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Autore	Bierschenk Thomas
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Altri autori (Persone)	BierschenkThomas Olivier de SardanJean-Pierre
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Andreas Eckert -- Sedimentation, fragmentation and normative double-binds in (West) African public services / Thomas Bierschenk -- The politics of reform: a case study of bureaucracy at the ministry of basic education in Cameroon / Helene Charton -- Building state capacities? The case of the poverty reduction unit in Mali / Isaline Bergamaschi -- A breeding ground for revenue reliability? Cameroonian veterinary agents and tax officials in the face of reform / Jose-Maria Munoz -- Old-school bureaucrats and technocrats in Malawi : civil service reform in practice / Gerhard Anders -- Teachers unions and the selective appropriation of public service reforms in Benin / Azizou Chabi Imorou -- The state that works : a 'pockets of effectiveness' perspective on Nigeria and beyond / Michael Roll -- The delivery state in Africa : interface bureaucrats, professional cultures and the bureaucratic mode of governance / Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan.

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Sommario/riassunto

States at Work explores the mundane practices of state-making in Africa by focusing on the daily functioning of public services and the practices of civil servants. Adopting mainly an ethnographic approach as a basis for theorizing, the authors deal with topics including: bureaucratic cultures and practical norms, operational routines in offices, career patterns and modes of appointment; how bureaucrats themselves perceive and deliver goods and services and interact with service users; the accumulation of public administration reforms and how the different bureaucratic corps react to the 'good governance' discourse and new public management policies; the consequences of these reforms for the daily working of state bureaucracies and for the civil servants' identities and modes of accountability; and the space that exists for bottom-up micro-reforms that build on local innovations or informal arrangements.

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