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A Thought Dilemma:

1)      We were told early on in our project that the government(s) were trying to encourage Aboriginal groups to set up corporations and NGOs in remote communities so they could take over the services which are currently being ‘delivered’ by NGOs like Mission Australia, Red Cross, Anglicare etc (and which were once delivered by government).  *Governance* is seen as what needs to be grown (or delivered) for these new Aboriginal bodies not to fail.

2)      Some of the Yolngu we work with keep reminding us that governance is a collaborative (not a top-down) process, and in the modern world good governance involves collaborative arrangements between Aboriginal and nonAboriginal people. But the doctrine of *normalisation* seems to dictate that all the governance work in remote communities should ultimately be undertaken by Aboriginal people.  (The same thing happened years ago when the process of Aboriginalisation in education was taken by some to mean that all the roles and structures in the system would remain the same, but gradually be taken over by Aboriginal people.  No room for collaborative arrangements across boundaries.)

3) This puts us as researchers into a funny position. Yolngu think we are there to help them *do* governance (rather than *learn* it), but we are paid to *develop* it (while the government *strategises* it). The Yolngu see all those as somehow the same. What makes us think that they must be (or can be) separate? How do we think or *our* governance of the project?