



**BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND DEPENDENCE:
“POLICY TRANSFER” DYNAMICS
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

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ACRONYMS

BCEAO	Central Bank of the West African States
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LMD	Licence – Master – Doctorat (Bachelor – Master – PhD)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union

Introduction

Policy transfer issues are unquestionably a topic of the highest interest for administrative and political sciences. Numerous articles, essays and reference books now devote special attention to this theme, in recognition of its importance and scientific legitimacy (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Boussaguet, Jacquot and Ravinet 2004: 444-452; Hay 2006; Freeman 2006; Hassenteufel 2008). Once studied from the perspective of institutional mimicry (Meny 1993), it has clearly grown into a full-fledged scientific subject. As such, not only do policy transfer issues enable the examination of political and institutional dynamics within public administrations, but they also appear as a particularly fertile ground in which to observe and analyze the evolutions that are today changing the role of the state in a globalizing world.

This topic is of substantial importance for African countries, given the numerous and wide-ranging influences which affect them in their international relationships (Darbon 2001 and 2009). State reform in times of crises is one key field in which such influences resonate. In this regard, we may recollect that, in the 1960s-1970s, as they were emerging from the colonial process, African governments put the development and the institutionalization of the state high on their agenda. This spurred the production and the implementation of a great number of institution-building policies. But the entrenched crisis in the 1970s, largely tied to the oil shocks, led to a reexamination of the development models which had thus far guided governmental action in Africa. The new context which set in was one in which the state-centred orientations of African countries were called into question. State reform was propounded as the way out of the crisis, following notably tenets rendered fashionable by the Washington consensus. The debate presents obviously numerous dimensions, which are directly tied to the recent political and economic history of Africa.

As regards policy or model transfers, Dominique Darbon shows that Africa-related research has tended to focus “on domination phenomena and the political and social consequences of the disconnections that came from” the implementation of external models. In his view, these models “do not evolve in a linear and constant mode, but rather, they spike out ‘in puffs’ every time that the domination context, in which grows a high institutional importation/exportation ratio, becomes evident [...] so much so that the perception of the transfers will each time be linked to the particular situation in which it makes sense. Darbon identifies three waves of scholarly output: the first wave corresponds to “the works that were produced during the independence years, in the 1960s, in a context of political domination and dependence.” At that time, the prevailing terms in the research output were “notions of models, mimicry and borrowing.” These works “are firmly inscribed within the theoretical perspectives of modernization and political development.” The second wave, starting from the admission that the earlier wave had failed, was more open as to the set of problems presented by the transfers. It consequently focuses on “the transfer process, the nature of the transferred objects, the interplay and strategies of actors, producers and consumers giving an essential part to appropriation and reinvention logics.” A third wave of scholarly output bears on “the dissemination of global or sectoral models of management and governance variously maintained by international aid actors and institutions, the expansion of the European integration movement or the systematic comparison process of institutional accomplishments which spreads into the institutional domain” (Darbon 2009).

While this paper is connected to this third wave of scholarly output, it recognizes the fruits of the second wave, which rightly reminds us of the exogenous character of the state in Africa, as well as highlighting the complex issues related to its importation (Badie 1992). This paper will mainly explore the dynamics of policy transfers as they emerge in the political and bureaucratic practices of the African states, starting in the 1980s, under the influence of development aid policies. In effect, African countries appear in this domain as a fertile ground in which to observe exchanges, innovations, experiments and the transfer of a great variety of institutional or political models, perceived chiefly as practical way outs of the perennial crisis that began in the 1970s.

The omnipresence of that crisis signals a marked disenchantment regarding the autonomy of public action in the countries of the South, which strongly depend on international aid for the financing of their development. Most African countries are directly affected by this situation which compels them to resort ever more systematically to new recipes often included in aid packages. The orientation brings the international financial institutions (IFIs) back into African political arenas, stimulating new dynamics of policy production, and leading scholars to rethink public action in developing countries.

In this paper, I will concentrate on the dynamics of policy and administration building, as well as on the sectors affected by transfers. In relation to the latter in particular, I will focus on their effects in terms of their appropriation by and ordering of African public administrations affected by globalization processes. While these processes are generally measured using commercial indicators, they also evolve on other terrains, through certain specific vectors and factors. The perspectives adopted here open up a discussion about the actors, enablers and incubators of these dynamics, which are particularly well revealed by policy transfer issues. Policy transfer, under many other names, is a commonplace practice among African governments in the context of cooperation with the developed world. The position taken here is valid only when we recognize that a great deal of the policies adopted and implemented by African countries originate in the outside world. During the Cold War, such policies were shaped by the goal of developing economic organization along the lines of one of the opposing ideological blocks, which then ordered the world. To be sure, this type of policy transfer could be quite varied. However, while the question draws a growing interest in Europe and in the United States as indicated by the substantial literature devoted to it, it is equally clear that there are very few data available on the ground itself. So we have here an object with the full potential of becoming a new research field. It offers many themes for investigation in relation to the recomposing of public action or the administrative organization of the state more generally. It also impinges on the international relationships of states in search of development aid.

In this paper, I study the dynamics of policy transfer in Sub-Saharan Africa on two scores. First, I explore the issue in terms of its concrete patterns and, second, I analyze its ordering effects on African states. I highlight the fact that these states are thus made to become experimental fields in matters of policy transfer; and the resulting changes show that they generally fail to learn and master transferred policies, and do not actually benefit from the experience of others.

1. POLICY TRANSFER IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: AFRICAN STATES AS EXPERIMENTAL FIELDS

African contexts are peculiar in revealing a plurality of circumstances. States have very limited wriggling room in matters of policy conception, owing to their dependence on development aid. Structural adjustment policies, from the early 1980s onward, offer the classical instance in this view, but this dimension of the issue also affects the political terrain. Many sectoral policies are also brewed in external arenas, and are subsequently launched into African states, which appear then as mere experimental fields.

1.1. Economic Policy Transfer: Structural Adjustment Programs as Templates

The IFIs became convinced in the early 1980s that structural adjustment programs were the solution to the manifold economic crisis of African states. Many governments eagerly took the programs up, seeing in them a kind of miraculous cure. The president of the World Bank pointedly argued in a widely circulated report that “a fundamental reordering is on order if we are to transform African economies and render them more competitive in a world where competition intensifies by the day. Adjustment efforts must be carried on, reforms widened and deepened...” (World Bank 1989: xiii).

The recommended policies rested for the most part on the quest for macro-economic balance, considered as the key approach for restarting growth in economies bleakly impacted by the financing crisis. African governments were expected to adjust their maintenance expenditures to the resources that they were able to secure. These states, which are now discredited for their poor achievements, were perceived, in the 1960s, as strategic actors in terms of economic and social policy. The implied perspective change meant that state organizations had to be downsized, and the state’s role redefined (World Bank 1997) in a context where acceptable solutions over-appreciated the role of the market.

Interestingly, these measures conditioned access to aid funds. While their painfulness was recognized, it was assumed that they had been proven right elsewhere, especially in Southeast Asia. They were therefore seen as sound remedy to the waste, inefficiencies and shoddy economic results of state-centred African economies.

These policies remain, today, the central engine of state economic action in Africa. The current poverty reduction strategies (PRS) hold on to the fundamentals of the structural adjustment programs. These are their running line, even if they barely transpire in economic policy speeches and discourse. Very few African countries escape today the strictures of structural adjustment, which count toward the performance criteria required for eligibility to certain international financing schemes.

Often presented as national policy freely agreed upon by local governments, structural adjustment programs can be best analyzed as policies transferred from the World Bank after rounds of negotiation, and then set up as the desired solution for tattered African economies.

1.2. Political Model Transfer: Rule of Law and Liberal Democracy

Early generations of structural adjustment programs were transferred in the context of authoritarian rule. The second sets came out as the Berlin Wall was being demolished and the Soviet Union was imploding. In the new context of international relations, democratic demands in Africa had a window of opportunity that placed pressure on the ruling regimes. They were forced to negotiate with the new political forces, which were fighting for political liberalization. At the same time, on the international level, rule of law and representative democracy were erected as a new conditionality for development aid (Gaulme 1998). Political questions related to the nature of ruling regimes emerged as central themes in the debate on development cooperation. Regimes were required to democratize in order to receive the benefits of public development aid. The requirement was tied to the notion that it was impossible to promote development without democratic rule. This type of regime became positively correlated with concepts of performance, selectivity and merit, the new buzzwords in cooperation discourse (Naudet 1998). The catchphrase “no democracy, no development” defined a new *modus operandi* in international cooperation circles.

The democratic model became therefore the new channel for transferring policies. The model is specifically the liberal democratic regime, proven right and sound since it grew with the economic and social development of Europe and North America. This was the model that needed to be broadcasted in the new political context ordering international relations. A great number of aid agencies included this model in their aid conditionalities, in order to push for its adoption in Africa. Development aid became selective, and was now meant to help countries that were beholden to democratic values and institutions.

The 1990s were thus marked by waves of democratization throughout the continent. National conferences ushered in democratic transitions. Pluralist, liberal regimes became the key models, and the benchmark for measuring state achievements. Democratic institutions were broadcasted in this way, and renewed the political discourse by valorising human rights ideals as inscribed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1981 African Charter for Human and Peoples’ Rights.

It is worth noticing here, however, that there was some alignment between the democratic demands and the aspirations of a sizeable fraction of the populace, which favours the reception of the transferred policy identified in this way with a legitimate social demand. The great principles are transferred and become convenient dialogue tools in the political interaction between governments and donors.

1.3. Sectoral Policy Transfer: from the Global to the National

Here, I will explore four terrains to understand and analyze the dynamics of policy transfer. I will first explore the sectors of water management, higher education and scholarly research. In these three domains, policies are developed in external contexts and then transferred to several different countries at the same time. The same trend is observable in a fourth domain, the larger framework of the Paris Declaration on the efficacy of aid.

Water Privatization: A Compulsory Pattern.

Water privatization, engineered by the World Bank and supported by its partners, follows a single operational scheme (Ménard 2001; Tidjani Alou 2006):

- Establishment of a patrimonial society to which the state cedes control over water resources.
- Creation of an exploitation company in charge of exploiting the resource. The company is controlled by a multinational enterprise that ensures day-to-day management.
- Institution of a multi-sectoral regulation authority in charge of overseeing adherence to the rules of the founding contract.

This operational scheme prevails in most countries that have set out to privatize water resources. It is a pattern imposed from the outside, a kind of trademark in relation to which states have little breathing space, if they want to access the credits attached to the reform of the sector.

The LMD¹ Reform: A Case of Wholesale Transfer

The LMD reform offers an example of policy transfer in relation to higher education. It comes out of the Bologna process, in Europe, and follows the signature, on May 25, 1998, at the Sorbonne, of a declaration on “the harmonizing of the architecture of higher education in Europe,” by the higher education ministers of Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and France. This system is today being implemented in most European countries. In the last few years, it has reached the shores of Africa, where a number of Francophone African universities have decided to align the reform of their higher education system on the Bologna process.

But the transfer of that European-originated policy uses the channel of an international organization, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). Perceived by the governments of the concerned African countries as a modernizing method *par excellence*, the policy comes with substantial funding from the African Development Bank and the WAEMU, for the benefit of universities that take up the reform. The reform is also seen as stimulating African integration in higher education.

This is a case of a blanket transfer of an organizing model for higher education systems. First worked out in Anglo-Saxon countries, the reform is exported to the countries of the European Union before being transferred to certain African countries. The latter did not develop it, but they accept it as a modernization and integration tool for their higher education systems. While states are the ultimate carriers of the policy, it follows the indirect route of a regional integration organization that stimulates, through a directive, its implantation in member countries.

¹ LMD is an acronym taken from the French term “Licence – Master – Doctorat” that translates to Bachelor, Master and PhD.

Scholarly Research²: A Partial Policy Transfer

Scholarly research also may prove a sector of interest in this reflection. The lack of effective means for research in universities and other academic centres orient these institutions in two directions:

- The production of research programs attuned to the desires and the strategic options of the countries of the North, rather than to the specific needs of African countries. In these circumstances, these countries appear as extensions of the scientific fields of the countries of the North, rather than as autonomous fields endowed with their own specific logic.
- The sub-contracting of research programs worked out and implemented by universities and research centres in the North. In this view, scholars from the South appear as data collectors rather than as information producers. This positioning removes them from the knowledge production and scientific debate spaces, where they appear only marginally or exceptionally.

The sector of scholarly research uncovers therefore a situation of partial policy transfer. Or again, certain segments of research activity are transferred and function in accordance with autonomous logic. In some cases, enclaves of international level achievement and competitiveness may appear, but they will be barely connected to local research. Moreover sub-contracting practices may change universities into mere data production agencies, thereby annihilating the potential for independent research production of a quality grade valid in the markets of global knowledge.

The Paris Declaration: a Joint Working Framework in Search of More Efficient Aid

The Paris Declaration offers another telling illustration. In March 2005, a declaration on aid efficacy responding to the poor results thus far recorded by the international community was adopted in the context of the OECD³ (Development Assistance Committee, DAC). That declaration “joins bilateral donors, the multilaterals and forty recipient countries, leading, step by step, to the Rome Declaration on the harmonizing of aid by 2003” (Jacquemot 2007: 164). The Paris Declaration rests on five principles (ibid.):

- Harmonizing procedures among donors,
- Aligning donor objectives with national policies,
- Appropriation of aid by recipients,
- Management pegged on results rather than on means, and
- Mutual accountability regarding the use of development resources.

These principles are moreover complemented by a panoply of commitments to be taken by both donors and recipients in view of improving the quality of aid and its impact on development.

That declaration – inscribed in the new orientations of aid that flow from the Millennium summit – comes with a number of instruments that recipient states should implement (program approach, medium term expenditure framework, budgetary support). The implementation pace varies from one country to the other, but the contents of the policy are nearly identical for all countries that agree to adjust their policy options on the content of the declaration.

² These remarks are valid only for the social sciences.

³ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

In its public staging, that declaration is described as a policy jointly produced by OECD donors and certain countries that benefit from their aid. This is a case of policy co-production obligating the countries committed to the process to work for the achievement of the principles attached to the declaration. The execution of the declaration generates newer approaches in cooperation work and a new intervention system.

So the ways of policy transfer are numerous and varied, and the resulting significance is multifarious (Freeman 2006: 369-372). In official speeches, policy transfer appears as the outcome of logics of negotiation, freely agreed upon by the recipient countries in the framework of their relationships with donors. But that freedom is fairly relative. In reality, these reforms most often derive from recipes recommended by donors. This leads to the prevalence of a logic of compulsion which is well expressed by the concept of conditionality. That word clearly indicates that the countries that take up the transferred policies gain access to attached financing, which could be described as acceptance bonuses. This is the central problem of aid selectivity, as it exists still today in the domain of development cooperation (Naudet 1998).

Each of the cases I examined here highlights a specific configuration, which I am now going to study in their effects in terms of appropriation and structuring.

2. POLICY TRANSFERS IN AFRICA: THEIR STRUCTURING EFFECTS

Policy transfers have certain impacts on the public administrations of the states involved in that type of process. The observable trends uncover nodes of evolution, which durably order the national political arenas.

2.1. The Observable Trends

The Standardization of Public Policies

First and foremost, a trend toward the standardization of public policies is observable. States no longer produce their policies in accordance with their particular concerns. The exact same policies are implemented in many countries at the same time, with no specific regard for their different contexts. For instance, Burkina Faso's Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) appears to be a replica of the ones framed for Niger and Mali. At any rate, these countries are subjected to the convergence criteria defined by WAEMU in a framework of regional integration. We have seen that the reform of water resources deploys strikingly similar policies in all concerned countries. Examples could be easily multiplied to illustrate the standardization of policies and reforms which "are most often forced on Sub-Saharan African states given the general observation that they are incapable of organizing dependable and responsible bureaucracies" (Darbon 2001: 43). That trend upholds the observations that put forward the existence of a strong "proximity of rules, procedures and techniques which preclude the understanding of the nature of the social processes which build around them..." (Darbon 2001: 42). As a matter of fact, the uniformization stimulates many forms of a "creeping disestablishment of the state," (ibid.) and standardization is the most obvious symptom of the phenomenon.

The technicization of administrative procedures and tools

The heavy technicization of administrative procedures and tools also constitute a strong trend in the changes stimulated by policy transfers. Many examples may be considered here. First, the resort to statistical instruments in economic arguing is becoming widespread and is gaining increasing legitimacy. To be sure, statistics did enable the modernizing of administration through the vulgarization of a variety of computational software and the pressures put on states to produce and use quantitative tools. These practices introduce a political awareness of numerical realities in public administrations. Numbers become, in this context, the most commonly accepted measuring rod. It is the evidentiary tool *par excellence*. Yet these statistics are produced in fairly insecure contexts, and are often marred with reliability issues. Moreover, even when they are reliable, they insist on quantitative representations, which do not reflect concrete realities and fail to provide the complex information related to evolving realities. Both the language and the instruments of economics become remote objects reserved for a small minority of specialists, and they tend to translate economic life into abstract, lifeless images. There sets in a kind of disconnect between the real economy and the numbers which describe it.

The Displacement of Decision Centres in Economic Matters

The displacement of decision centres in economic matters is also a consequence of the dynamics of policy transfer. The SAPs provide in this sense an edifying case. These policies, imported through the channel of the IFIs, have helped in stripping states of their economic authority. This is now the preserve of high officials in Washington. Despite the cool neutral tone of their official discourse, these persons have become full actors in local political life. The opinions they deliver on governmental policies have become important political resources. Governments use them to demonstrate their own competence, and opponents use them when they appear unfavourable to governments, in order to call their competence into question. To be a good student of the IFIs is solid proof of competence for a government. As for bad students – low achieving states in the running of their program, or those that fail to negotiate a program with the IFIs, they have no chance of securing sufficient external funds for the financing of their development. The systematization of the intervention of the IMF and the World Bank in poor countries signals the emergence of a new pole of economic power. That power operates through depriving states of their authority in the economic domain. It is embodied by a collective actor rather than by a specific state. While present on national territories through its representations, it does remain remote with its headquarters in Washington. It plays to a great extent on that ambivalence, which renders it simultaneously close by and distant. The IMF and World Bank's missions are national events, and politicians, union leaders and militants alike eagerly anticipate their discourses that unveil local government achievements.

The End of Politics

So it is that in a great number of countries/states have ended up accommodating the situation. All goes as if policy is no longer the object of political struggle. During political campaigns, running candidates with a chance to win the vote are satisfied when they go over the current programs of the IMF and the World Bank without much innovation. Political

actors seem to have given up on the essential combat around policy options, leaving whole sectors of state activity (education, health, environment, etc.) to external actors before whom they appear impotent. They seldom dare call them to task, a behaviour that suggests that the ruling elites have abdicated responsibilities when it comes to public policy, or rather, that they have become passive receivers of the IFIs' directives. Moreover, it appears that the intellectual mastery of donors' current programs by presidential election candidates is today an indicator of their skills and of their supposed abilities in tackling the "great economic dossiers of the state." So much so that the issue here is that what is expected of states is not in fact the capacity of working out proper policies, but rather their abilities in managing the transferred programs and at confronting the social reactions they might produce. In Sub-Saharan Africa's Francophone countries, the new dynamics of regional integration should be added to these important and trivialized trends of state divestment in the economic domain. Here too, as was noted by Bach, "states divested of large portions of their sovereignty, have faced forms of external dependence that were believed to have died out after the age of decolonization" (Bach 1998: 7).

The Emergence of an Economic Technocracy

In all these domains, states handle dossiers in which they make very few decisions, if any at all. They remain the preserve of the high officials of the international civil service who craft technical files, and not of states, which merely endorse them. The globalization which transpires in African countries through policy transfers by the IFIs notably consecrates a new kind of technocratic power, using the resources of the state and grounding its legitimacy in technical foundations. This power is embodied by the high officials of international organizations, and by the consultants affiliated to them. The reports they regularly produce have become key sources of inspiration for numerous national policies. In their reports to states, they dictate political orientations and assess the objectives to be attained in order to secure new funding or continue to cash on existing funding. In recipient states, a parallel trend witnesses the emergence of a new breed of politicians, whose skills do not derive from classical political militancy within political parties, but rather from a kind of activism fleshed out through their continuous presence in international finance circles and their technical competence in economics. In most Sub-Saharan African countries, these men have occupied the highest responsibilities in the state apparatus, either as President of the Republic as in Benin⁴, or as Prime Minister as in Cote d'Ivoire⁵, in Niger⁶, in Burkina Faso, etc., or yet as prestigious Economy Ministers. In many instances, it is rumoured that these men are promoted through special recommendations from institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF or the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), which would rather have them than people unknown to them. One may also notice in this regard that a position as Finance Minister in a context of adjustment is always a favoured way of gaining access to positions within one of the IFIs or the WAEMU⁷. Lastly, it should be noted that these adjustment contexts have consecrated within the countries subjected to them the preponderance of economists, and among these, those who have developed skills in macroeconomics acquired either in universities, or in international organizations, or yet again in international banking. All of this signals the establishment of circular career paths marked by the predominance of cadre co-opted or accepted by the IFIs or similar

⁴ Nicéphore Soglo ou Yayi Boni.

⁵ Allasane Dramane Ouattara.

⁶ Amadou Boubacar Cissé or Boukari Adjji.

⁷ Idé Ghandou in Niger.

institutions, which then pick them up in their systems at various levels of responsibility, where they share the same liberal ideology and the same bureaucratic culture. They eventually appear as development brokers (Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan 2000), operating at upper levels, at the interface of the IFIs and the decision-making structures of African states. In that position, the broker operates a space, in which a certain kind of capital is convertible into any one of the two interest areas, that of IFIs or the state, that he connects to each other.

The Predominance of Experts

The reform context carves out an important space for experts from among international organizations, but also from private national or international consultancy bureaus. In reality, international civil servants supervise the general orientations that commit them to partner states. But their tools within this budding configuration are to be found in consultancy bureaus. The latter appear, through their experts or consultants, as the actors *par excellence* of policy production. Their functions – identifying, following up and assessing – strongly position them as mediators. They offer policies oriented in the directions desired by their client and they strive to sell them to participating parties. The complexity of the questions at hand ensures that they hold strategic positions in view of their mastery of the situations from which they draw their credibility. This positioning of the experts includes the risk of leading governments to shed their responsibilities, owing to their intense workloads and the weakness of their capacities, thereby becoming secondary actors who merely endorse decisions that were taken at the technical stage, and which they cannot hope to change or shape.

2.2. The New Configuration of Actors in the Production and Implementation of Public Policies

The new configuration of actors in the production and the implementation of public policy offers the opportunity to redefine of the role and place of the state.

The State, a Central Player

For a long while, the state remained a central player in international relations, through the concept of sovereignty and national independence. This is a legacy of the Westphalian system that triggered the expansion of state power in the world as we know it today (Smouts 1998: 37-59). That position of the state was strengthened throughout a great deal of the twentieth century by the diffusion of Keynesian ideas. The African elite inherited the State/Keynesianism package by firmly anchoring state power in their newly independent countries. In most of these countries, the political, economic and cultural spaces were almost exclusively dominated by state actors, which were then perceived to be efficient and of key importance for collective actions. They were the main, if not the only providers and promoters of public policies. That dynamic was the result of a shared belief grounded in the notion that the state could do everything, so long as it had the means of action. In these circumstances, it is small wonder that state structures should grow, complete with their bureaucracy and their squads of functionaries. Far from yielding the desired outcomes however, the strategies put in place, all oriented toward the development of the state,

engendered strong state authorities, invasive and barely efficient, and this legitimized in turn the idea of reforming the state.

The Demoted State

In the world of reform, the state is demoted. It is no longer the sole provider of public policies, and has to share that position with the external partners that fund its actions through development cooperation. The cases explored in the earlier sections of this paper show very well the weakness of autonomy it may have in such a context.

Development cooperation policies are generally carried through rural development projects, their classical implementation field. The project grows out of an international convention between two states, or between a state and a non-governmental partner. It develops over fields defined in common. In principle, this is a space of co-production of public policies. The multiplication of development projects in the same stroke increases the extent of these spaces of policy co-production and reduces the autonomy of states in the production of policies. We can see here the full ambivalence of the Paris Declaration. By adopting the program approach and global budgetary support, the Declaration decreases the weight of donors in their one-on-one relationships with states. But the new dynamics thus promoted include a greater harmonizing of external interventions with greater pressure on states to ensure transparency and good governance. States are in this way certainly bolstered, but also, and paradoxically, subjected to greater surveillance and monitoring with respect to the management of aid resources, where they must provide robust transparency guarantees. As a result, the current dynamics display complexities that derive from mutual suspicions whose stakes reside in the quest or the maintenance of leadership in the management of cooperation funds.

This situation appears to be accepted by African states without much resistance. They execute policies that are increasingly developed without their input, and they are goaded by the low levels of skills and competences among their operative organizations and leading cadre. It should be pointed out on this note that African administrations are undergoing an unprecedented erosion of their levels of competence, owing to the fact that highly skilled cadre increasingly migrate into politics, international officialdom and development projects. They must continuously renew their top personnel to sustain their organizations, but such renewal offers no guarantee of qualitative growth, since they have very poor regenerative capabilities. This goes a long way toward explaining the dismal results of administrations which appear to be blessed with the best possible policies, worked out as they are in apparently ideal circumstances (co-production, expert control).

New International Relationships

New kinds of international relationships are brewing. They rest on dealings that link directly, within African national spaces, the aid-providing states in the accomplishment of collective joint tasks heretofore left to national actors. The latter lose de facto their preponderance in both the production and even the implementation of public policies, taken in charge by an assorted expertise with many different origins. The national actors almost become normal actors on par with all others. Public administration is no longer the business of the state, but also the concern of local organizations with specific mandates and of

regional or international organizations that put on view, sometimes ostentatiously, their presence. Moreover, the new orientations for international cooperation in the greater number of donor states prescribe, through new rules and bylaws, that they must intervene more directly in the affairs of their partners in the South (Gaulme 1998: 101-118). Such interventions come to pass in the guise of positions adopted on current policies and events in national politics. A variety of sanctions are possible, on the basis of fundamental political disagreements. They range from temporary suspensions of cooperation work to the termination of entire programs. Political interference is now established, as donor states and most development institutions alike deem it rightful to converse on the political life of their partners in the South, to deliver opinions and to set specific conditions for their valued actions. All of these steps and orientations are grounded in the promotion of values constitutive of economic liberalism and liberal democracy, taken as universal norms to be imperatively propagated throughout the world. The new discourse is now carried and promoted by the states of the South themselves, in an effort to reconceptualize their perception of the world in relation to the new context which orders their interaction with society and with other states.

Conclusion

As a matter of conclusion, we may note that the recent history of Sub-Saharan African states was strongly shaped by the transfer of policies produced elsewhere. The dynamics of these policies lead to new chains of change in states that still shift between autonomy and dependence, with powerful trends toward dependence as chief a characteristic of policy transfers, as it has been my aim to show in this paper. The search for autonomy remains, obviously, a living project which orients public action toward greater “policy learning” (Chakroun 2008 : 11-18), an achievement defeated today by the weakness of state capabilities in both the working out and the implementation of these policies.

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