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Sommario/riassunto	South Sudan is undergoing a process of internationally-supported state building of which decentralisation forms part. For the people, decentralisation is understood as a right to self-rule based on native-stranger dichotomies and as a means of appropriating and incorporating an abstract and distant state into the local context. The South Sudanese government, in contrast, sees decentralisation primarily as a tool for service delivery and development. Conversely, the international community, in its desire to guarantee international stability through the creation of Western-style states all over the world, sees decentralisation as one tool in the state-building toolbox. These different interpretations of decentralization may not only lead to misunderstandings, but different groups and different ways of understanding decentralisation have interacted throughout history, and attempts to impose a particular understanding on other actors continue. Annina Aeberli examines this hybridisation of state 'decentralisation' and argues that the international community and the government cannot and should not try to ignore people's understandings and expectations: a state – in whatever form – always

depends on the acceptance of the people.
