hospital, I commented on the reconstructions being done. "It is not good," he said. While

the government was renovating the central hospitals at inflated prices, he knew many villages where there were no public health services available at all. "Not even a single room," Audu said in a frustrated voice. "Is that justice, Jummai?" I agreed with him, and asked him why he thought the government prioritized in this way. In a tone suggesting my question was that of a novice, he told me that it was because of the relations to external donors. "The EU, the UK and the Big People, when they come here to see what the government has done, they will not go to the villages, they will not go to the small, small places." As the concrete buildings in place remind people of their elites and how corruption practices have infested the state apparatus, a construction of spatial relations between power nodes is mapped out. In Nigeria, there is always a Bigger person, behind and above the one you see or know. Sometimes the person is in Abuja, sometimes, in "the EU, the UK" or elsewhere outside Nigeria.

Beyond the material manifestations in the city daily reminding people of their corrupt leaders, the spatial practice also disseminate knowledge of state practices and policies as well as changes in these. When travelling between the two neighbouring cities of Katsina and Daura, a distance of about 80km, you can be sure to pass at least six police or military checkpoints. On the main route between Katsina and Kano, the second-largest city in the country located around 180km south-west of Katsina, there are only two. The reason for this, I was told, is that militants from Boko Haram travel from Borno in the north-east, through Niger Republic and into Nigeria. The reason less often discussed, however, is that the roads between Daura and Katsina is a major smuggle route between Nigeria and Niger, with manufactured goods like plastic wares and cheap Chinese knockoffs going out of Nigeria and foodstuffs and international NGO-subsidised medicines coming from Niger. The smuggle routes are one way in which Katsinawa get knowledge of government policies, or rather, the implementation of these policies in practice elsewhere around the country. When President Buhari restricted foreign imports, to make Nigerians patronize Nigerian goods in an effort to stabilize the dwindling import-export balance (with the hashtag #buyNaijatogrowtheNaira trending on Twitter), the influx of smuggled goods increased significantly into Katsina. These smuggled goods were for the most part ordinary food-items, like rice, spaghetti and tomato paste. It is at first sight not easy to see on the pack of spaghetti or sack of rice if it's smuggled from Niger, or imported, tolled and registered at the border. When shopping most people I asked never knew whether they were buying goods from Nigeria or Niger. But they did know at what times there was a large influx of smuggled goods, and the ways in which this related to the government policies they heard talk of on the radio or on the street. The traders themselves were very much affected by the influx of smuggled goods, whether or not they took part in selling the goods. When food items are imported into Nigeria, documentations and stickers on the packages follow the goods from the border control to the market stall. Most often, the stickers with the name of the importing company and their trading

license are placed on the large cardboard box, which contains smaller boxes with individually wrapped items. As the smaller boxes are not labelled, the small-scale traders who cannot afford or store a full cardboard box will have to either obtain documentation otherwise, say a photocopy of the import documents, or to take the risk that they are not searched by customs or police officers. This uncertainty, however, lead many to ally with powerful patrons, who can secure them against random searches and overzealous police officers. As goods move through space and cross political borders, checkpoints and government desks, those who handle the goods learn about the relations of power and concrete government policies (official or unofficial), but they also come to know who they are to those with power. In other words, through the movement of people and goods through the landscape, the state apparatus is encountered in ways that both constitute ideas of power relations and the state itself, and knowledge and experience of Self.

STATE, SUBJECT AND KNOWLEDGE

Michel Foucault's arguments, interlinking individual conduct with relations of power, were pioneering and are still highly influential in studies of states and governance. One of his central concerns was processes of subjugation, stating "[m]y object [...] has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects." (1982:777). The notion of power Foucault operates with is a *positive* power, that is, not the ability to repress and constrain, but rather the ways in which "power is *productive*" (Taylor 1986:75). Foucault rarely used the notion of power by itself, but spoke instead of relations of power, and argued that power in itself, as an object of study, does not exist. Power is in relations and "exists only when it is put into action" (Foucault 1982:788). As such, the exercise of power as defined by Foucault is "a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions" (1982:789). The French word *conduire*, translated as conduct in English, has the double meaning Foucault drew attention to; as it means both to lead as well as to behave oneself, which is why in the 2003 volume edited by Rainbow and Rose, the exercise of power is translated as "a 'conduct of conduct'" (Foucault 2003:138); a *disciplinary* power closely tied to the capacity to govern, meaning "to structure the possible field of action of others" (Foucault 1982:790). In Foucault's work, power is not exerted by subjects, instead he sees the subject as constituted and re-constituted through the workings of power relations (Taylor 1986:76).

Knowledge-production is a central concern in Foucault's work. He studied how European states transformed in the 1600's from having been sovereigns with the power to threaten life, to the

being invested with "the power to *foster* life" (Rainbow and Rose 2003:xxix). Biopower is "what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power and agents of transformation of human life" (Foucault 1980:142 quoted in Inda 2005:5). As (European) states meticulously collected population data and made calculations about life, bodies and populations the "knowledge-power" or "regime of truth" necessary for government (Inda 2005:5), human life became part of the realm of government. Secondly, Foucault writes of *discipline*, which works at the individual level of human bodies, through how we discipline ourselves and conduct our bodies following 'social norms' produced by knowledge-power (Foucault 1986; Inda 2005). *Discipline* does thus point to mechanisms of internalizations of power relations.

As I stated in the introduction, I ask, not what brought human life into the realm of government, but rather what has brought government and the state into the realm of (everyday) lives. Such a study is not an abandonment of Foucault's perspectives, but is rather deeply informed by them. In the examples brought to attention in this chapter, I am concerned with how people, be they farmers, traders, or shoe-shiners, come to *know who they are* to others, including to the state. This entails an exploration of how individuals are formed into state subjects. In the translation of Foucault's work, there are nuances sometimes lost in translation. As Didier Fassin, amongst others, has shown; in his early work, Foucault tended to use the word *assujettissement*, which Fassin translates to subjection (2013, 2014). By subjection it is meant how one becomes a *subject of*; of how one is established as a subject in the eyes of the dominant. *Subjectivation*, used in later works, is on the other hand the process of which subject identities are internalized (Fassin 2014, 2013¹⁵) as one behaves in accordance with, disciplines or governs oneself so-to-say, according to the subjectivized identity. A subject, then, is both constituted in the eyes of others, and self-constituted, but this self-production of Self is structured by relations of power. This perspective places power and production of power at the very core of the social, and not as something external to it, a perspective on the reproduction of society much similar to Bourdieu's *doxa* (Bourdieu 1977). This, however, is not the full process of becoming a subject in the Foucauldian perspective, because, as stated, Foucault's view on power as *productive* not only refers to how individuals are made subjects of power, but also how individuals assert themselves as agents to be accounted with; as subjects to, along the lines provided by the dominant. Take education as an (highly simplified) example. Nigeria has since 1999 had free primary education and the state is, both in political statements and in practice, investing in high enrolment and completion of primary and secondary education (UBEC 2017). Through the educational institutions, individuals acquire knowledge, but not any type of knowledge – rather,

¹⁵ Fassin's (2013) work formed an integral part of my SOAS thesis (Baann 2015)

the knowledge deemed important to function in a 'modern society'. This includes reading and writing; taken-for-granted skills by those who already has embodied the knowledge of how to do so; those who acknowledge reading and writing as 'valid' knowledge and who identifies as someone who can read and write. Although the value of skills learned through educational institutions is established through relations of power, it is through acquiring such skills individuals have better chances at asserting their rights as citizens (state subjects) and approach the state demanding these rights.

Foucault's *disciplining* points to how relations of power are incorporated into social, individual bodies and identities, but his focus is on the institutional routines and official discourses. Pierre Bourdieu's work, especially his *theory of practice* (1977) was on the other hand more concerned with the naturalized individual conduct, using Mauss' term *habitus* to explore how individual practice and dispositions are structured through classed relations, which reproduce the conditions of these structures as 'objective' and natural. However, it is not to Bourdieu's work I will turn, but rather to Hanne Müller's writings on vocational work and welding at a shipyard in Bergen (2000, all the following in my translation from Norwegian). Müller wrote on tacit knowledge; that which cannot be taught through words, but must be acquired through bodily practice. She argued that the acquirement of tacit knowledge is not a question of appropriating some given quantity of knowledge, but rather of "becoming"; of re-establishing oneself by leaving the known discourse and passing through the unknown in a 'rite de passage' where the signs have not yet acquired their discursive meaning. What she does, is to incorporate sign-theory with embodiment, as she argues that every individual body will use contextualized, personal signs that originate in previous individual experience (2000:26). These personal signs are necessary for one to get to know the new signs that constitute the foundations of a skill. In Müller's example, she used her knowledge of what water looks like when it is about to boil, to learn when the weld pool was ready and it was time to move the electrode (2000:27). Learning to plough, I had to mentally place myself on a boat with an outboard engine, which like the plough, moves to the opposite side of the direction you take the rudder. Noticing the tiny movements of the plough reacting to my steering, my boating experience was my personal, embodied pool of semiotic knowledge. Nuredin, who taught me how to plough, has lived all his life around 850km from the ocean, and has never boarded a boat.

Acquiring new skills is connected to existential growth (2000:13), as the individual learns about self and Being-in-the-world through drawing upon what is already intimately known in the body, and incorporate the 'abstract', non-yet-discursive unfamiliar. Furthermore, as Müller shows how she learned welding through imitating what she saw the experienced welders do with their hands and postures (2000:22), manual work as existential knowledge is the personal

realization of the deeply intersubjective embeddedness of self. As Stoller (1995), drawing on Taussig's work on mimesis (1993), points out: "One mimes to understand. We copy the world to comprehend it through our bodies" (Stoller 1995:41), to which I would add; through imitating, we make that which is abstract and far into something intimately known. It becomes experience-near, and the knowledge contributes an expansion; a change, of Self. But this type of knowledge can, as Müller (2000) clearly shows, only be acquired through embodied practice in time and place. Going back to Foucault, then, the *disciplining* of the social body as he explored it (1986), has to be embedded in places, in landscapes and socio-temporal contexts. Precisely this; the shaping of experience-near knowledge in everyday practice and place, is the basis of my thesis, as I seek to understand how the Nigerian state seeps into these places and become, in Mueggler's words "a constitutive force at the heart of the social world" (2001:5); as an integral part of the realm of life.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIG MEN

In Hausa society, it is impossible to separate physical and visible manifestations of greatness from the actual exercise of power and influence; a man of true importance who does not live, dress, or travel as do manya-manyà ("big men") is a contradiction in terms.

WILLIAM MILES: HAUSALAND DIVIDED 1994:168

I heard somebody on the radio saying that their member [government representative] is lost, they cannot see him anymore. So, if he hears this [message], they want him to come to the ward, they just want to see him.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR FOR THE NATIONAL

ORIENTATION AGENCY, KATSINA BRANCH

During my time in Katsina, I met several Big Men. Sometimes, the meetings happened by chance through other contacts. Other times, I did what most Nigerians frequently have to do – I sought out a Big Man for his services, be it for an interview, for a document or for permission to conduct research in his 'field'. I have also met a few Big Women. I have met with middle-men and -women; those in positions less structurally defined, be it by economic wealth, heritage, office or title, and more dependent on their continued hustling in social relations (Bøås 2015; Bayart 2009; Whyte 1993). And, I have met with the 'small, small people'. The ones who, in the socio-political hierarchy, have few resources and most often find themselves at the client's side of a relation. These labels concerning social status are intricately tied with the ways in which people imagine the state, as well as how they approach and participate with state agents. Nigeria is a country with high levels of income inequality, and the high economic growth the country has seen has for a large proportion of the population not had an effect on their living conditions (World Bank Group, 2017). Unequal access to public services (Okojie 2010) and low electoral participation (IFES 2017) are also indicating that 'the state' is not equally present to all. The experience of inequality, however, is not unequivocal, and quantifiable numbers say little about how people seek to enhance control over their own lives and connect with powerful nodes in society, how people resist and challenge hegemonic power and power relations, and how individuals tackle feelings powerlessness.

In Katsina, it is not inequality that is most often brought to the forefront of discussions on the state and state power, but *distance*. The state is understood as a social actor, present in space, but less so in place. State agents are embedded in localities, but their power to make decisions and intervene in the lives of others, stemming from their position in the state apparatus, is connected to an imagined extra-local state; a force outside an immediate locality. This will be explored further in chapter four, but first I will start with the actual, locally embedded encounters between different people. In Katsina, the production of a distinct state; separate and outside a locality, is connected to the management of "distance" and "connectedness" to others, and hereunder, specifically the Big Men's distance to the conditions of the lifeworlds of the *talakawa*. Opening with a description of one ethnographic place, namely the durbar-parade during Eid-celebrations, this chapter will be an exploration of these processes along two dimensions. First, there is a concern about social status, and the ways in which men, especially Big Men, *perform* their status and masculinity through "being good at" (Herzfeld 1986) being Big Men. Highly gendered processes of distancing and controlling access and external influences on body and self are here central. Secondly, I will examine how people express experienced distance to the political apparatus, both as a personal problem, as well as a lamentation about the situation in "this our country today". This section will link 'access' and the aesthetics of distancing to the economy of oil and the history of the military in power.

THE DURBAR PARADES

The celebrations on Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, the two most important Islamic holidays marking, respectively, the end of the fasting month Ramadan and the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son and submit to God's will, are spectacular events. In northern Nigeria, the *hakimai*¹⁶ (district heads), travel with their entourage and horses to the city where their *Sarki* (Emir) is seated, to participate in various rituals of both Islamic origin and following local customs. Of these, the public parades, known as durbar in English, are the most notable. On the day of Eid, the emirate council and district heads mount their horses, beautifully decorated in a myriad of colours and bejeweled tack. There is a lot of prestige in the horse decorations and costumes the riders wear, as decoration is a costly affair. There are certain materials and styles, like hand-woven *babbar riga* (a wide flowing gown worn by men) and *kayan doki* (horse tack and decorations) from Borno, Libya and Morocco, that are hard to come by these days. Wearing

¹⁶ *Hakimai* (sing. *hakimi*) has since pre-colonial times been appointed by the central Emir to govern their respective districts on his behalf. Today they, like the emirs and other traditional leaders, do not have a formal political role

exclusive gear with a long history shows the position of oneself and one's family publicly during the Eid celebrations. In Katsina, the parade goes over two days, with *Hawan Sallah*¹⁷ being the parade on the day of Eid, whereas *Hawan Bariki*¹⁸ follows the day after. *Hawan Sallah* starts with the riders gathering around the Emirs palace, to accompany the Emir himself to the mosque.

On Eid al-Fitr, I went early to the family compound of one of my friends in Katsina, whose husband was to ride in the parade. When I arrived at the compound, the dapple-grey horse had already been groomed and braided. As the various horse-tack was brought out, I was told how the parade has a long history in Katsina and the rest of northern Nigeria. The historical roots of the parade lie in warfare. If the emirate was under threat of attack, or a warring raid against neighbouring enemies was under way, the Emir would call his *hakimai* to the palace, together with the warriors from their districts. From the palace they would ride out in organized sections, demonstrating their riding and organizational skills, and showing off their weapons and armour, both as an act to intimidate their enemies, as well as to assure the wives and children left behind of victory. After the jihad of Usman dan Fodio, and warring between neighbouring Hausa states decreased, the parade transformed into a celebration of Islamic holidays, centring on the traditions of the Emirate. When the British took over northern Nigeria, their policy of indirect rule through the emirates, in combination with a wish to preserve the "cultural traditions" in the north, the Eid parades transformed into *Hawan Sallah* as it is known today. I heard this recollection of the history of the durbar several times, and it stands somewhat in contrast with historical records recounted by Callaway (1987), Cohn (1983 in Apter 1996) and Maier (2000), showing how the durbars were introduced by the colonial regime in India to integrate Indian rulers and 'traditions', and brought to Nigeria by Lord Lugard. In other words, although the historical origins of the parade lies in warfare and in subjects accompanying their traditional rulers to prayers on religious holidays¹⁹, the form of the parade as seen today is a product of the colonial vision of re-inventing tradition to manage 'the other'. The colonial aspect is turned on its head in popular historical memory²⁰ in northern Nigeria, as I was told that the British actually "appreciated this tradition [of the *Hawan Sallah*] so much", that the Resident of the time had wanted his own parade. This is how *Hawan Bariki* came to life. *Bariki* comes from *barracks*, appropriated in the colonial days, and kept through the years of the military, when the seat of government was the army barracks. Today, *Hawan Bariki* goes to the old Government House, on

¹⁷ Translation: *The ride or horse-parade on the day of celebration*

¹⁸ Translation: *The ride or horse-parade to the barracks*

¹⁹ German traveller Heinrich Barth writes about the "cavalcade of the sheikh" on Eid al-Fitr in Kukawa, north-eastern Nigeria in 1851 (Kirk-Greene 1962:204-207)

²⁰ In the books by *wazirin Katsina* (the emirate scribe), Dr. Lugga, the durbar is listed under cultural heritage, with no reference to the colonial days (Lugga 1993, 2006)

the eastern side of Katsina city. As from the warring days, the equipages still gather in regiments following their *hakimi* (district head), or according to their position within the central Emirate.

The Emir is announced by two riders on camelback, banging big calabash drums. He rides out on a heavily decorated horse, with a young man holding a large parasol over him and the horse, to give shade and air, as the umbrella is heaved up and down. The parade goes from the palace to the mosque for prayers on *Sallah* day. Coming back, the *hakimai* present their entourages in front of the palace, where the governor and important functionaries are seated on invitation. Lastly the Emir arrives, and after the riders have greeted him their *jahi* (greeting) by riding towards him at full speed with their thumbs in the air and cheering loudly, the Emir holds a speech to the crowds. The next day *Hawan Bariki* follows, with a similar parade going from the palace grounds at *Kofar Soro* to the Old Government House, where the Governor and other government officials will welcome him. Following the parade, both the Governor and the Emir will give a speech, before the Emir rides back with his *hakimai* and the celebrations are over.

The first time I witnessed the durbar, it was from the grandstand by the gate, together with the police band and some families in their most extravagant clothing, the girls and women without their hijabs, all greeted politely by the police at the gate. When the emir and riders had left the parade grounds for the mosque, the field was at first taken over by children, running around, playing and pretending to be dressed-up men on horseback. After some time, the density of police and military vehicles increased, and so did the felt presence of the ones already there. Since morning, the various security agencies, from the Nigerian Vigilante Groups armed with sticks, to the Department of State Security Services in full riot gear, from local police officers with whips to heavily armed military patrols in vehicles, had covered the ground. The level of security should not surprise any, given the heightened security threats in the whole northern region of Nigeria, from both known and underground organizations, Boko Haram sympathizers and local hooligans. However, my fieldnotes evidence how I, the foreign ethnographer, was surprised by their *actions*:

Before the parade, the police took the opportunity to drive like mad-men across the field and in the streets to clear them of the crowds. "MOOOVE! We are more important!" People stepped away, but nobody seemed frightened or surprised. Just typical police behaviour, their reactions seemed to say. (Translated from field-notes in Norwegian)

Some police and army vehicles drove around on the big, sandy field like maniacs, as if it was vital to take up as much space as possible. Others, also at high speed, used the road and nearby roundabout to establish their presence and importance. One car, with armed soldiers on the truck-bed, drove slowly up past the grandstands and gate and stopped on the side of the media

cars, where some of the soldiers jumped off. One of them went to greet an acquaintance, two others went up to one of the television cars, and started to yell what looked like commands, or possibly demands (for papers, contacts, or money). Their combined behaviour made me wonder if they were more concerned with establishing their presence on the field, than with having total control on the parade grounds. Later during the fieldwork, I mentioned this to one of my informants. He disagreed and said their actions were important to scare off potential trouble-makers. A non-military strategic like myself can only speculate; however, with little control over who has access to the field, or over the airspace above, including the rooftops²¹, it seems unlikely that this was the most effective use of resources to secure the field. The ones who bore the lion's share of the physical force the security forces used were the local on-watchers, most especially the children. As the riders began arriving at the field after the prayers, the crowds moved further in-field to watch the parade closely. There were no physical barriers between the on-watchers and the riders. Instead the myriad of agents from all of the different security agencies²², seemed to be locked in a constant battle over the control over the space on the side-lines of the parade. Without warning, the officers regularly descended on the crowd, most of them *almajirai*²³ children, with sticks or whips more often than not.

During the second *Hawan Sallah* I witnessed, on Eid al-Adha, I decided not to sit isolated as a spectator on the grandstands, and stood instead among the *almajirai* and poorer families to watch the parade on the ground. Here, I felt the battle for space on my own body, as people pressed forwards to see the parade, only to be pushed back again at irregular intervals and with varying degrees of force by the security officers. One child was hit with the whip, the boy next to him laughed loudly. Some young girls squeaked. At one point, while we were being pushed back, I lost a shoe. One of the officers trying to control the crowds used his long whip on the ground, stirring up clouds of fine, Sahara dust, dried under the hot Sahel sun. Back and forth, the battle for space seemed interminable. Or was it a dance? Less a battle for the control of space, more an, at-times violent, dance-performance enacting the domination over bodies and place? Of course, it only took some ten minutes or so, before a senior police officer realized that a young *baturiyya*²⁴ was in the middle of the crowd about to be pushed back with whips and batons for the third time. He took me out of the crowd, to let me have a privileged view of the parade, protected by some other officers closer to where the Emir would soon be. As *Sarkin Katsina* was nearing the

²¹This was confirmed by a friend who works in the police, as well as during an interview with an officer in the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps

²² The Army, Police, Security and Civil Defence Corps, State Security Services/Department of Security Services and the uniformed Vigilante Group of Nigeria

²³ Children from poor families sent from surrounding areas to the city to study the Qur'an, but spending most of their time wandering the streets in small groups, scavenging and begging for food.

²⁴White/European woman

field, the crowds stilled in movement, as the cheering increased. *Ranka ya dade!* May your reign be long and good! *Allah ya kiyaye!* May God protect you! People cheered, lifting their hands up high, with the thumbs up giving the Emir *jahi*, signalling respect and homage. More or less, they were now standing put on their places. The security personnel, only a few minutes ago frantically trying to control the crowds, were now standing calmly and presentably.

FRONTSTAGE: ENCOUNTERING BIG MEN AND STATE PERFORMANCES

The durbar parade as described above illustrates several aspects of social relations between elites, state agents and commoners that I will explore further in this chapter. The presentation of 'greatness' (Miles 1994:168), with every man and woman dressing in their finest clothing, starched and ironed for the celebrations, is at its most elaborate during public parades like the durbar. The parade is also a place when ideas of "traditional" and "modern" meet, as the Emir, district heads and the other riders make use of decorations and clothing displaying their own belonging through, or at least knowledge of, historical aesthetics. The governor and other 'Big' government officials, sitting distant from the parade grounds on the grandstand, arrive in shiny black SUVs, which for many Nigerians have become the ultimate symbol of the modern Nigerian state and of Big Men with their hands on state resources (Smith 2007). These symbolical differences, manifesting the socio-political and economic status of different individuals both, are furthermore enhanced through techniques of distancing, evident in everyday encounters, both employed by 'Big people' themselves, but also by state agents like the security forces, who separate an elite (including me, the white woman) from the 'dangerous masses'. These distancing techniques have a performative, or *poetic* (Herzfeld 1986) quality, through which attention is turned towards the *performance of distancing* itself. In the following sections, I will explore the ways in which social status, especially a status as Big Man, is performed during "frontstage" (Goffman 1990) encounters, where techniques of distancing and controlling the effects of external forces on self and body, are central.

PERFORMING STATUS

Hajiya's village is located about 20 minutes outside Katsina with public transport. It is possible to haul an *akurkura*, an auto-rickshaw, or to take a mini bus en route to Ajiwa, a nearby town. To catch the bus, however, one has to come early to the station before all the seats are taken. One

time Hajiya and I were going to the village to inspect the crops, we went to catch a bus from the station, but as we got there, the only seats left on the bus were on the last row where the passengers sit facing out of the back window. Entering the station, I greeted the conductor and was about to jump in the back of the van, when Hajiya stopped me. *Jummai, wait*, she said. *I can't sit there*. I asked why, but she simply told me to wait, and started to discuss the price with a rickshaw-driver instead. Paying the double of what it would cost for two seats in the mini-bus, at least we didn't have to feel the humiliation of sitting in the back of the van with the village women (as well as two children, four large baskets and a caged chicken), staring into the private cars of affluent people driving behind the bus.

Questions of social status and roles have long been a concern of social scientists, with sociologist Erving Goffman, and Pierre Bourdieu's works highly influential (Goffman 1990[1959]; Bourdieu 1980, 1986; see also Hylland Eriksen 2010). Goffman (1990) defines status as made up of certain characteristics which gives the owner certain rights and duties, whereas roles are "the dynamic aspect" of a status; that is, how status is enacted (Hylland Eriksen 2010:56-57, Goffman 1990:27). It can be reasoned how sitting rear-facing in a cheap mini bus would not be in line with society's expectations of Hajiya, with her status as a senior civil servants widow, university educated and from a good family. By sitting in the back of van, she might "discredit the fostered impression" (Goffman, 1990:114) of her as a middle-class woman, and would therefore rather pay double price to travel in style to the village. In social interaction, Goffman argues how we rely on various "sign-vehicles" (1990:13) to evaluate the role performance of others. These include verbal communications, aesthetic presentations and various actions and factors we do with our body in the presence of others. In all social interactions individuals do not simply enter with an intact body and social identity, but rather, these are produced, shaped and reproduced in social meetings.

In Goffman's work (1990), although the phrasing "reciprocal influence" (1990:26) in interaction can draw attention to power being inherent in encounters, the (re)production of relations of power is less clear (Hylland-Eriksen, 2010). To shed light on these dynamics, I draw on Pierre Bourdieu's work on capital, taste and distinction (1980; 1986). Bourdieu was concerned with the reproduction of class structures, not just through production, distribution and sharing of economic capital, but also through what he called social and cultural capital. Social capital are the resources one can draw from "a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (1986:21), whereas cultural capital is our tastes, dispositions, and "ways of knowing the world", existing either embodied in us as habitus, as objectified in goods, or in an institutionalized state (for example in academic qualifications). As with economic capital, these are the products of accumulated labour and their value is in a

negative relation with how abundant and accessible they are. What Bourdieu shows is how experiences of class belonging and class domination are created and structured in the cultural realm, as one's knowledge of how to speak, dress, comment on aesthetic expressions, including art and music, and 'posture' are learnt tacitly in classed, and - one may add - gendered (Poepenoe 2004), environments. What counts as (valuable) capital at a given point in time, is not random or 'naturally' given, but rather a result of the structures of distribution of these capitals, which again, as capital "contains a tendency to persist in its being" (Bourdieu 1986:15), reproduces the class structures. As we evaluate others, and objects in our surroundings, through our taste, experienced and viewed as pure subjective choice, we reproduce the class structures our tastes are created through. Through taking what counts as legitimate taste for granted as natural, common knowledge, when it in fact is socially produced, Bourdieu holds, the symbolic logic of exchange between economic, social and cultural capital may continue. Frontstage presentations we do of ourselves contribute to maintenance of our social status (Goffman 1990); they are the presentations we give 'in character'. The ability to perform a status, and to evaluate the performances of others, are intricately tied with the possession of capital as understood by Bourdieu (1980, 1986). In other words, the concept of social status involves both the conscious, willed agent who performs him- or herself, as well as the unconscious and embodied *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977), that together build a framework through which individuals learn how to perform and how to evaluate other performances.

Conducting ethnographic fieldwork, anthropologists are uniquely placed to explore the interlinking of capitals, performances and social status, using ourselves as the tool, at the same time as we are, to a certain extent, bound to follow these logics as we seek our informants trust and rapport. Let me take language as an example, as it was one aspect I struggled with. There are many dialects of Hausa, and since I stayed in Katsina and associated with many people who spoke the Katsina dialect, that was the dialect I tended to speak. In the Katsina-dialect the f-sound has a tendency to be pronounced in a way similar to h, which means words like *lafiya*²⁵, *zafi*²⁶ and *jafi*²⁷ sound more like *lahiya*, *zahi* and *jahi*. This brought me corrections from a lecturer at UMYU: "No no, Jummai, we do not say *lahiya lau*, it is *lafiya lau*! With F - 'eff' - *laffffiya*." I told him how I was only copying the Hausa I had heard at the markets, on the streets and chatting with the *akurkura* drivers. He looked perplexed at me, and told me that these people are not educated people like us! They don't know how to write Hausa properly, maybe they can't even write at all, he said. He continued to tell me that I had to use the proper language, and not the common language of the "small small people." Language is a marker of class, and as a

²⁵ Fine/good

²⁶ heat

²⁷ traditional greeting

university researcher, I was expected to speak the 'upper class' dialect. However, outside university, I spent much of my time with the 'small small people' and I felt it unnatural to distance myself from them by speaking the Hausa of "the educated people," although I most certainly is one of them by number of years at university. However, it is to this *distance* I will now turn. Logics of distancing and closeness, and of drawing attention to sameness and difference in social interaction, I dare-say happen in all societies. In Katsina, however, there is a peculiar connection between the individual performances of status through techniques of distancing and the ways in which people have come to imagine the contemporary Nigerian state. This logic has the Big Man as the locust.

BIG MAN PERFORMANCES

The literature on Big Men, and especially clientellistic distribution of resources and services, will be further explored in the coming chapter. Here I am concerned with the ways in which those who are seen as Big Men perform their status in specific ways. These performances are symbolically analogous of state performances, as Nigerians today know there are strong connections between someone's ability to succeed economically and politically, and one's connections to and position in, the state apparatus (Apter 2005; Smith 2007). Both Miles (1986) regarding Hausa society, and Smith (2007) concerned with Nigerian politics, point to how Nigerian elites are *expected* to display their wealth and 'greatness' ostentatiously. I will argue that the symbolic logic that governs this display, shape the images people have of 'power' and 'state' in Nigeria today.

The terms Big Man and Big Men are emic terms in use in Nigeria, both in Hausa, in English and in Pidgin English. I heard the Hausa terms *babban mutum* (Big Man) and *manya-manya* (*Big People*) in daily conversations, and they are used in the literature and music. First of all, a Big Man is a *man*. There are Big Women too, but I have met so very few of them, that I am not in a position to properly, explore logics of 'big-womanism'. This is a bias in my material, but it is underscored by the real bias, namely how there are many more Big Men and men entrusted with important roles in the Nigerian state apparatus (Ogbonna 2016; Oluyemi 2016). Secondly, the symbolic logic which governs Big Man performances is highly gendered, and produces and reproduces gendered spaces. The symbolic core of these performances is the dialectic between openness and closedness (Popenoe 2004), between distancing and contact. Two works on gender performativity, namely Michael Herzfeld's writings from Greece (1986) and Rebecca Popenoe's work from Niger (2004), have influenced the following argument.

Popenoe explores bodily practice and symbolic constructions of female and male bodies among the Azawagh Arabs Moors in north-eastern Niger. She argues how among the Moors the:

[...]fundamental difference between female and male bodies – one cut, open, and vulnerable; the other strong, upright, and whole – is the bedrock on which expected female and male comportment, spatial relations, eating, dress, and all interaction are founded” (2004:138)

A similar distinction between the female body as more open than the male, and men being more able to control their ‘openness’ than women, operates in Hausa society as well. Although there are several differences between the Hausa and the Moors, most especially how the Moor practice of fattening female bodies to produce female and male *bodies as opposites* is not evident now or historically among the Hausa, the confinements of this thesis limits my discussion to the aspect relevant for the current topic. The association between femininity, openness, and interiority, and masculinity, “wholeness” and outwardness, is evident in Katsina both in conceptualizations of male and female, and in gendered spatial practices. As I will come back to in chapter three, I was often told how the female body is more vulnerable because of its openness, than the male body. Both men and women expressed the need for women to cover up, not only because of ‘decency’ and the problematic sexual attraction men have to uncovered female bodies, but also because to uncover is to expose openness to outside forces, be it cold winds causing runny noses, or spirits entering through body openings. Women were often conceptualized as less able to control the effects of outside forces on their own bodies, whereas men were implicitly more able of such control. To be a man, then, is partly based on the idea of the masculine as that which can close off, keep away outside forces, and distance the Self from that which may affect one's body and self. Bourdieu's practice theory (1977) influences Popenoe's work, as well as mine, and Popenoe writes “the relationship between space and social life is not one of mapping, metaphor, or model” (2004:156), but the gendered organization of space is rather, and here she quotes Bourdieu, “a context developed through practice – that is, through the interaction of individuals” (Bourdieu 1986:116 in Popenoe 2004:156).

In Katsina, the gendering of public space as a masculine space, is connected to how men perform their masculinity through principles demonstrating the closed and unaffected body. In these frontstage performances of masculinity, techniques of distancing form the baseline of *poetic social interaction*, as developed by Michael Herzfeld:

A successful performance of personal identity concentrates the audience's attention on the performance itself[...] It is in this self-allusiveness of social performances, and in the concomitant backgrounding of everyday considerations, that we can discern a poetics of

social interaction. The self is not presented within everyday life so much as in front of it (Herzfeld, 1986:10-11).

Writing from the island of Crete in Greece, Herzfeld (1986) employs a semiotic reading of manhood and masculinity in a small mountain community. He draws on the emic term *simasia*, translated to English as *meaning*, to argue how Greek village men value the actions of themselves and others through the *simasia* of their actions, an assessment based on *how* an act is performed. Herzfeld introduces the notion of *poetic social interaction*, to argue how the significance of actions is assessed in the performance of these actions, where the symbolic and the ordinary merge. His informants stressed the importance of "being good at being a man" (Herzfeld, 1986:16), and Herzfeld argues how *eghoismos*, or self-regard, is a social value through which men can perform their male excellence as well as assess the performance of others. Such performative aspects of gender are tied with performances of social status. In Katsina, Herzfeld's (1986) concept of poetic social interaction is helpful, because it draws focus to the performance itself, and the *how* of a performance. As Miles (1994) has pointed out, the Big Man who does not display his greatness on his person and in his style of living, is rarely seen as a proper Big Man of power and connections. Beyond aesthetics, however, the concept poetic social interaction highlights the performative aspect of display of wealth and status. As Herzfeld's Greek men draw attention to *how good they are at being men* through *eghoismos*, in Katsina a man is good at being a man through performing *distancing* and *unaffectedness*.

Distance is a many-faceted concept, but here it is understood as the simple *distance between*. In Hausa, *nisa*, meaning distance in space, would be the proper translation, although I feel the need to point out how it is here used as an analytical concept, and not an *emic* term concerning social status. *Nisa* is used in conversations to describe distance between the living conditions of the *talakawa* and the ruling elites, much in the same way as one would use inequality in English, but not in relation to performance of social status or masculinity in the way I employ it as an analytic term. As Herzfeld (1986) argues, a poetic social interaction draws attention to the performance itself, where distancing and appearance of closedness is at the core in Katsina. To a certain extent, my argument is similar to what Mary Douglas wrote concerning polluting objects and relations (1966), however, in the performances of masculinity and bigman-ism in Katsina, the 'pollution' is not symbolically given or structured, but rather continuously created and re-created through the practices of Big Men in public performances. The importance is not in the symbolic content of a polluting object, but rather in how the *performance* fixates the audiences' attention on the performance of distancing itself. Let me draw up some examples:

Personal attire:

To wear a clean, white *babbar riga*, ironed crisp with visible, straight folding edges, is a male symbol of status and wealth. *Babbar riga*, literally 'big', or large, piece of clothing in Hausa, is a type of robe or tunic worn by many Hausa men. It has several meters of fabric, sown together in the sides, and folded up on the shoulders, and worn with a fitted cut tunic and trousers underneath. A proper *babbar riga* has embroidery around the neck and on the front, and the more embroidery, the more expensive the robe. Some are also made of hand-woven material, and the colours and designs can to a certain extent give information about heritage and nobility, as well as monetary wealth. To have a clean and neat, ironed crisp, *babbar riga* shows you off to society as a man of means and importance. At the same time, it is part of a performance, drawing (unconscious) attention to the ability to control over one's surroundings. In Nigeria, public supply of both water and electricity is erratic. Laundry is for the majority done manually, most often by female family members. Ironing can only be done when there is 'light', which at worst can be weeks apart, or if there is a generator connected to the house, *and* there is money to keep it running. To have neat clothes as personal attire is therefore, beyond being manifestations of monetary wealth, part of a performance in the everyday poetic social interaction, drawing attention to how much in control the performer is over his surroundings. The clothes the wealthy wear are not only expensive, but also well-kept, presenting them as someone who manages to distance themselves from the dusty savannah everyone has to wander and the conditions there that others are unable to control.

Environmental surroundings:

The wealthy have several tools to keep society and surroundings at a distance, or rather, at such a distance that the presentation of self is not affected. The AC in offices and cars is such a tool. It keeps the blazing heat at a distance. In an AC room, the heat does not control you, it does not exhaust you or make you sweat out your nice clothes. Rather, you are able to distance yourself from the climate, and, by presenting the air-conditioned car or room as your living environment to the world, you perform your status. Everyone who has entered an AC-cooled room from an outside temperature of 45 degrees Celsius or more, can recognize the feeling described in Festus Iyayi's novel *Violence*, as the protagonist Idemudia, a working-class man, is invited into the air-conditioned house of a wealthy businessman for a cold beer:

The cold beer tasted so good that unconsciously, he licked his lips. He sighed. It was good to be treated like a human being, he thought. It was good, sitting down in the cool and quiet [...] drinking this cold bitter beer served in a tall beer glass. (1979:284-5)

It is relaxing to sit behind car windows as the noisy, dusty, and crowded life outside passes by, being only spectator, not a participant. To ride in a private car is to be in control over when and how one enters society, by scrolling down the window, asking the young boy selling dates 'nawa nawa ne?' - how much for each of them? – and then handing him twenty naira for two bags before sliding up the window again. It also *presents* you as the one in control over contact. Sitting in a rickshaw or on a motorbike, hawkers continuously approach with the intent of selling everything and nothing. Inside a car, one is much less affected by the hawkers, and their daily struggles to put food in their stomachs.

Personal availability:

A Big Man is one who makes others wait. He is not the one to re-arrange his personal schedule, but will allow access to his time at his own will. There is a performative quality to this management of access. I tried a couple of times in the beginning of my stay to arrange meetings with some of the senior politicians in Katsina, but quickly realized they were not going to be any door-openers for me, so I left the quest for their time. Towards the end of my stay, I met someone who had contacts at the governor's office. After some back and forth over the phone, with lots of empty promises, I got tired of hearing 'call back next week,' and concluded that I would not be able to conduct interviews with any high-ranking government official. Then, during my last week in Katsina, I got a courtesy call from this contact, calling to greet me. When I told him how I was leaving Katsina in four days, to travel back to Norway, he exclaimed: "But you have to meet the Governor!" Suddenly, the tables were turned, and the next day, admittedly late at night, I was given an hour to interview with Governor Masari.

GENDERING PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AND SPACE

To be in control over, and keep at a distance, the forces affecting one's attire, body and time, is a central aspect of how the Big Men perform their status in frontstage encounters. I have chosen to draw on Goffman's (1990) terms frontstage, to highlight how these encounters can happen both on the streets and in homes, with the significance being on how the performance seeks to enhance and maintain the performer's social status. However, there is an important spatial element to the dynamic, as these performances contribute to the gendering of 'public' place in the same way as they are produced by gendered logics. Drawing on Frøystad's (2011) elaboration of Goffman's (1963, in Frøystad 2011) work on public places, a public place is here understood as a place where one may meet anonymous strangers and where access can be unrestricted or partly restricted. Frøystad explores logics of class and caste identifications and

practices of social distancing in India, arguing that the middle-class in tend to favour "restricted spaces which 'homogenise' the people present" (2011: 159). She studied enclosed spaces, like sporting clubs and trade fairs, which are present in Katsina and in my data material as well, however, my focus here is a different one. Following the logic of distancing, and as will be explored further in chapter three, the public place is gendered partly through the symbolic logics of openness and closed-ness of gendered bodies. As the female body is held to be more open and prone to be affected by outside forces, the public place can be a dangerous place. A man, on the other hand, is held to have a more closed off body, and thus able to keep forces at a distance. This distance, however, has to be performed, and performed, precisely, frontstage in public spaces. These performance-practices, then, contribute to a gendering of public space as a masculine space.

Despite the public space and performances of distance being highly associated with men, women are not necessarily strangers to moving around in the city-scape, interacting with others, and of drawing on symbolic logics to perform a status. During my fieldwork, Hajiya got news of a plot of land on the eastern edge of town that her husband had acquired before he died. We therefore set out with the mission of finding the sale recorded in the land registry at Katsina local government. After consulting with male relatives, including a senior civil servant with the Katsina state government, Hajiya was told to go to the local government office for land, bringing with her the documents she had. The first time, out of three, we went there, we hauled a rickshaw in the early afternoon, after the one o'clock prayers. It was still hot outside, and the breeze in the open rickshaw as we drove felt good. As we neared the General Hospital, the road became crowded with people, cows, goods and motorbikes. Close to the crossroad leading to the 'Yarkutungu market, everything had stopped because of a tilted cart. Our driver got out of the vehicle to see if he could pass around, but it did not take him long to conclude that we might be stuck for a while. I suggested just walking to the office, instead of spending time stuck in traffic. Hajiya looked out of the rickshaw again, and told the driver to go back instead, at the same time suggesting a new price to the driver for taking a longer route. After some haggling the driver turned back and took us on a detour around 'Yarkutungu to the offices. The price doubled, but at least we got there without dusty dresses and sweaty foreheads. When we arrived I asked Hajiya why she did not want to walk there? We can walk back home instead, she answered.

To a large extent, men and women did behave very differently and were judged according to different standards. However, as Hajiya's search for documents at the land office shows, there are some discrepancies between what was being said about women in public places and the actual practices and behaviours of women, and the men judging them, that I witnessed. When Hajiya approached the local government officials, she could not simply present the case in her

husband's name, *she herself* had to be presentable. She was ready to be judged according to her performance of her status as the widow of a senior civil servant and respected man, and she could therefore not show up on foot, with dusty clothes and sweaty forehead. Wearing a long jilbab, she had donned the correct clothing for a proper woman, but to get the Director's attention and help, Hajiya adopted some aspects of masculine performativity to prove her worth in the eyes of the state officials.

In this section I have explored the ways which performances of social status in Katsina can be seen as a poetic social interaction, with *distance* at the heart of the performance. I have connected it with the status of the Big Men and argued that their status is tied up with their ability to present themselves as distanced from external factors and forces influencing them. As the literature on Big Men suggests (see for example Nugent 1995; Utas 2012; Bayart 2009), however, to be a Big Man is just as intricately tied with one's ability to get close, to know intimately, and to be dependent on others. This aspect will be explored much more in chapter three, but before I do so, it is necessary to elaborate on a second aspect connecting to distance as a trope for understanding Nigerians' experience with their state, namely the political economy surrounding petroleum in combination with the political history of the country.

LACKING ACCESS, EXPERIENCING DETACHMENT

In this section, I will follow two parallel arguments concerning the connection between the Big Men's performances and imaginations of state power. The first concerns the Big Men's use of state offices and agencies as 'tools' to enhance and solidify their own positions, which ties into the history of the military regimes in Nigeria. The second argument follows the development of a political economy surrounding the petro-state (Apter 1996, 2005; Smith 2007; Watts 2007, 2018). I will argue that the political economy of oil contributes to a disembedding of the state from localities, and how, taken together with the Big Men's poetic performances of distance, the state comes to be experienced as an entity, to which it is increasingly difficult to access and attach.

THE STATE APPARATUS AS A "TOOL"

Going back to the introductory example in this chapter on the durbar parades, it was the actions of the security forces during the parades that nudged me towards a focus on performing distancing. The efforts of the police and the other security officers to control the masses was not simple practices producing distance between the paraders and on-watchers, but rather a *poetic*

performance, drawing attention to the distance-making itself. A fence, or disciplined line of officers, have the same function of separating spaces and crowds as the activities I witnessed, creating a border between the parade and the crowd. But the actions witnessed during the durbar parades were, rather, *interactions*; the crowds responded to the actions of the police, pulling back and forth, their attention turned towards the movement of the security officers' feet, the raising of a hand and a whip, the shouts and yells. Through their performative interaction between the security officers and the crowds, the distance between a parading elite and an on-watching crowd of 'small, small people' was created on the field. Furthermore; through the bodily interaction with the security forces in the parades, the crowds learn of their subject identity; who they are to the Nigerian state. Moving backwards when the security agents physically ordered them to, flinching when arms and whips were raised; the crowds learn they are not the ones the state is prepared to protect. Secondly, they come to learn for whom the state works; namely, the elites.

I am white-skinned, and, during the durbar parade, I probably did not play my part as an on-watcher very well, standing confused and staccato as the security officers 'attacked'. I did not have the subjectified identity embodied in me, and was easily spotted as someone who did not belong to the crowds. Labelled someone worthy of protection, I was brought out of the crowd and allowed to stand by the Emir's guards, media personnel and other security officers protecting the Emir. In the public appearance of the elites, like a durbar parade, the security forces are always there to guard the elites. Similarly, they guard entrances to government buildings and public events where Big Men are present, and they escort politicians and businessmen on the roads. The security officers are thus experienced by commoners as *tools* in the hands of the political elites. They are there to protect the elites, and have the power to define who has the right to protection and who are considered security threats. Beyond their presence as protectors of the elites, the majority of encounters people have with the security agencies are demands for papers or money when moving around. "The police are useless, they only harass you" I was often told.

These two elements; the security officers protecting the elites, and harassing the 'commoners', find resonance in the history of the military regimes. Nigeria was under military rule from 1966 to 1979, and again from 1983 to 1999 (Falola and Heaton 2008). As the literature attests to (Falola and Heaton 2008; Soyinka 2011; Ihonvbere 1996), the successive regimes in Nigeria have used the military apparatus to repress, silence and brutalize dissenting voices to keep themselves in power. I cannot do justice to the complexities of the history of the military regimes here, but I will draw attention to two elements central in the stories I have been told on memories of the times under the military. The first element was fear. Many people have told me

how they remember being afraid of the soldiers. A neighbour told me how, if he disobeyed his parents when he was young, his mother would threaten him by saying "na go call soja!" – I will call for a soldier [to punish you]! Two senior politicians told me in separate accounts how they remember the lack of freedom, of both movement and of speech, during the military regimes. A retired teacher, who had been teaching in government schools in Katsina since before independence, said that people were afraid because the military "could do whatever they liked and force you to do whatever they like." The second factor evident in many stories was the military uniforms and parades. Interestingly, these were often spoken of with awe; as aesthetical displays of discipline and unity. The parading troops commanded respect, and I often noticed how people were impressed with such military performances. At the same time, people knew these parades were like a show, a spectacle for the masses, serving to take the public attention away from the abuse of power and the lack of service provision by the (military) governments. This double-sidedness of how the military in power is remembered influence peoples experience with the current democratic state. Both the violent repression by the military and the impressive parades were used as tools by the elites during military rule to hinder people from accessing the places and people of power. The parades were mesmerizing performances; and for those who were not "fooled" by the technique, arrests and violence awaited.

This relation between the elites, the state apparatus embodied by the military, and the people, during military rule affects the relations today as well. Like the military elites used the soldiers as tools to repress opposition to their rule, people feel like the current elites also make use of the state apparatus as a tool to maintain their positions. It follows then that the Big Men are those who are able to appropriate and make use of the state apparatus as such a tool. From two sides of Nigeria, between Nigeria-Niger, and Nigeria-Cameroon-Chad, respectively, Miles (1994) and Roitman (2005) write about the cross-border economic activity, much of which from a statist perspective would be labelled smuggling. Roitman's work from Cameroon explores how economic regulatory authorities at the borders is pluralized by both official and unofficial sources, and how the "unregulated commerce" (2005:152) across borders are "part and parcel of the political logics of the state itself, contributing to its ability to fulfil essential political imperatives such as extraction and redistribution" (2005:165). In his account from Niger, Miles explores the history of cross-border activity between two villages, approximately 100km east of Katsina. He recounts how the villagers see the Nigerian and Nigerien border patrols disrupting trade, and government actions thus "run[ning] counter to the normal, healthy, and ancient Hausa ethos of free trade" (Miles 1994:202). The Hausa language does not have a word for unauthorized trade, but the word *simogal* is used; a loan-word from the English *smuggle*. Although the ancient emirates controlled trade into the cities, and taxes were collected through the system of district- and village-heads (Miles, 1994), the perception of a border (*tangaraho* or

yanken kasa, [Miles 1994:3]) controlled by an outside state is of a more recent origin. Miles argue that “[e]fforts to control transborder trade were an early and integral part of the colonial experience” (1994:202), which, I would add, have continued into the present day experience of the post-colonial state.

Smuggling is to this day vibrant in the region, despite the joint Police, Customs and Immigration border patrols' efforts to control trade. However, in relation to the understanding of elite circulation of resources of favours within the state, it is the differential treatment by the security forces at and around the border that many Nigerians draw upon in their conceptualization of power relations within the state. The massive lorries owned by wealthy businessmen have to pass through the same border and the same police checkpoints, as everyone else. Nevertheless, these businessmen are able to import large amounts of smuggled goods to the Nigerian markets, whereas a *talaka* is stopped for “carrying a chicken from his Nigerien auntie”. Without patrons in the political apparatus, cross-border trade, even legal trade, is difficult, and the ease with which some elites are able to expand their trade empires (together with pictorial evidence of business meetings, dinners and even weddings, between Big businessmen and politicians), feed into the idea of the state apparatus as tools for the elites. The road police are labelled “useless” by people, precisely because they are, to the common person, useless. They collect ‘taxes’, either state-legalized through documents or as ‘petty corruption’, from ordinary Nigerians, but the big fish are allowed to pass through without paying a single naira. As the clientellistic resources from the big-scale smuggling are channelled into the elite circles in high state offices, the small-scale trader is left to himself at the checkpoint to pay the price of a lunch for the police officer; the Big Man’s tool.

This image of the state finds resonance in the historical political economy of Nigeria as well, something both the 'Big' and 'small, small' people alike agree on. During an interview with the federal National Orientation Agency in Katsina, the Director recounted an interview he had heard on the radio, where a frustrated villager had told the journalist how their government representative was lost, and they just wanted to see him with their own eyes. The director lamented how politicians and representatives were given allocations to open offices in their constituencies, but beyond painting the buildings in the party colours, they rarely asserted their presence. I noticed myself how, even in the relatively metropolitan city of Katsina, the myriad of offices for elected representatives around the town were rarely open, and, when I sought interviews there, I was often met by a junior secretary or gate security, telling me the politician was in Kano, Abuja or simply 'travelling' for a few days. I could come by later the same week, but upon doing so, I most often received the same answer. These empty offices are just the visual

manifestation of the lack of access many Nigerians feel they have to the state apparatus. To fully understand the 'distant' state, one has to look into the political economy of oil.

THE ECONOMY OF OIL

Historical anthropologist Andrew Apter (1996, 2005) and geographer Michael Watts (2018, 2007) have written extensively on the oil economy and relation to politics in Nigeria, and for the purpose of this thesis I will employ some of their perspectives in relation to my arguments concerning distance. Both use the term "petro-state" to explore how the state economy is dependent on oil revenue and how political strategic action has increasingly focused on rent-seeking. As Smith puts it "The Nigerian state became the locus of competition for resources, a reality captured eloquently in the colloquial expression Nigerians use to describe the state: 'the national cake'" (2007:14). The national budget has since the 1970s based 70-80% of its income on oil revenues, and the Nigerian state is a key actor in the industry as well as the regulatory authority (Houeland 2017). This oil economy has fuelled corruption, both through policies of subsidizing refined oil products like fuel and kerosene (which are imported because of Nigerian refineries' continuous break-downs [Smith 2007:116]), and through the ways in which the federal budget allocates money to the individual state- and local-government budgets (Houeland 2017; Watts 2018; Falola and Heaton 2008). The rent-seeking activities of the ruling class has disembedded the state apparatus, as the state no longer taxes wage-labour and invests in non-oil sectors like agriculture and manufacturing industries. Falola and Heaton (2008) point out how the rents are partly collected from foreign companies paying for contracts and licenses, which leaves few opportunities for citizens to hold the state accountable. The "unproductive accumulation" of the oil-economy has produced "a self-consuming state" (Apter 1996:453), as the state bureaucracy expanded (Watts 2018), and the ruling elites reinforce their position and control over the budget through capturing and allocating contracts, licenses and monetary rents.

It is precisely these disembedding mechanisms²⁸ I am concerned with because they show how the structure of the historical political economy of Nigeria surrounding petroleum has created an elite class whose power stem, not from its relation to a population, but rather from its relations with itself and its *own* means of production, at the same historical time of post-independence as the state becomes imagined as ideally a representative for a citizen population (Gupta 1995; Smith 2007). In other words, the lack of access to the state apparatus, is experienced along similar lines as the distance-making of the local elites. This likens the state to

²⁸ See also Mitchell (2009) for a further nuance concerning the qualities of oil

a *social actor* whose power stems from its ability to close itself up, and to *contain and distance* others. The detachment of the state from the lifeworlds of people in Katsina is thus produced through the simultaneous performative distancing of the Big Men, the historical memory of military rule, and the current structure of the political economy of oil. That being said, in their everyday lives, Nigerians both want to, and have to, interact with and relate to the state. They need documents and certifications, and seek services, jobs and resources only or primarily acquired through the state apparatus. The question then becomes, how do people attach themselves to the state apparatus and agents?

CHAPTER THREE

TO GIVE A LITTLE SOMETHING

Ba ni gishiri in ba ka manda

Give me salt, I will give you potash. **HAUSA PROVERB**

To, ci, mu ci.

"Well, eat, and we will eat." **FROM CONVERSATION WITH TWO RECENT UNIVERSITY GRADUATES**

If the Nigerian state is experienced as withdrawing from peoples' lives, Nigerians have strategies for minimizing distance by attaching to Big Men and state agents. In Mueggler's (2001) work, the Chinese state is presented as an increasingly intimate force, whose changes in policy and practice at the local level contributed to a dismantling of the rituals through which people experienced control over their relations with the state. What Mueggler's account is less elaborate about, is how individuals also *want* to draw closer to the state. This chapter is an exploration of the tensions in the relations between people and the Big Men in the Nigerian state apparatus. I am concerned with how people seek to attach themselves to the state, but also people experience, and criticize practices of relation-making. I will draw on three concepts I met in Katsina that highlight both discursive content of relation-making, but also the embodied experience of such practices. First, I will explore the phrase "to give a little something" in its historical and contemporary logic, interlinking it with everyday *zumunci* (good relations) and Big Man clientelism. Secondly, I will explore the links between gift-giving and corruption, looking into the idea of 'taking to keep'. Lastly, there follows an account on eating, as *to eat* is a common metaphor for corruption, as well as an embodied experience of social relations, and of the dangers associated with allowing someone to get too close to oneself.

ATTACHING TO THE STATE

"TO GIVE A LITTLE SOMETHING"

To "give a little something" is a commonly heard phrase in Katsina. It means to give a token gift to show that you appreciate a service you have been given, or hope to be given, or that you appreciate the relationship you have with someone. In a Western context, 'to give a little something', would probably have been labelled 'greasing a relation'; a highly normative label. Everywhere, we share material objects with others, given as gifts, but with immaterial expectations of a relation between the giver and the receiver being created, maintained or strengthened. Furthermore, as Strathern (1988) and others have argued (eg. Mauss 1995; Spiro 1993; Weiner 1999), through relations, including those established through giving gifts, we establish Self, our Being and personhood. As such, when Mauss (1995) in 1925 discussed the *hau* of a gift; its 'spirit' containing essences of the gift-giver and all its previous owners, the 'little something' given in a Nigerian context can also be said to have *hau*. By giving and accepting little something's, people are not only incorporating the gift as part of Self, but rather, fully establishing their Self as relational, as someone whose wholeness is based on one's relatedness.

In Nigeria, these kind of small gifts form a part of what Olivier de Sardan has called the "corruption complex" (1999:36) in Africa. They contribute to the maintenance of patrimonial relations, hidden from 'public oversight', and to the movement of state resources into private hands. This, however, is not the way this kind of gift-giving is perceived, nor practiced, by Nigerians themselves. These token gifts are embedded in long-standing practices of relation-making, and have both hierarchical and egalitarian capacities, in that gifts move both upwards and downwards between 'patrons' and 'clients', as well as circulate between social 'equals'. These practices of relatedness through gifts are highly gendered practices, and they are integral to establishing Self as a fully social and moral person. In the following section, I explore some strategies people employ to 'get by' in everyday relations with the state, which involve money, and how people try to legitimize their actions by embedding them in ideas of reciprocity and relationality.

One afternoon, I went with a university student on a house visit to her aunt, Belawu. She told us how her husband had gone to a town in a neighbouring state to see a lawyer. The lawyer was involved in a land-case between her husband's family and a high-ranking state bureaucrat in that town. He had gone there to pay fees for some documents and the work the lawyer had done so far. 'It is not easy to go up against a man like that,' Belawu said, referring to their opponent.

However, they had acquired the original documents, and were now preparing to take the man to court. What they needed was some more money to pay the fees, but she had seen a relative earlier this evening, who had promised to help. Asking Belawu if her husband would be away for long, I also commented on the expenses involved in resolving cases like this. *Gaskiya ne, Jummai*, she said, it truly is. Travelling was expensive these days, and so were the fees for all the documents and for the lawyer. However, the lawyer was honest and very involved in the case, she said, so she was optimistic. On the way back from the visit I asked my friend what it meant to be 'very involved'? She told me the lawyer was promised a share of the land-money, so that he would do a good job. This type of rewarding is different from the 'fees' paid for the documents and hours of work, but it is just as vital in turning the wheels. I heard similar stories several times during my fieldwork. Once, Aliyu, a middle-class entrepreneur, told me how he had spent all day visiting people in a neighbouring (traditional) district. The district head would soon choose a new man for a title in the district, and Aliyu knew the right man for the job. Many of the Big Men in that district agreed with him, but he still had to do the lobbying. We spoke in English, and when Aliyu used the word lobbying, I felt the need to ask what he meant. "You go and talk to them about your case, and then you give them something, like some money or different goods or favours, to show that you appreciate their service".

Mutual service giving is central, as it ties into the norms of reciprocity and redistribution. *Gaisuwa* is the Hausa word for greeting, and it can imply both the mundane 'good morning', but also the greeting of leaders and patrons. *Jahi*; lifting the hand with the thumb up and cheering, is a symbolic *gaisuwa*, done publicly during parades or when meeting nobility out on the street, but *gaisuwa* can also be material (Miles 1994; Roitman 2005). The type of lobbying explained by Aliyu is an example of material *gaisuwa*. Explaining my project to a fellow researcher at the university, he gave me detailed advice on how to gain trust and good relations with people in the villages, so that they would allow me to do research there. First, I should go with some sweets and snacks and give it to the children, telling them I was just passing through. The next time, still 'passing through', I should bring with me some second hand clothes, washed and ironed, to give to them. Then the third time, I should approach the village head, and give him *gaisuwa*, and maybe the fourth time, I could ask to do interviews there. These practices would establish myself in the eyes of the village community as a moral person, and as someone who could be trusted with information, as I proved myself as someone who wanted to establish good relations with them.

These ways of giving 'a little something' form part of *zumunci*-practices; practices of establishing good relations as shown in chapter one. Through *zumunci*, people establish themselves as embedded in social relations and as made through these relations. That is not to say that these

practices are always considered legitimate. I often heard people, sometimes the same people who had previously shared how they too had given money under the table, label these practices as corruption, as 'cheating the ordinary people' and as a symbol of the immorality of today's state employees and elites. However, this is not necessarily a contradiction in behaviour, as it is the underlying logic of reciprocal *relation-making* that enables people to participate in, but also criticize such practices. In Nigeria, corruption phenomena include two distinct practices, which in reality intertwine and are difficult to differentiate. To take (or accept what is offered) to give and redistribute, is distinguished by people on a normative basis from taking (or accepting) to keep to oneself, or distribute outside one's solidarity network. In reality, it is difficult to separate these two practices, which is one of the reasons why the conceptions that 'everyone is corrupt' and 'corruption is everywhere today' are so widely held in Nigeria. When participating in 'corruption', people tend to stress the reciprocal element to the transaction. One receives a service and 'appreciates it' by giving something back. En route from Abuja to Kano one late night, the bus stopped at military and police checkpoints several times. As we neared Kano, we were stopped at a temporary check-point, and as I woke myself up from a drowsy state, I overheard the policeman asking the driver: "Will you not give a little something for me?" Tsk! The driver uttered his disapproval and started up the bus. "Ey! Do I not secure the roads for you?" The policeman said, but with a hint of humour in his voice. The driver laughed, and bid him good night as he sped up and left the checkpoint. Although unsuccessful with his demand, the police-officer emphasized the fact that he was providing a service – securing the roads – for the driver and passengers in the bus, in his attempt to get some extra cash.

RELATIONS WITH BIG MEN

Mutumin kirki; a person of goodness or greatness, is a Hausa term denoting the quality of a person, based on his or her ability to have *kirki*. *Kirki* is a complex word, and, as explored by Kirk-Greene (1974), it translates to 'goodness' and virtue, involving trustworthiness, generosity in sharing ones possessions and *hankali*, or good sense and manners. The description can fit both men and women. *Mutumin kirki* is a label based on how one manages one's relations with others. 'Big Man' carries some of the same connotations of relatedness, but can have both positive and negative qualities, and has a hierarchical element which *mutumin kirki* does not. A Big Man is someone 'above' the common man on the socio-political ladder, and someone who has connections to (imagined) centres of power outside a locality, like the state apparatus,

wealthy²⁹ family, or connections outside Nigeria. Within the plural Big Men (*manya-manya*) there are both *mutumin kirki* and *mutumin banza* (useless/bad).

During a visit to the 'cultural village' at the Federal College of Education in Katsina, I asked about the 'Arewa' symbol on one of the buildings there. *Arewa* means north, and is a political and historical symbol, denoting the northern heritage as well as the political ambition of a 'one north'. The symbol, I was told is a "symbol of the northern people and the powerful people of the north." To me, this sounded a bit like an oxymoron – is it an inclusive symbol of everyone, or a symbol of the status of some powerful elites? I was told that it is the symbol of someone who is an important man in his community. "If you put up this symbol on your wall, and you are not an important man, like a traditional leader or a rich man; someone who has given a lot to the community, they can ask you to remove it." In other words, the Arewa-symbol is a symbol of both unity and distinction: it is given out based on someone's ability to re-distribute his wealth and to give back to his community, with the aim of helping his community to prosper.

Both the Big Man and the Good Man are expected to redistribute wealth and services to 'his' people. Sometimes, redistribution means giving money directly. During several visits to the house of a very wealthy man, I noticed how people from all social classes came to his house and sought his audience. Those who sought his aid, either by money or service, were brought there by a middle-man close to the wealthy man, who introduced the client by (re-)telling a story of how he was related to the community or family of someone within the wealthy man's network. The client would then introduce himself again, give thanks for the audience and explain his problems. During all the occasions I was present, the wealthy man gave his visitors a stack of money, and some consolatory words. I was later told, then, how such money would circulate downwards through the contacts that gave the client an audience with the wealthy man. I never witnessed this man deny anyone his audience or money, however, I do not know what happened when I was not around, or how the proceedings of the middle-men between the client and the big man went on. He was known in his community as a *mutumin kirki*, and everywhere he went he seemed to have good relations with others in the community. That is not the case with all Big Men. Many have told me stories of how they have sought the service of someone without luck. The stories told of unsuccessful meetings, show the high monetary costs involved in such relation-making. First of all, there are travel costs involved, hauling rickshaws from one house or office, to another. Secondly, the involved middle-men tend to expect some sort of 'appreciation', whether or not one has successfully reached the Big Man with the money. Such unsuccessful

²⁹Hausa people are well-known throughout West Africa and the Sahel for their success in trade. Much of today's *masu arziki* (the rich and successful) have built their wealth on extensive trading networks throughout the region.

attempts can have severe economic consequences, and contribute to the experience of the contemporary leaders being selfish and greedy.

In his classical comparative analysis of political systems in Polynesia and Melanesia, Marshall Sahlins writes about big-men and chiefs as central nodes in the socio-political workings of the societies (1963). Contrasting how they amass and personify political power, Sahlins likens the big-man to a capitalist, who combines the interest of society with his own, and whose acts serve "to show a standing above the masses that is product of his own personal manufacture" (1963:289). Whereas a chief can lay claim on political office based on heritage, a big-man gains his position based on the management of interpersonal relations and success in attracting loyal followers, by using personal skills, distributing resources and associating with other big-men. Faction-making then, is the true mark of big-men, as there are embedded in large networks of obligations and allegiance.

Political scientist Jean-François Médard, who has published much on neo-patrimonialism and corruption in African politics, has applied Sahlins' work to an African context. He focused on the material and economic aspects of Sahlins' analysis, that is, how the Big Men attain and keep their status through the networkal accumulation and redistribution of wealth. In essence, the "logic of the Big Man" (1992:170, my translation) concerns how symbolic exchanges allows the conversion of one type of material resource to another, as well as conversion between material and "relational resources" (1992:170, my translation). According to Médard, the African Big Man seeks primarily to convert the socio-economic resources into political resources, as he "straddles", to not only acquire new positions, but also strengthen his current one(s). Furthermore, Médard held that the African State and Big Men have a privileged, interdependent relationship, varying in degree from states where public resources are used distributed privately through patrimonial networks, to the extreme cases of personal rule stored in autocratic regimes. In a more recent volume, anthropologist Mats Utas (2012) provides a good overview of what he calls bigmanity in relation to conflict and governance on the African continent. He argues that the tendency to analyse governance in Africa in terms of personal power, has often produced accounts where 'culture' is seen as the root cause to the role of Big Men. However, as Utas states that "[...]Big Men and networks of governance [are] not [...] sociocultural features but rather [...] socio-structural ones, where certain structural features prescribe certain social outcomes" (Utas, 2012:4). Although the focus in Utas' (2012) account is on Big Men as an alternative response to a void in formal governance structures, the argument of Big Men as nodes in socio-structural networks, whose ability to transform social relations into political power, is instructive.

In Nigeria, there can be said to be a distinction between chiefs of yore and *nouveau grandes*, both in terms of assumption to power, a time-aspect as well as the source of wealth, but also, and more importantly, in terms of the distributional logics which people experience they apply. Although both can be assumed under the category *manya-manya* – Big Men, the ‘chiefs’ are those with hereditary claim to power like the traditional elites, or who belong to non-royal families with long histories as *masu arziki*, with wealth accumulated through open trade along socially legitimate channels³⁰. *Nouveau grandes* on the other hand, have a much shorter history as men of power, and many of them have become wealthy through the oil-rents of the “petro-state” (Apter 2005, in Smith 2007:14). As argued in the previous chapter, rent-seeking contributes to dis-embedding elites from their communities, as wealth is accumulated not from local taxation (including *gaisuwa* and clientelistic distribution of money) but from oil-rents, and because, as I will soon argue, these elites have a tendency to distribute “upwards” or “outwards.” The *nouveau grandes* maintain an ambiguous position in the socio-political hierarchy, and seek to solidify their status through relations with other Big Men. Sahlin’s (1963) big-man, seen as dependent on his relations with many loyal followers, has in the case of Nigeria rather become the junior of an ‘even Bigger’ man, closer to the national budget. Describing a close friend and mentor, Haruna told me how many people who could claim a traditional title did not seek it, because they ‘already have a name to protect.’ They will behave as fathers for their people, because they are seen as such in their home community. The newly rich elites, on the other hand, have no ‘name to protect’ in the eyes of a local community, as their wealth and power comes from extra-local relations. That being said, the distinction between old and new Big Men, and the logics behind their accession to power, is here highly idealized³¹. As Paul Nugent (1995) has argued from Ghana, the relational dynamics between big men, intermediaries and ‘small boys’ are much more complex and nuanced, as most people relate to several patrons, and have strategies and tactics to themselves gain from networkal relations. However, I want to highlight how the idealized version I have presented, is not based on theoretical reduction, but is rather a grounded, emic theory of power. The distinction between the ‘old and moral’ elites, and the ‘new and “useless”’ *nouveau grandes*, is a central aspect through which people imagine social relations in Nigeria today, through which they experience themselves as subjected to these dynamics, and how a topography of power-relations (Ferguson 2004) comes to be imagined based on how there is always a bigger man outside and above. This argument will be followed up more thoroughly in chapter four, but before I do so, it is necessary to look into dynamics of ‘corruption’ and the ways in which relationships can be ‘wrongly’ established.

³⁰ Smuggling will be discussed below

³¹ See Smith (1964) for a historical overview of forms of *gaisuwa*, taxation and fines in northern Nigeria

TAKING TO KEEP

In Nigeria as elsewhere, people have expectations to the stat. As one student lamented: “We are the ones to elect the leaders, before we elect them they are nothing. We are the ones to bring them to power, so why should it be so difficult for us now to see them with our problems?” Similar arguments have been brought up during discussions on corruption, and especially concerning leaders accused of stealing from the national treasury. However, there is also a longer historical perspective, concerning the relatedness to Big Men, and the expectation people have to their leaders when it comes to re-distribution.

Writers on the moral economy in an African context (Olivier de Sardan 1999), have tended to stress the ways in which money has had an individualizing effect on “communal” economic relations (Austen 1993), and one may see the relation between ‘taking to keep’ and ‘taking to give’ on such terms. What I will argue, however, is that such interpretations may end up essentializing the economic history of the continent in terms of a ‘communal’ past, disrupted by individualizing objects and an international neoliberal economic order. It is not my intention to refute the massive socio-economic changes brought about in African communities in the last century, but there is a need to nuance the picture. Northern Nigeria, and Hausa societies especially, was for centuries a trade-hub in Western Africa and the Sahel. Hausa trade networks were wide-reaching and some of the wealthiest merchants in the region were Hausa (Usman 1981; Roitman 2005; Adamu 1978). Trade was both the exchange of goods (including slaves), and the ‘buying’ of goods with ‘money-like’ objects, including manilla rods and cowries (Adamu 1978; Kirk-Greene 1962; personal visits to the Katsina State Museum, the National Museum in Calabar [Cross River State], and Gidan Makama Museum [Kano State]). Wealthy individuals and families, were expected to have more than commoners, and to display their excesses through their clothes, properties and food habits. A wealthy man could be “selfish” and eat meat to every meal, while his farm workers ate starchy *tuwo* (pudding) .and watered-down *fura* (porridge). Elites were known and *expected* to enjoy their riches, but they had to somehow acknowledge that their riches also stemmed from their relations with a community. How their meat came from cows herded by pastoralists, who made use of the landscape that others also tended to, through farming, medicinal plants, hunting and practices of worship. How their farmlands were tended by the farmers in the community, and their prestigious clothing sown by skilled artisans. How their knowledge of trade-deals and contacts, came through the socio-economic activities of less-wealthy people in their own communities, exchanging objects and news as they met in houses, markets and streets. The activities of others had to be appreciated through more than simply paying a fair price for the food, clothing and services received. *Zumunci*; good relations,

with a community was important, because, as any merchant can attest to, fortune does not come from hard work in isolation, but from establishing and maintaining good relations, including good relations within the community where one is based. As such, people remember the old elites as embedded within their own communities, and the elites' lifeworlds affected by many of the same conditions as their own.

"Modernity" and "capitalism" has not changed this perspective on trade and wealth-accumulation on its head, although, there are important alterations in the recent times (see for example Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Strathern 1999; Arce and Long 2000). What has happened in Hausa society, and in post-modern Nigeria, is that these relational practices have become embedded within a state economy based on oil and oil-rents. As argued in the previous chapter, the political economy of the petro-state channel political action towards rent-seeking has had disembedding effects of the state from local communities. The Nigerian state has become a resource-network for the elites, with disrupting effects on the relation-making at a local level. The middle men and local elites are increasingly experienced as *distributing back to* the state; to, not give services and receive *gaisuwa* from their local clients, but instead turn around and give their *gaisuwa* to other Big Men in the state apparatus, and themselves receive state services in terms of contracts, money and big houses.

Here, the distinction between 'taking to keep' and 'taking to give' becomes relevant. This distinction allows people to participate in practices of corruption through being nodes in wider networks of redistribution, as well as critique the corruption of others who are seen as selfish. This distinction should not be based on a dichotomy between 'communitarianism' and 'individualism', as both 'keeping' and 'distributing' have individualizing and relational qualities. In Nigeria, 'taking to keep' refers to, not primarily each separate transaction (like pocketing money), but rather the system of transactions within which the patron is embedded, and the logics which guides these transactions. 'Taking to keep' refers to the *total* of redistributive practices that *primarily* contribute to the enhancement of the wealth and status of the Big Man himself. The moral evaluation is hence not based on whether money is pocketed, but rather on the ways relations that are established. 'Taking to keep' is as relational as 'taking to give', but condemned as the wrong kinds of relationality, because as the Big Men, most especially the *nouveau grandes*, seek to enhance their own status by attaching to other Big Men, they redistribute resources *out of* a local community, instead of through it.

Let me explain by using a Hausa proverb: *Da kudi ake neman kudi* means (only) with money, can one search for, or acquire, more money. It may be interpreted as a simple reflection on how the rich tend to get richer, but Hausa proverbs are tricky. *Neman kudi*, 'searching for money' is an

activity which requires connections, and most especially connections to other *masu arziki* (wealthy). Much like in *neman sarauta*, the practice of seeking traditional titles, in *neman kudi* one seeks to attract the attention of the elites and to establish good relations with those who are seen to be in control over that which one seeks. In the traditional *neman sarauta*, the seeker needed to have good relations with his constituents as well as with the elites, as it was not unlikely that representatives for the Emirate Council travelled to his district to learn about the reputation of the candidate (Whitaker 1970). In *neman kudi*, on the other hand, the ultimate price is the 'national cake'; the state resources, which is not acquired from the people, but rather from oil-rents. The practice of *neman kudi*, then, does not require the same amount of attention given by the seeker to establish good relations with his home community, and instead the money required to 'seek' money, is channelled into the elite network of senior state officials, politicians and Big businessmen. Many of the writers on "moral economies" (eg. Schmoll 1993; Austen 1993; Olivier de Sardan 1999), see money and commoditization as individualizing social relations. I do not seek to refute these arguments, but to nuance them. Moral evaluations are rooted in both whether relations are made, as well as *how* and *what kind of* relations that are being made. "To give a little something" and networkal distribution of resources and services becomes the object for moral repercussions when the distribution is seen as going out of the local network and community. When there is an imbalance between the connections out of a locality at the expense of connections within a locality, people tend to label it *corruption*.

Are such accusations of corruption, then, simple expressions of jealousy or even greed? Some³² would have it is, and Nigerians themselves do to a certain extent critique their fellow citizens for being greedy. People in Katsina have told me how their fellow *Katsinawa* are known for *bakin ciki* – black stomachs, meaning jealousy of others. *Babba juji ne* is another Hausa proverb, translating to 'leaders are trashcans', the implication being that a leader will be treated like a dumpster, receiving 'trash', i.e. negative critique, regardless of his actions. "People are just jealous," Hajiya once said, while listening to Nigerians criticizing President Buhari's policies on the radio. Certainly, stories of the extravagant lives of the Nigerian elites and extraordinary riches distributed through the state apparatus, can make any person - Nigerian or not - jealous, and dream of becoming an overnight millionaire. However, the logics of reciprocity and networkal redistribution in Nigeria together with the public discourses on corruption, have much more far-reaching effects than name-calling and label-making. It is through the practices of 'giving a little something' and critiquing the elites for 'taking to keep' that northern Nigerians come to *imagine* the state itself as an external entity (Mitchell 1991), and create a 'map' of the

³² See for example Collier (2000) and Collier & Hoeffler (2004) arguing that 'new wars are caused by greed, not grievances

relations of power in contemporary Nigeria (Ferguson 2004), which will be further explored in the next chapter.

The redistributive logics of giving 'a little something', and the contemporary Big Men as more concerned with 'taking to keep', in combination with the experience of the state apparatus, most especially the security forces, appropriated as tools in the hands of the Big Men, form part and parcel of what it is like to live with the Nigerian state. However, as people participate in these practices, which they themselves very often talk of as *corruption*, they shape intimate and embodied experiences of Self and Being-in-the-world (Jackson, 2002). This ties in to what I will now explore, namely the interlinking of *eating* and relation-making.

EATING AND CORRUPTION

CI - TO EAT

In 2012 young people in the US and Europe sang and danced along to a hit-song by the Nigerian rap-duo P-Square, who had teamed up with American-Senegalese singer Akon. *Chop my money* – literally *eat my money*, is pidgin English for 'take my money', and the artists sing about how a good-looking woman can spend all their money; they won't care since she is so hot. The song can be interpreted as a story about careless rich rappers and their attempts to get a woman to date them by offering her all their worldly goods. However, it could also be argued how the song is really about the seductive power of women over men, as women's "sexual corruption" of men can make men do stupid things, like give a woman all the money. This interpretation might seem far-fetched, but it resonates with many of the conversations I have had with young men about gender-relations in Nigeria. When Nigerian feminist novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie visited the House of Literature in Oslo in October this year³³, she told the audience how often she got similar comments from men, who would say things like 'men may have the power, but women have power over men'. Adichie's feminist interpretation of such comments as belittling the struggle for gender equality are incredibly important in public debates, but in this thesis, I am going to start by taking such comments made by young men in Katsina at face value; as an expression of their concern with the moral quality of relations between male and female. This concern starts with an understanding of the Hausa word for eating: *ci*.

³³ See Litteraturhuset's website <http://litteraturhuset.no/arrangement/feministverktoy/>

Words are metaphorical symbols, and specific words, seemingly without context, can draw attention to certain complex interrelations. Lakoff and Johnson argue how metaphorical concepts structure human world-view and practices, through the ways in which thought processes are structured by metaphors and their essence as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (1980:5). Using 'time is money' as an example, they argue it is evident that time has become a valuable commodity in the West, and through acting as if time is limited, time is conceptualized as such. Ontological metaphors are according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) formed based on experience with material objects, including one's own body, and are often taken at face-value as direct descriptions because they are seen as 'experience-near'. Such metaphors are not reflected upon, but governs human practices and actions through the ways in which they sub-consciously create relations between different experiences.

In Northern Nigeria, there is an interlinking of discourses of corruption, eating, sexuality and sociality, all coming together in the word *ci*. The word *ci* means in its literal translation and most used form "to eat". Eating is a practice closely associated with making and maintaining social relations. "I am not hungry, but I will eat the food because you made it," Hajiya's sister once told me. We had gone to visit her for some days, and one of the nights I offered to cook dinner for everyone. To eat food made by others, and sharing one's own food, was often brought to my attention. In the early days of my fieldwork, I had declined the invitations from one of my neighbour's to share the food he had made, simply because I was not hungry at the point of his invitation. One day, while I was visiting, he said jokingly to his friends that Jummai refused to eat his food. "I no be refusing oh", I responded, "I'm not hungry so I will not eat now now". "*Wallahi*, Jummai, no be the same?" one of his friends rhetorically asked. To use Mauss' (1995) phrasing, by refusing to accept the gift of food, I was also refusing a relation, or the opportunity to improve and strengthen my relation with my neighbour. The Hausa people recognize the relational quality of not only 'selfhood', but also of the human body. The body needs food, and by eating the food of others, the digestive system makes use of what it has been given through relations, to create and maintain the individual body. The individual body is therefore a highly social body at its very formation, and its health and vitality is based on how it is made and remade through social relations.

Pamela Schmoll writes about the symbolic content of *ci* from across the border in villages south of Maradi in Niger Republic (1993). Her account provides an interesting take on discourses on witchcraft and 'soul-eating' (*maye*) in relation with then-recent socio-economic changes, arguing how changes in the discourses on soul-eating, especially the commoditization of it, can be understood as answer to local conceptualizations of contemporary moral dilemmas. Schmoll

explores "[...] soul-eating as a symbolic and semantic space in which particular hardships and struggles of contemporary life are brought together[...]" as "these symbols provide a sense of familiarity, and thus continuity, to experience" (1993:195). Through the commoditization of soul-eating, as the 'stomach stones' necessary to practice soul-eating were no longer only acquired by inheritance, but could be bought with money, people conceptualize broader socio-economic changes and provide a moral critique on changing economic transactions. Schmoll's account is as mine concerned with relatedness and the (re)production of social relations in a changing world, and she argues how the words *ciki* (stomach, inside, pregnant womb) and *ci* are powerful symbols concerning anti-social lust, or "uncontrolled desire for power and wealth" (1993:205). Her account provides a thorough grounding of questions of relatedness in local ontologies. However, as concerned as she is with the body, the *bodily experience* of relatedness remains less explored. As Csordas (1999) and Stoller (1995) argue, the human body is not simply a container of symbols, or an object and source of text, as linguistic anthropologists may have it. The body is an *agent*, and an "intersubjective ground of experience" (Csordas 1999:181). Embodiment understood phenomenologically, then, is the acknowledgement of the body as the source of everything one can know about the world and all the objects in it. The world does not exist as we know it before perception, but is constituted through perception. As Merleau-Ponty wrote:

I am the absolute source, my existence does not stem from my antecedent, from my physical and social environment; instead it moves out towards them and sustains them, for I alone bring into being myself (and therefore into being in the only sense that the word can have for me) the tradition which I elect to carry on, or the horizon whose distance from me would be abolished – since that distance is not one of its properties – if I were not to scan it with my gaze" (2005[1945]:ix).

With this understanding, Csordas goes on to argue how culture cannot only be understood through symbols and material objects, but also as residing "in the bodily processes of perception by which those representations come into being" (1999:183). The Hausa body and bodily practices, is therefore not only a text to be cognitively understood through metaphors and discourse, but also the intimately *felt* source of worldly relations. The body as a *corporeal world* (Mueggler 2001:9) is made, remade and intimately known through practice and perception. It follows that eating is not only a discursive construction of social relations, and a social commentary on the 'effects of modernity' or a decline in social morality (Schmoll 1993). Eating is bodily practice, and thus a way of experiencing, and, hence in continuation; *knowing*, the world.

To eat is to create; and to *experience* the creation of, social relations through the body. Several times, I was reminded by people of being careful with what I ate. These warnings were not simple euphemisms concerning immaterial dangers lurking in the shadows, but rather real concerns for my health. I might fall seriously ill from eating "dangerous" food, the danger stemming from the food itself or from the relation between me and the cooking or serving the food. It was widely known that affiliates of the phenomenon³⁴ known as Boko Haram was able to convince young girls into joining their ranks, by cutting themselves and putting their own blood into dates. Eating these dates, the girls would become unable to control themselves and blindly follow Boko Haram's orders, from marriage and child-bearing, to walking into crowds carrying suicide bombs. Most times, however, the danger was not food someone had tampered with, but the ways in which food can carry with it *essences* of the giver. Resonating how Mauss (1995) described *hau*; eating the food made by others, one may receive and digest some of their beliefs and moral values. Eating and proper digestion are not simply metaphors, relating to cognitive symbolic structures on proper social relations. These are rather bodily experiences, providing through the senses guidance in the world. "[T]he sentient body", Stoller writes, "is culturally consumed by a world filled with forces, smells, textures, sights, sounds and tastes, all of which trigger social memories" (1995:7). Eating food can trigger such social memories. Eating the soup seasoned by someone else, one is reminded by the tongue tasting the relationship.

THE DANGERS OF EATING MONEY

Beyond eating food, *ci*, much like the Pidgin English word *chop*, is used in contexts relating to money; here often referring to taking money that is not meant for you, or for spending more money than you have. *Ci* is used to speak about corruption practices in a casual way, without dealing out blame and judgments. When talking of corrupt officials or patrons, people tend to say *yana ci kudi*, literally he eats money. *Ci mu ci* – eat so we can eat, refers to how those who acquire of wealth and money are both expected to, and known to, share with those in their network, just like they are seen to have acquired their own wealth through their own networks. Corruption as eating is concerned with the creation and shaping of social relations, and especially with the experience of certain 'exchange networks' as corrupting the individual and social body. First of all, corruption as eating establishes practices of corruption as relation-

³⁴ I have here chosen to label it a phenomenon, because the non-violent religious sect that started out as followers of the radical preacher Muhammed Yusuf in the early 2000s, has in later years become a multi-faceted phenomenon, including cell-structures of violent militants, some of them with links to ISIS (Siollun 2016), but also criminal gangs, and non-organized hooligans, partly engaged in electoral violence (Duru, 2016). For further information see Montclos (2014), Deckard, Barkindo and Jacobsen (2015) and Dele-Adeji (2017).

making as argued in the first part of this chapter, and incorporates these practices in *bodies*, in *corporeal worlds* (Mueggler 2001), as constitutive elements of the social Being in body (*jiki*) and soul (*rai*). This relates to the second aspect, namely the dangers to oneself, including one's body, by engaging in practices of corruption. In English, the root of the word *corruption* means to decay or rot. Its semantic equivalent in Hausa is *baci*, which translates to corruption, retaining the meaning of decay. Eating money, then, is like eating spoiled food; it may corrupt your body.

The danger of the accepting gifts of money points again in the direction of Mauss' work. Writing on witchcraft and kinship from across the border in Cameroon, Peter Geschiere (2013) shows how English translations of Mauss' *Gift* have had a tendency to ignore the dangers associated with gifts. According to Geschiere, *rendre le don* is better translated as "to return the gift" (2013:30) rather than to reciprocate. This notion of reciprocity resonates with the Nigerian one. To accept a gift, is to *allow a relationship* with the giver, and to draw this person closer to you. This can put oneself at risk for many reasons. Firstly, because of the almost omnipresence of squandered state money, to have cliental relations with a politician or state bureaucrat is to accept 'corrupted' money, and also to trust that the patron will not send the federal EFCC (the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission) to your door. Furthermore, the money itself can be 'trick' money, *kudin iska* (wind money, see also Masquelier 2001), that vanishes into thin air overnight, which make your cliental services to the patron, be it a vote in the elections or communal or political support, worthless. However, *kudin iska* may be of least concern, as ones health and life might now be in grave danger.

"They are just artificial," "we know who created them," and "corruption fed them" were phrases often cropping up in discussions about the relation between the previous government, corruption money, witchcraft and the Boko Haram. This is a complicated case, and although there is little evidence that any Nigerian politician has paid money to any of the factions connected to Boko Haram, it is not unlikely that some of the youths paid by politicians to create upheavals during election have later connected to more organized criminal gangs with ties to the Boko Haram network (Montclos 2014). Furthermore, much of the money that was budgeted from the federal government to fight Boko Haram has ended up in the private pockets of individual Big Men (BBC 2015; Sahara Reporters 2015). Nevertheless, in popular imagination, the crimes of the Boko Haram cadres are simply too atrocious for any sane human being to commit, and related to the point I am making here concerning the dangers of 'eating' money, "corruption fed them" is significant. It points to how the acquirement, or 'eating' of 'corrupted money' can make individuals into mediums of a 'corruptive' force, that destroys communities and bodies. Both politicians and Big Men who steal from the public assets, and the militant cadres who "eat" this money, are affected. As the money corrupts the bodies and souls of the

Boko Haram cadres, they are able to commit the worst atrocities imagined, including killing one's own family, maiming bodies and destroying religious places and figures of authority. However, because of the *hau* of the money they received, they have an intimate relationship with the political elites, which they now turn to pray on. The politicians thus fall victim to their own schemes, as the militants turn around and attack the source of their own corruptedness; the Big Men and the Nigerian state.

EATING WOMEN

The last aspect of eating and relatedness is concerned with gender, and it ties in with the concern of understanding the ways in which people evaluate the moral quality of practices of attachment and relatedness. The regulation of relations between men and women are important concerns of Katsinawa, and should be warranted more attention on its own than what this thesis can afford. What I will highlight is one aspect of social reproduction, namely sexual relations between men and women. *Ci* can refer to sexual intercourse, as denoted by Schmoll (1993), although in her article the moral connotation is not explored. A better English translation of *ci* in this context is "to fuck", as it is a vulgar word (Newman 1997:245), and refers to sex initiated by lust and desire. I encountered³⁵ this meaning in a book by Nigerian author Elnathan John (2016), where the main character passes a prostitute who asks him to *ci ni*, translated as "fuck me".

Schmoll describes how soul-eaters who have sex with non-soul-eating women, will destroy the reproductive capacity of the women and, as a consequence, deprive a community of its "collective 'prosperity'" (1993:210). Her interpretation resonates with the argument I am making for *ci*, although with a few modifications. I never heard the word *ci* used in ways that could mean *destroy*, as translated by Schmoll. I did however, often hear it being used meaning the quite opposite, namely to *master* or to *win* (see also Kraft and Kirk-Greene 1973:337). *Ya ci jarrabawa* and *ta ci Turanci*, means, respectively, "he did well on his exam" and "she masters the English language". In this sense, it might be as productive to link *ci* to *cuta* – cheating in English, and argue that a sexual relationship denoted by *ci* can be seen as a man 'winning' the body of a female by 'cheating' the woman and her family of their rights in terms of security for the woman through marriage (*aure*) and presentation of dowry (*sadaki* and *kayan lefe*).

From south-eastern Nigeria, Smith (2007) provides a similar argument on '419', possibly the most common metaphor in Pidgin English for deception and fraud. "He played me 419", Smith

³⁵ I had conversations with some of my informants about gender relations and sex, but most of these conversations were conducted in English, I did therefore not hear *ci* used in this context during my fieldwork

(2007:81) quotes one of his informants saying about her boss, who had threatened her temporary job position when she did not want to sleep with him. Despite finally having sex with her boss, her position was terminated, and the woman ended up being cheated for both her job and her sense of bodily integrity and self-worth. Smith shows how intimate relationships between male and female are ever more frequently phrased in terms of fraud and 419, as men blame women for disguising material lust as romance, and women blame men as notorious cheaters. Beyond the lack of trust, Smith also point out how sex is “a mode of exchange” (2007:80) in Nigeria, as elsewhere, something which is highly significant in the case of northern Nigeria. Marriage was often explained to me in terms of a man gaining rights to the reproductive capacities of a woman’s womb. That is not to say that feelings of love, care and intimacy were not important – the majority of my informants do stress their deep care and love for their partner. However, the perspective on sex as exchange is also present, which is relevant to the understanding of *ci* in Hausa society, and in terms of national discourses on corruption and eating.

In Hausa, the word for socially legitimate sex, between husband and wife, is *jima'i*, whereas *ci* connotes the sex that does not establish proper social relations, either because there is no exchange (of bridal payment) or because that which is exchanged (money and sexual services in the case of prostitution in John’s novel [2016]) does not strengthen the relation between two individuals and their wider networks. Sexuality and sexual relations are considered natural and sanctioned by God (Popenoe, 2004). Following both Islamic religion and Hausa customs, husband and wife are expected to lay with each other and to bear children, and to love and care for each other, including when sharing beds. Sex is a primary means of establishing relations in Hausa society; through bodies and bodily contact, and through wider familial relations with the individual body as the nexus. The *sadaki*; the 'bridal payment', now consisting of an agreed-upon sum of money and kola nuts, given by the groom's family to the bride's father or *wali* (caretaker), legalizes a marriage according to Islamic customs.

To have sexual relations outside marriage is considered infidelity for both male and females, but the regulation of it is much for consistent and the social repercussions much worse for the woman than for the man. The female womb is a fertile container where, through intercourse, two families come together. The word *ci* for sex has a connotation of winning and cheating: the man 'wins' as he satisfies his sexual desire, but he cheats the woman and her family of the duties that a husband is expected to fulfil, including duties towards an extended network. The eating of women, then, attests to a corrupted relation between a man and a woman, and their extended families. Eating thus attests to an intimate bodily experience of such relation-making, especially

those where the relation made does not provide a foundation for mutual prosperity and social reproduction, but where one partner 'wins' by cheating the other.

This intimate experience of eating female bodies and destroying relational capabilities, together with the dangers of 'eating money' provide a background for the national discourses on corruption, Big Men and state practices. 'Eating' is thus both a social commentary on improper relation-making, between man and woman, between families, between communal networks and between patrons and clients, as well as a bodily experience shaping the foundations of knowledge of Being and the World. As one's *gaisuwa*, and the state resources every citizen is entitled to, is eaten by selfish elites, the foundations of the relational body and self is taken away. It attests to how eating has infested the most intimate spheres of social reproduction, and the very foundations of human intersubjectivity. Two consequences follow, the first being that through processes of 'giving a little something' to Big Men related to the state apparatus, the state becomes a 'constitutive force at the heart of the social world' (Mueggler 2001:5) as its practices and discourses is entangled with the processes, practices, and knowledges individuals make use of to inhabit their bodies and worlds. Secondly, I argue that 'eating' can be seen as experience-near frame for understanding social change, and to question the forms of knowledge necessary to function in the 'modern world.' *Zumunci* practices are experience-near, existential knowledge (Müller 2000), but through both the discourse and experience of 'eating', these practices are questioned. As the 'taking to keep' of the elites is seen as countering proper relation-making, and thus compromising the abilities individuals and communities have to socially reproduce, people increasingly question the morality of *zumunci* and 'giving a little something'.

CHAPTER FOUR

KNOWING SELF, KNOWING STATE

Nigerian author Wole Soyinka wrote in his prison memoirs *The Man Died* that

[t]he cold reality of power is, of course, that it has to be endured. [...] the very act of going out to earn a living under the system, or studying under the system, is in itself an act of collaboration, a species of legitimization whose only excuse is an immediate lack of options.
(2011[1972]:xiv-xv)

Soyinka has been a vocal critic of many of the successive regimes in Nigeria, both military and democratic, and his statement echoes what Sule once told me when I asked him if he had considered working for the government. "What is the point?" Sule said. Telling me the now-familiar story of how, for a *talaka*, it is impossible to get a job without the right connections to a Big Man in the government, he added, "I can never work for them." Why could he not? Because, as Sartre wrote of the colonized in the preface to Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, "[i]f he shows fight, the soldiers fire and he's a dead man; if he gives in, he degrades himself and he is no longer a man at all[...]" (2001[1961]:13).

Violence is an integral aspect of the relations between people and the state in Nigeria. Nevertheless, it is not to structural (Farmer 2004) or objective (Žižek 2008) violence that I will now turn my analysis³⁶. Instead, this chapter will tie together the points made in the previous chapters and focus on how people, in fact, endure (Soyinka 2011), but also change, resist and challenge state power. It is not violent opposition that is at the heart of this resistance, but knowledge. Existential knowledge, of Self, of Other and the conditions of lifeworlds, is a matter of becoming (Müller 2000). As the state becomes part of the intersubjective, the state is 'encountered' in the sense of Goffman stressing "reciprocal influence" (1990:26). The power-relations are undoubtedly immensely unequal; nevertheless, just as individuals are affected by their interaction with the state, so is the state. This chapter is thus an exploration of how Nigerians take control over intersubjective places where the state is present, through establishing knowledge of "the other"; that is, the state. I will first explore the term '*zamanin siyasa*'; the time of politics, in relation to how people construct a topography of power relations (Ferguson 2004). Secondly, the tension between distance and closeness, between attaching and

³⁶ This formed the baseline of the analysis in the SOAS thesis (Baann 2015)

detaching, will be explored as I argue that the ways in which people come to know both the state and their Selves, is simultaneously a product of power relations, as well as the foundations of individual agency.

ZAMANIN SIYASA

Politics and the current state of the nation is a favourite topic for everyday discussions amongst Nigerians; men and women, young and old. During such discussions, a phrase that often came up was 'since the coming of politics', which sometimes referred to the time-period following the return to democracy, and other times going all the way back to the last years of colonial rule, when the nationalist movements and political parties started to form. *Zamanin Siyasa* is a Hausa term, mostly used by scholars (Kirk-Greene 1976; Kastfelt 1993; Reynolds 1999) and not in everyday conversation, which translates to 'the time of politics'. *Siyasa* and '*yan siyasa* (politicians), however, were commonly used. With this in mind, as well as the knowledge of the Boko Haram anti-state propaganda (Baann 2015), I asked several of my interlocutors if they felt like electoral democracy was a 'foreign' or 'imposed' form of governance in Nigeria. Although they pointed to Nigeria being formed as a country by a foreign power, none saw democracy or 'politics' as problematically alien. 'The coming of politics' meant for most rather how lobbying, false promises and "throwing shit in public" had infested the ways in which policy decisions were made at all tiers in government, and how the political elites related to the citizenry.

Haruna, a middle-class businessman, lamented to me more than once that when the military opened up for political parties and prepared for elections in 1998, "everyone rushed to politics". Many of the people who sought political positions were simply in it for the money and power, Haruna said. This echoed several other opinions I heard, from both senior government officials and from people who had very little access to the political elites. What many concluded, was that in *zamanin siyasa*, the 'system' could no longer be trusted, because the elites would say and do anything to maintain their position and to fool the middle-men or *talakawa* (commoners) to continue supporting them. In an article from Abuja, Bøås (2015) explores how community leaders and middle-men become 'disposables' to the big fish in the state capital. These middle-men are given promises during election times, which they themselves have to follow up by continuing to seek out and wait for their Big Man. Bøås (2015) argues that this has created a frustrating situation of hope and uncertainty for many, an argument which echoes Nuijten's work from Mexico (2004). Nuijten worked with relations between peasants and the Mexican bureaucracy, and shows how the bureaucracy functions as a "hope-generating machine"

(2004:223) as the peasants are continually encouraged to seek 'another man' with some 'other contacts' to solve their case. Furthermore, she argues that this is a central governmental technique, not fully elaborated by Foucault, which contributes to "the construction of the 'idea of the state'" (Nuijten 2004:211). This point is what I will turn to now, exploring how the relations between the people and the state, between the Big Men and the 'small, small people' shape a 'topography of power' (Ferguson 2004) and the state as an external entity outside 'society' (Mitchell 1991).

POWER TOPOGRAPHY

Timothy Mitchell (1991) argues that Foucault's work was seminal in the understanding of disciplinary power as working from the inside, at the level of individuals self-governing of their own bodies, ideas and conduct. What remains less explored, Mitchell holds, is how the boundary between state and society, and the image of the state as an *external* apparatus, is as much "structural effects" of disciplinary power (1991:94), as self-governance and production of individual subjects. To reiterate Mitchell's words:

The state should be addressed as an effect of detailed processes of spatial organization, temporal arrangement, functional specification, and supervision and surveillance, which create the ap[p]earance of a world fundamentally divided into state and society. (1991:95)

My undertaking here is to combine Mitchell's perspective with the works of James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (2002; Gupta 1995; Ferguson 2004) concerning the spatial aspect of states and power. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) argue that the production of spatial and scalar hierarchies is a key principle of governmentalization. They write that the metaphorical conceptualizations of the state as vertically 'above' society, as well as 'encompassing' society, is

productive, in the Foucauldian sense, in that it constructs a commonsense state that simply is 'up there' somewhere, operating at a 'higher level.' [...This idea] is constructed; the task is [...] to draw attention to the social and imaginative processes through which state verticality is made effective and authoritative (2002:983, their emphasis).

These processes are produced in their taken-for-grantedness through everyday activities, and have fundamental effects of the production of subjective identities, bodily conduct and sociality (2002:984). In a later book-chapter, Ferguson (2004) explores what he calls power topographies; the "imaginary space, with the state up high, the family low on the ground, and a range of other institutions in between" (2004:385). A similar perspective was explored in

relation to corruption by Gupta (1995), concerning how the state is constructed as a trans-local unitary institution through the everyday encounters with localized bureaucrats and the discourses on corruption. Through discourses on corruption, the entities “the state”, and “the people” as citizen subjects of the state, become symbolically constructed. The state is imagined as “marked and delineated from other organizations and institutions in social life” (Gupta 1995:389) through the interaction with local bureaucrats and the hierarchical structure they are embedded in, as well as through the ways in which discourses on corruption in India frame the ‘political’ and the ‘public’ and the “multilayered nature of the state” (1995:387).

The ways in which the state and state power relations are spatially imagined are imperative to my argument. In chapter two, I explored *distance* as a poetic notion in social interaction and performances, and how especially Big Men perform their status through drawing attention to their ability to create distance between themselves, and the surrounding people and environmental factors. Furthermore, I argued how the economy of oil has dis-embedded elites, especially the newly rich, who are experienced as distributing their *gaisuwa*, their money and resources "up" and "out" from their local communities. The notion of 'taking to keep' as argued in chapter three concerns the total of redistributive practices of the Big Men, that in result enhance the wealth and status of the Big Men themselves. An experience of distance between Self and an imagined centre of (state) power is thus developed from two sides; first through the poetic aspects of social interaction in communities, as the Big Men perform their status by managing distance between themselves and the conditions that shape the lifeworlds of the talakawa. Secondly, the distributive logic of money and services out of a localized network, contribute to the image of an elite with extra-local connections to other Big Men, some of them even 'Bigger' men. Following the proper moral obligations of reciprocal relations, the Big Men are expected to give back to their community, and when they do not, the reasons for their immorality becomes a concern for their communities. In the previous chapter, I explored the corruptive force of 'eating' stolen money, but the topographic aspect is as important. When a Big Man does not give back to his community, people draw the conclusion that it might be because behind the man they know, can see, and possibly meet, there is an even Bigger Man. This contributes to the construction of a topography of power, with the Biggest Man always located 'outside' a local community, 'somewhere else' not visible or accessible. As both Bøås (2015) and Nuijten (2004) have explored, this leads to frustration as people cannot properly get to the (imagined) places where decisions are made, or to the 'right man'; the one who has the documents they seek, the needed authorizations or the knowledge of due process.

In the *zamanin siyasa*, the time of politics, the elites seek to attach themselves to the state apparatus to gain access to the riches, resources and contracts. This attachment happens

through re-distributional practices into, and within, the state apparatus and those already attached, as imagined by people in the distinction between the 'old and moral' elites and the *nouveau grandes*. When the *talakwa* themselves attempt to attach to the state, their *gaisuwa*, their 'little somethings', are appropriated by the elites to which they have access, be it a local bureaucrat or a Big Man of the community, and distributed 'out' to the Bigger Men. As the Big Men control access to the "national cake" of the state apparatus, the state is likened to an entity to which it is increasingly difficult to attach.

Much of the literature on the entrepreneurial and resourceful straddling of middle-men and social mobility of clients in resource networks from West Africa (Guyer 1995, 1997, 2004; Nugent 2010, 1995; Bayart 1999) has shown that people are not lost behind one horse, and cliental networks of power and resources are in practice rhizomic, rather than hierarchical³⁷. These perspectives, however, do not negate the argument I am making here. It is precisely through the networkal engagement, with individuals attaching to local elites and playing support from different elites up against each other, that an emic theory of power relations is constructed. As the local elites *poetically* distance themselves from the conditions of the lifeworlds of the *talakawa*, and distribute their *gaisuwa* to Big Men outside the community, the idea of these local Big Men as men of power through their connections to a state structure, rather than to their local society is visualized, and a boundary between a state and a society is formed. In other words, following the distributional logics, the local elites trade their local relation-making for connections to extra-local Big Men in the state apparatus. As such, the power of the central state is envisioned as distinct from, and hierarchically above, the local communities.

This spatial organization of power finds resonance in colonial history, when the country was, in legal terms, ruled from the outside, that is, from London. In practice, there was much and many the colonialists did not oversee (Miles 1994; Yahaya 1980). However, the system of indirect rule and the historical memory of it have had lasting effects. Indirect rule was developed by colonial administrator Lord Lugard to ease the personnel requirements in running the colonies and to ensure stability and cultural 'continuance' of the territories (Falola and Heaton 2008; Miles 1994). This was reiterated to me several times during my fieldwork. The relation is illustrated by a story I was told at the Katsina History and Cultural Bureau: When the emir Dikko went to the UK, he had visited the zoo. He studied the animals there, standing outside their pens, looking down on them. 'But he did not see,' my storyteller laughed, 'that when he was standing here (holding his hand in hip height), the British were standing up here (holding his hand high up in

³⁷ The scope of this thesis leaves me with little room to elaborate upon this concept, and I will therefore instead refer to Kapferer and Bertelsen's (2009) edited volume, where they discuss the entanglements of state processed with rhizomic war machine dynamics. Roitman's (2005) work on overlapping regulatory authorities is also instructive.

the air), studying him, the black man!' This relation between the black man's perspective, and that of the colonizers, find resonance in the history of colonial indirect rule. Indirect rule means that *behind and beyond* the local figures of authority people interacted with, were the colonial masters, the true rulers. This echoes the situation today, as many experience it, as the current political elites not only seek the attention of and connection to each other, but also continually travel out of Nigeria. To reiterate what Audu told me about the reconstruction of the hospital during our walk through the city landscape; as the Big Men in the Nigerian government are more concerned with pleasing the international donors and their measures of 'development outcomes', the true relations of power are exposed, and thus known, to the common man.

PERFORMANCE AND THE PANOPTICON

This spatial organization of power relations is, as Mitchell (1991) contends, an important effect of disciplinary power. However, going back to Foucault's definitions of power as existing only in relations, through human action and practice (1982), the conceptualization of the state as a resource structure outside of a community is only effective in-so-far as social agents continue in their practices that uphold this image. This is where the tension, or even contradiction, in my material becomes instructive. In the introduction and in chapter three, I wrote about how the state comes to be experienced as a constitutive force (Mueggler 2001:5) increasingly encountered in places of social, familial and corporeal production and reproduction, whereas in chapter two and in the above section, I have drawn up the state as a distant entity located 'somewhere else'. However, before I explore this tension in full, I see the need to take a detour, and point out a place from where I depart from Foucault's perspectives.

Foucault draws on Bentham's Panopticon as the ideal instrument of modern power, as the face of power is hidden, its gaze always surveilling (Taylor 1986). Because individuals cannot be sure when they are being watched, they discipline themselves as if they are always under surveillance, and thus the Panopticon is "a spectacular image of disciplinary power" (Redfield 2005:64). With the Nigerian state described here as an outside, powerful entity, whose ability to discipline the population stems from its ability to enter intimate spheres of social reproduction, it may seem like the Panopticon is a fitting image. However, this perspective leaves little room for the ways in which the experience of state power is formed and reformed through the actual, physical encounters with state agents and those imagined to be connected to the state apparatus. To go back to the durbar parade described in chapter two, it is through the

continuous encounters with the police' whips, forcing individuals back, that the body itself experiences the conditions of state power. It is in the everyday encounters with Big Men who so ostentatiously display and perform their status, that individuals learn that the power of the Big Men stem, precisely and primarily, from their performance of distance. In these embodied encounters, people come to know the state, not as a panopticon, but as a structure of power, whose power does not exist outside its populace. The Nigerian state does not enter from the outside to enforce subject categories, but produce these through *actual everyday encounters*; not as an all-seeing, all-powerful force, but as a constitutive force on the inside, producing and reproducing social relations and their conditions through the human interaction.

With the state present in the acts of its agents; the security agents pushing people back, the bureaucrat in his office allowing or disallowing a service, and the Big Man driving through town in his shiny SUV; power is no longer hidden. That is not to say that the functions of the Nigerian state is the sort of old sovereign in the Foucauldian sense, but rather that through engaging with people, state power becomes intimately known, and exposed. People now know where the gaze of state in the tower comes from, it is no longer panoptic. As the police officer hits the *almajiri* boy with his whip during the parade, it is his performance of the control over space that enables his further exercise of power, as he is an agent of the state, an embodiment of state power, only as long as he can perform correctly. This catches him in a double bind (Bateson 1972), as his capacity to embody the state is conditioned on his constant performance, yet his ability to secure and govern the whole parading place, is diminished as he focuses all his energy upon the beating the street boys.

TO "BODY FORTH THE WORLD"

Jiki magayi – The body is the informer. **KRAFT AND KIRK-GREENE 1973:261**

The Hausa proverb *jiki magayi* recognizes a central concern in this thesis, namely how individuals gain knowledge of their lifeworlds through attending to their bodies in time and place. As I argued on *eating*, to eat is not simply a metaphor for corruption, but rather an embodied memory of how we constitute ourselves and our surroundings through digesting social relations. However, beyond the body as a source of knowledge about the world, Jackson phrases the existential relation as mutually constitutive, that we are not simply shaped by our surroundings, but "actively body forth the world" (Jackson 2013:71). This will be the last perspective I explore in my thesis, concerning how the body is both a source of knowledge as it

informs Nigerians about their relations with the state, as well as the agent through which individuals create the world, and thus also change it.

Sitting in Hajiya's living room one afternoon and chatting casually about the problems of nepotism, Audu complained about the Nigerian Big Men. Everyone wants to be a Big Man, he said, and added that the only way some people become Big Men today is by refusing the access of common people to the good jobs (implied, in the state apparatus). But "what do they do? What do they know?" He asked. "They just sit like this all day and do nothing!" Whilst talking, he changed his posture and position in the sofa, from sitting with his back straight and relaxed against the back of the sofa, and legs next to each other, feet on the ground, to take up as much space as possible with his lean body, by sliding downwards, spreading the legs, arms casually up on the armrest and the back of the sofa, like a true Big Man, owning the surrounding space. We laughed at his portrayal of the Big Men and continued our discussion. Although neither unique, nor spectacular, his actions were not insignificant.

I witnessed this type of mocking of the Big Men's way of sitting, and of how they use their bodies in public spaces, many times during my fieldwork. This miming of "the other" has powerful implications. Writing on spirit possession in West Africa, primarily Niger and Ghana, Paul Stoller (1995) explores the role of the body in mediating memory, knowledge and resistance. Stoller draws on the work of Walter Benjamin (1933 in Stoller 1995) and Michael Taussig (1993) concerning mimesis, arguing how through miming, through corporal copying of others, the uncomprehensible Other becomes something understood through the body. Questions of power dynamics is at the core of miming, as Stoller shows: "Copying a thing, even a European type, is (electro)shocking; it creates a flash of sensation that engenders a sense of comprehension, mastery" (1995:40). In miming, one copies to know, but also "to other" (Stoller 1995; Taussig 1993). 'Othering' happens in the encounter between the miming subject and that which he mimes, between the European colonial man and the African portrayal and embodiment of the white man (Stoller 1995), between self and self as portrayed by one's alter. This encounter has political qualities, as it disassembles the border between self and other, between the colonial master and the colonial subject, between what identifies self and that which identifies other.

Following Stoller (1995), I argue that Nigerians get to know their state through mimicking state practices and the Big Men. When miming, they create embodied, corporeal knowledge of state power, which can both draw them nearer to power, as well as challenge and resist the power of the state. The miming in question here, is not the organized, subversive miming practices evident in Stoller's account of the Hauka spirits, but rather the ordinary and mundane copying people do every day, as they chat with friends, seek services from an influential contact, and

circulate documents and paper. It is the copying of acts and behaviours experienced through previous contact with the state, through which the effects of state disciplinary power are challenged. Firstly, the 'state effect' (Mitchell 1991) producing a boundary between the state and society is challenged as individuals mime state agents and practices. In this embodied copying, the *distance* so central to state performances is broken down. To have knowledge of the state as *distant*, is to be invested with the capacity 'to other'; by breaking down distance, the conditions that make the state an entity of power are challenged.

Secondly, as the state becomes a constitutive force entangled with processes of social and corporeal reproduction, one has the possibility to *existentially know* the state itself, and thus also develop new practices and techniques to manage the state. Through the intimate experience of the conditions of power, and thus the conditions of existence, can constitute a *doxic* break, as the symbolic overlap between economic, social and cultural capital no longer occurs (Bourdieu 198), and the arbitrariness of the socio-political order is no longer *mis*-recognized, but, in fact; recognized (Bourdieu 1977:164-192). This opens room for new becomings (Müller 2000). One day, Hajiya was planning a longer visit to some family members and wanted to bring with her fresh vegetables, so we borrowed a car and drove to some farms close the dam near Ajiwa. While Hajiya spoke with several of the farmers to find the best vegetables, I introduced myself and told the farmers about my research. I told them how I had recently been ploughing the fields myself, and that, knowing how difficult it can be, I was impressed with their skills. One of the farmers agreed; farming requires a lot of knowledge. Then he said, in Pidgin English, something amounting to 'the government tells us to farm, but what it is doing for us?' The federal government of President Buhari, and Governor Masari in Katsina state, has recently sought to invest in agriculture, as the new foundations for stable economic growth in Nigeria. This strategy is spoken about on the radio, in the local bureaucrats' offices, and at the markets during haggling on prices of both the farmer's inputs, like fertilizer and seeds, and produce. As the state gets entangled with the local, experience-near lifeworld, and, the conditions of one's own existence is brought to cognitive reflection. In Müller's words, the forgotten becomes visible, forcing existential experiences into a reflexive space (2000:38, my translation). One understands, through the body, of how the conditions of our world are produced precisely through our own bodying forth of the world, the room for agency is opened, as "the gestalt is shattered" (Müller 2000:13-14, my translation).

Attending to the body in social encounters, is thus the existential realization that the individual him- or herself, contribute to making the social, cultural and material worlds; both the near and far lifeworlds. Müller asks in her thesis what an individual must existentially experience to establish agency; what must be known for one to acquire new social positions (2000:236, my

translation). In the social sciences, we have a tendency to assume accounts concerning the straddling of middle-men and political entrepreneurs are inherently better equipped to deal with human agency, than explorations of power. What I argue is that it is precisely through *experiencing* the conditions of power intimately, and learning about Self and Other, that humans are able to exert their agency in the world. It is the practice of becoming (Müller 2000), and thus adapting to new challenges, where the human ability to acquire new knowledge, and thus the possibilities of agency lie. Not knowledge as in cramming the multiplication tables or being able to discuss philosophical terms, but “existential knowledge-experience” (Müller 2000, my translation), where the Self and World meets, and is mutually constituted. Mueggler explores “the question of how to inhabit a world shorn by [state] violence[...] to bring to language a mutual enfolding of flesh and place” (2001:25). In my account, it is in the narratives of corruption and the spatial logic of the Biggest Man located outside a community, through the embodied experience of eating and relatedness, and the spatial practices of moving around in the city, encountering others and objects, entering houses and offices, that individuals come to know the Nigerian state. As the Nigerian state becomes known through everyday encounters, the embodiment of this knowledge can be the source of agency, as both the world and Being is now altered. Experience-near knowledge is only acquired through embodied practice in time and place (Müller 2000). Going back to Foucault, then, the state's disciplining of the social body as he explored it (1986), has to be embedded in places, in landscapes and socio-temporal contexts; but as the state comes close; as individuals experience the state seeping into the intimate lifeworlds, the state itself comes under one's own gaze. To reiterate Merleau-Ponty's words “[...] the horizon whose distance from me would be abolished – since that distance is not one of its properties – if I were not to scan it with my gaze” (2005[1945]:ix).

The argument goes that the state becomes part of human intersubjective lifeworlds as it seeks to create a governable population through its ordering of place, time and knowledge (Mueggler 2001; Scott 1998). However, by becoming entangled in these real places, the state itself becomes the object of individuals attempt to shape an inhabitable world; as individuals seek to take control over social change through knowledge of the other. That being said, this does not negate state power, understood as the power to discipline and govern populations. Rather, it is to embed the practices of power in people's everyday lives, and see these practices as both shaped by power relations, as well as constituting and changing these very relations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis has been concerned with how the Nigerian state is encountered in various places and becomes entangled in the making and remaking of peoples' habitable worlds. I have drawn on Mueggler's notion of the state as "a constitutive force at the heart of the social world" (2000:5) to explore how people in Katsina come to understand and experience the Nigerian state, and how, specifically, they balance the tension between attachment and detachment to the state apparatus. Central to this argument has been an exploration of the relationship to Big Men, and their poetic performances, as well as how human practice in time and place create and shape lifeworlds, which condition future social engagement, relations and knowledge.

Through exploring the practices in time and place; of moving through the city; searching for, and attaching to, the right man; of encountering state agents, especially the security forces in the city landscape, and intimately sense their performance on one's own body, I have argued that the knowledge individuals gain through intersubjective relations shapes their ideas of the state, of society and of self. The perspective of the experience-near and the more abstract lifeworlds (Jackson 2013) has been used as a productive tension throughout the whole thesis. In chapter two, I explored who the Big Men's performances, centring on their ability to distance themselves from the conditions of the lifeworlds of the *talakawa*, in combination with the dis-embedding mechanisms of the economy of oil Nigeria is so reliant on, has produced a view of the state as increasingly difficult to access. This was built on in chapter three, exploring the techniques of sociality people employ to attach to the state and the Big Men who are held to control access to the state apparatus. It was argued that the local elites, most especially the newly rich, are experienced to distribute their resources out of a locality, and thus trade their local relation-making for connections to extra-local Big Men in the state apparatus. As such, the power of the central state is envisioned as distinct from, and hierarchically above, the local communities. This provided the foundations of the argument in the first section of chapter four, where I explored the topography of power relations (Ferguson 2004).

This is finally where the tension between distance and intimacy, attachment and detachment, becomes evident. Going back to the perspectives developed in chapter one concerning how humans, through our embodied practice in the temporal landscape, come to know the state. As the state seeks to enter and govern the intimate, embodied knowledge humans have through social engagements in the landscape, the following encounters produce knowledge of the state. As the state becomes *known* as distant, the distance is itself broken down. Furthermore, through understanding the incorporation of new knowledge as an existential process of becoming

(Müller), a new space for individual growth and agency is formed, as one is again navigate in and inhabit a contemporary lifeworld where the state is experienced as a constitutive force.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND PHRASES IN HAUSA

<i>Akurkura</i>	Rickshaw
<i>Alhaji</i>	Respectful title for men, ideally a man who has performed the Hajj
<i>Almajiri</i> (pl. <i>Almajirai</i>)	Children from poor families sent from surrounding areas to the city to study the Qur'an, but spending most of their time wandering the streets in small groups, scavenging and begging for food.
<i>Arewa</i>	North
<i>Arziki</i>	Wealth
<i>Aure</i>	Marriage
<i>Awara</i>	Tofu-like snack
<i>Babban mutum</i>	Big Man
<i>Babbar riga</i>	"Big clothing", a wide gown worn by men
<i>Banza</i>	mad, useless, crazy, bad
<i>Bariki</i>	Barracks
<i>Bature</i> (m.), <i>baturiya</i> (f.), <i>turawa</i> (pl.)	European, also specifically British, or more generally white-skinned
<i>Campi</i>	The belief that evil can strike if one breaks a taboo
<i>Ci</i>	To eat
<i>Cuta</i>	To cheat
<i>Dan</i>	Son of
<i>Fura</i>	Porridge
<i>Hajiya</i>	Title for women who have performed the Hajj, but also used as a respectful title of seniority
<i>Hakimi</i> (pl. <i>Hakimai</i>)	District head, traditional rulers appointed by the emir
<i>Hankali</i>	Good sense and manners
<i>Hawa</i>	To ride
<i>Hawan Sallah</i>	Celebration parade
<i>Jafi/jahi</i>	Respectful greeting of a social superior

<i>Jarrabawa</i>	exams
<i>Jima'i</i>	sex between husband and wife
<i>Jummai</i>	Female name for someone born on a Friday
<i>Kasa</i>	Land
<i>Kasar Hausa</i>	Hausa-land
<i>Katsinawa</i>	People of Katsina
<i>Kayan daki</i>	'Things for the hut'
<i>Kayan doki</i>	Horse tack
<i>Keke</i>	Bicycle, also used for rickshaw
<i>Kofa</i>	Doorway
<i>Lafiya lau</i>	Very good
<i>Mai/masu arziki</i>	The wealthy and influential
<i>Manya-manyu</i>	Big Men, Big People or Important People
<i>Masu sarauta</i>	The aristocrats, nobility, royals
<i>Miyar kubewa</i>	Okra soup
<i>Mutumin banza</i>	Bad person
<i>Mutumin kirki</i>	Good person
<i>Naija</i>	Nigeria
<i>Nawa</i>	How much/how many
<i>Neman kudi</i>	Seeking money
<i>Neman sarauta</i>	Seeking traditional title
NEPA	National Electric Power Authority, also known as Never Expect Power Always
<i>Nisa</i>	Far, distance
<i>Noma</i>	Farming
<i>Sallah</i>	Celebration
<i>Sana'a</i>	Occupation
<i>Sarki</i> (pl. <i>Sarakunna</i>)	Emir
<i>Sha</i>	To drink
<i>Siyasa</i>	Politics

<i>Taimako</i>	Meaning everyday help or aid
<i>Talaka</i> (pl. <i>Talakawa</i>)	The commoners
<i>Tsofafi</i>	The old
<i>Turai</i>	Europe
<i>Turanci</i>	The English language
<i>Tuwo</i>	Starchy pudding that can be made from various sorts of grain
<i>Tuwon ruwa</i>	Pudding soaked in water
<i>Tuwon semovita</i>	Semolina pudding
UMYU	abr. Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, the state university where I lived the first month in Katsina, and where I followed lectures in Hausa and established a good network of informants
<i>Unguwa</i> (pl. <i>Unguwanni</i>)	Neighbourhood
<i>Wali</i>	Caretaker (Arabic)
<i>'Yan</i>	Children of
<i>'Yan sanda</i>	Police
<i>'Yan siyasa</i>	Politicians
<i>'Yar</i>	Daughter of
<i>Zafi</i>	Heat
<i>Zamanin siyasa</i>	The 'time of politics'.
<i>Zobo</i>	A sweetened infusion made from hibiscus flowers.
<i>Zumunci</i>	Good relations

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