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The Political Economy of the World Bank's Discourse :

from Economic Catechism to Missionary Deeds (and Misdeeds)

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Translated from French by Janet Roitman, CNRS, Paris

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The Political Economy of the World Bank's Discourse :
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Ces bailleurs de fonds se sentaient maîtres ès réalités.
Marguerite Yourcenar, *L'Œuvre au noir*

Following the example of the colonizers, who were quick to adopt a simplified image of Africa and a normative approach to its complex and apparently incoherent realities[1], international lenders have developed a perception of Africa and a philosophy of intervention that are both simplistic and norm-driven. This image has not evolved in its form ; its philosophical foundations have remained unquestioned since the 1980s. Until the middle of the last decade, only technical aspects of the economy were taken into account : economic difficulties in Africa stemmed from the pursuit of wrongheaded economic programs, on the one hand, and insufficient market mechanisms on the other. Since the middle and especially the end of the 1980s, and in response to footdragging, resistance, and reversals, as well as the supposed inefficiency of reforms, certain institutional and political factors were integrated into this paradigm[2]. Nonetheless, the philosophy and the method have remained the same: the political is treated as a technical and supplementary variable, only mobilized to affirm the prevailing discourse.

There are now numerous studies of the effects of macroeconomic liberalization programs (and structural adjustment programs, more generally) ; the relative failure or perception of failure of these programs ; and the economic, political, and social obstacles confronted by

[1] See J. Londsdale, 1990 : these processes of simplification and a normative stance were current practice, often being used as a means of social control.

[2] For a very good analysis of the evolution of the World Bank during the course of the 1980s, see Ravenhill, 1993.

reform processes[3]. Moreover, socio-political and anthropological analyses of the lenders' discourses have been elaborated since the early 1990s[4] ; part of this includes systematic critique of the " good governance " approach[5].

On the basis of these works, this study, which is part of a more general analysis of the dependence and insertion of " small " economies vis-à-vis the world economy, aims to show that the vision of the international lenders must not only be analyzed as a socio-political discourse, but also as an economic discourse. Criticisms of the World Bank's capacity to take into account the socio-political dimensions of economic programs are now widespread. I hope to add to this body of criticism by showing that, far from being simply a technical and economistic expression of African realities, the economic precepts imposed by the World Bank on sub-Saharan countries are founded on a specific orientation, and hence are not neutral precepts. In other words, it is not only the absence of socio-political analysis that explains the gap between the discourse of the World Bank and African realities ; we must also look at the economic constructs - which are highly normative - underlying proposed reforms.

This study also hopes to demonstrate that, due to the normative, simplifying, and apolitical nature of their underlying precepts, structural adjustment programs tend not to modify economic programs and modes of international insertion but rather to alter behavior and redefine opportunities for domestic enrichment ; that is, its effects are less economic than socio-political.

I take the World Bank as an ideal-type international lender. This is why this study will examine this institution only. But the reasoning and the conclusions are valid more generally, with certain minor exceptions. My concentration on World Bank documentation is inspired by the fact that the Bank has acquired a quasi-monopoly on institutional knowledge in the field of economic development. Due to the very definition of its functions in the Bretton Woods system, the IMF has a more restrained body of doctrine and does not attempt to propose a general doctrine on development ; the Lome accords only have a marginal influence on African economies, and European countries, including France, have not always known - despite their critiques and reservations - how to develop a coherent alternative discourse ; the United States has always privileged economic development via international institutions ; and finally, the GATT and the WTO have relatively little influence in the poorest developing countries.

I.B ECONOMIC CATECHISM

On the basis of World Bank official and internal documents[6], one can determine fairly easily the general theoretical framework that underpins recommended reforms : the latter are divided

[3] On the political effects of liberalization, *cf.* World Bank, 1989 ; World Bank-UNDP, 1989 ; Nash, 1990 ; Elbadawi, 1992 ; Michaely, Papageorgiou & Choski, 1991 ; World Bank, 1988 or World Bank 1994a and 1994b for a review presented by the World Bank itself. For critical analyses, see Fontaine, ed., 1992 ; Greenaway, ed., 1985 and 1988 ; Greenaway & Milner, 1993 ; L'Hériteau, 1986 ; Helleiner, 1989 ; Callaghy & Ravenhill, eds., 1993 ; Coussy, 1989 ; Duruflé, 1988 ; Havnevik, ed., 1987 ; Nelson, ed., 1989 and 1990 ; Ridell, ed., 1990 ; Taylor, 1990.

[4] See, for example, Ferguson, 1990 ; Moore & Schmitz, eds., 1995 ; Dilley, ed., 1992.

[5] See, most notably, Sindzingre, 1996 ; Schmitz, 1995 ; Moore, 1993 ; Sorensen, ed., 1993; Callaghy & Ravenhill, eds., 1993 ; Mkandawire, 1996.

between 1) the economic theory of welfare in partial equilibriums as formulated according to models of economic dependency, and 2) liberal economic policy. Analyses of general equilibrium are, of course, used by certain World Bank economists[7], but they are not, properly speaking, part of the discursive, or even theoretical, corpus of the institution. Indeed, they are mentioned in official documents only to strengthen arguments put forth by analyses in terms of partial equilibrium ; they are never at the heart of any particular case. Moreover, they are not used to justify the choice for liberalization, but only to measure the effects of the latter on other variables or other sectors. Hence Devaradjan & Lewis[8] show that by modifying certain hypotheses one can challenge the principles of adjustment programs, and specifically the principles of macroeconomic liberalization reforms. The same is true for simulations based on " multiple market " models[9]. But when one examines these analyses alongside classic academic texts[10], we see very clearly that : 1) only a part of the theories mentioned are used ; 2) only certain conclusions are retained ; and 3) there is constant recall to " empirical evidence " and other practical considerations in order to resolve diverse solutions. This is such that one cannot speak of the underlying theories of recommended reforms ; we have, in fact, discourse that informs economic policy.

An analysis of this discourse is important for at least three reasons. First, it is the discourse and not the theory that directly models economy policies in Africa, as elsewhere. Second, insofar as public interventions involve strong conditionalities, it is crucial to understand the political economy discourse that is implied in and imparted through adjustment programs. This discourse offers, and sometimes seeks to impose, a certain vision of economic reality ; it communicates an economic canon ; it encourages the adoption of a language whose effects cannot be underestimated in spite of prevailing strategies for circumvention. Finally, by establishing manners of apprehending, categories of analysis, modes of questioning, and ways of problematizing, the discourse exercises influence in itself ; it is performative[11].

The discourse put forth by Bretton Woods institutions is constructed around three more or less implicit principles : the introduction of the liberal norm of the non-interventionist state and, most notably, the norm of free exchange ; the quest for parsimony at all costs ; and the will to

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[6] The writings are numerous and often repetitive. Among general works consulted, one can cite: World Bank, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1994a and 1994b ; Thomas & Nash, 1991 ; internal and mostly sectorial documents on commercial economic programs ; World Bank manuals, such as Dornbusch & Helmers, eds., 1988 and Pursell & Rogers, 1985 ; articles in *The World Bank Economic Review* or *The World Bank Research Observer*. It is also useful to consult analysts used by Bretton Woods institutions, such as Balassa, 1988, Krueger, 1974 ; Lal, 1987 and 1989 ; Bevan, Collier & Gunning, 1987.

[7] See Devaradjan & de Melo, 1987 ; Bourguignon, Branson & de Melo, 1989.

[8] Devaradjan & Lewis, 1989.

[9] See, for example, Braverman & Hammer, 1988 ; or Braverman, Brandao & Hammer, 1990.

[10] See, amongst others, Baldwin, 1982 and 1984 ; Bhagwati, 1982 ; Brander & Spencer, 1983 and 1984 ; Caves & Jones, 1981 ; Corden, 1971 and 1974 ; Deardorff, 1987 ; Dixit, 1987 ; Dornbusch, 1980 ; Greenaway, ed., 1985 and 1988 ; Greenaway & Milner, 1993 ; Helpman & Krugman, 1985 and 1989 ; Hillman, 1989 ; Jones & Kenen, eds., 1984 ; Jones & Krueger, eds., 1990 ; Kenen, ed., 1975 ; Krugman, 1984 and 1987 ; Lassudrie-Duchêne & Reiffers, dirs., 1985 ; Mundel, 1968 ; Samuelson, eds., 1969 ; Stern, ed., 1987 ; Srinivasan & Wallay, eds., 1986 ; Vousden, 1990 ; Williamson, 1983, etc.

[11] On the idea of " discourse ", see Foucault, 1969 and 1971. For a particularly lucid elaboration, see Ferguson, 1990, who, on the basis of a detailed study of World Bank projects in Lesotho, shows how this institution constructs its object (Lesotho), structures knowledge about, or of, its object, and models it such that an " anti-politics machine " results. Through its discourse, which is above all a practice, the World Bank depoliticizes the fundamentally political questions of social inequality and especially poverty.

circumscribe the political. In an effort to be direct in my demonstration, I will consider only liberalization reforms relative to foreign trade, which are the most prevalent in adjustment programs. It should be noted, however, that other readings suggest that my analysis is valid more generally.

1. The introduction of the liberal norm

Contrary to the indications of the World Bank canon, there is not one economic theory, but a multitude of them. Likewise, models do not offer one solution ; rather they offer an infinite number of solutions, depending on select hypotheses and limiting factors. Indeed, this is one of the popular criticisms made of economists, who are accused of being able to say everything and its contrary. In fact, the discourse of political economy is necessarily normative and political since, as Fernand Braudel reminds us, " a national economy is a political space transformed by the state "[12]. And the methodological works of Max Weber show that knowledge, and hence analysis, depends on an object set apart from the society in which it is found. Knowledge of reality necessarily entails the introduction of values through indicators and instruments of analysis[13]. This banal statement is important to underline at a time when international lenders generally seek to impose their perceptions and their economic policies on the basis of " scientific " and apolitical arguments. Analysis of the texts and documents mentioned above shows that the lenders' discourse is highly normative (the norms being, to no great surprise, free exchange, the ideology of the non-interventionist state, and the absence of political and social considerations as part of economic analysis). This edifice is constructed through at least four procedures : the choice of certain models ; the omission of certain rules in selected models ; the introduction of certain hypotheses to obtain a single solution ; and the repudiation, explicit or not, of certain theories.

- The choice of certain models

The orthodox Meade-Salter-Swan (" Australian ") model is most often used by the World Bank to characterize developing countries[14], and especially sub-Saharan economies[15]. In this orthodox model, the hypotheses of perfect competition, full employment, flexibility of prices and wages, decreasing returns, and short-term fixed capital - only labor being mobile - allow one to obtain an analysis of disequilibrium in the balance of trade in terms of a disequilibrium between internal revenue and internal expenses and/or a disequilibrium between supply and demand of non-tradable goods. It is significant that the Australian model, and not the

[12] Braudel, 1985, p. 103.

[13] See Weber, 1904 and 1917. For discussion of my conception of Weberian political economy, refer to Hibou, 1996, Introduction. For the necessarily normative nature of the statistics, indicators, and instruments of political economy, see also Latour & Woolgor, 1979 ; de Certeau, 1980 ; Delorme & André, 1983 ; Hacking, 1983. For an introduction of values into the analysis of concrete situations, see also Myrdal, 1930 and Swedberg, 1990.

[14] See, for example, World Bank, 1987 or World Bank, 1989.

[15] See the explicit and in-depth usage in World Bank, 1990, inspired (albeit, again, in simplified form) by Dornbusch, 1980 ; Collier 1988 and Collier *et. al.*, 1986. See also Devardjan & de Melo, 1987 ; Lal, 1984 and 1989.

Scandinavian model, was selected for analysis of African economies. In fact, the latter[16], which was formulated to analyze employment problems, allows one to evaluate the effects of relative variations in income and relative prices between tradable and non-tradable goods on labor earnings and level of employment. To the contrary, the Australian model assumes full employment, which is guaranteed in a complete and permanent manner by the flexibility of prices and wages.

- The omission of certain rules in selected models

By accepting the restrictive hypotheses of the classical model of partial equilibrium in perfect competition, one particular conclusion - which is perfectly banal to economists - is never taken into account by those promoting the liberal reforms of adjustment policy. Partial equilibrium shows that liberalization does not work to the benefit of all economic agents ; the principle effect of foreign trade policy is in fact redistribution between producers, consumers, and the state, and not a general effect on welfare[17]. In other words, the situation can only improve for all agents if there is redistribution or compensation (the Hicks-Kaldor-Pareto principle). Hence analysis in terms of partial equilibrium justifies state intervention in situations of foreign trade policy reform.

The fact that this conclusion is almost always obscured by the analyses underlying these reforms constitutes, in itself, an example of the method used : the truncated and normative use of models and the selection of conclusions without explanation. What we have, then, is discourse which favors reforms and exchange liberalization, or anti-protectionist discourse rather than the presentation and the rigorous use of a neoclassical theoretical model.

- The introduction of certain hypotheses to select between different conclusions

The dependency model, mentioned above, offers an infinite number of possible adjustments in situations of trade deficits[18]. Conclusions as to the superiority of devaluation for protectionist policy is not a conclusion inherent to the theoretical model, but a result of the combination of the dependency model, the free exchange norm (the *a priori* superiority of external equilibrium over internal equilibrium, of outward strategies over inward strategies), and hypotheses about elasticities (the elasticity of export supply is said to be superior to the elasticity of import demand, as well as non-tradable goods).

In the same vein, the dynamic costs of protection (costs linked to the loss of economies of scale, utilisation capacity of investment, external effects, technology, etc.) issue from certain hypotheses about elasticity or about certain sectors of the economy, the adoption of certain horizons or certain objectives, the choice of certain relations or certain reactions of the national economy to protectionism and to liberalization, etc. It is most curious that, during the 1960s and 1970s, these same arguments (mobilizing different hypotheses, of course) were used to justify protectionist policies and hence to highlight the dynamic gains - and not the costs - of protectionism.

- The repudiation, explicit or not, of certain theories

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[16] Or the Aukrust model. For a presentation, see Dornbusch, 1980.

[17] Moreover, this is doubtless the most important point of the model: analysis in terms of partial equilibrium shows that protectionism is above all an internal question and not an international or even external matter. See Samuelson, 1939 ; Deardorff & Stern, 1987 ; Coussy, 1989.

[18] Which can be grouped into three types of solutions: devaluation and monetary and budgetary contraction ; protectionism ; combinations of the two in variable proportions.

Finally, by revealing the repudiations or " omissions " of the World Bank's discursive corpus relative to Africa, we can clarify both the *a priori* assumptions and the biases of reforms.

" New International Theory ", which is only new in name[19], has had a particularly significant impact by formalising models of imperfect competition and fully integrating them into neoclassical theory[20]. From this, we would have expected this school to have influenced the World Bank. However, in " New International Theory " two factors bring into question the principle of free exchange. The first factor is the existence of external economies: the latter are no longer posited as distortions whose compensation via foreign trade policy is only a " second best " solution, but rather an additional element which explains imperfect competition. Foreign trade policy can be considered, therefore, as the best means to internalize these external economies. The coexistence of increasing returns and imperfect competition constitutes the second anti-free exchange factor : by refusing to equate the revenues and opportunity costs of resources used in production, a " strategic " role is allowed for state interventions. In the absolutely traditional context of international trade theory, one can thus demonstrate that, in certain circumstances, protectionism can encourage exports and growth, thus raising national income. After having long neglected this argument, the World Bank rejected it explicitely in 1989 because of insufficient information ; the weakness of strategic industries in developing, and especially African, countries ; and the risk of reprisals. But these precautions and critical remarks could have led to different conclusions : following the theoreticians of this new current, one could have simply called for caution in the application of strategic trade policy. The all-out repudiation of this theory is not a result of empirical evidence or even the logics of political economy ; it is a reaction to its conclusions : " New International Theory " compels us to abandon the norms of comparative advantage and perfect competition, and hence the norm of free exchange as well.

Other theoretical developments are not even mentioned by those promoting reform, even though they are central to debates in industrialized countries[21]. This is the case for compensation measures[22], the New Cambridge School[23] or foreign trade policy as foreign policy[24]. Although there are more numerous studies of industrialized countries showing how foreign trade policy is often linked to non-economic objectives (such as national identity,

[19] List, and then J. Robinson, A. Marshall, T. Scitovsky, R. Prebish or R. Lindert have already developped, each in their own manner, the arguments of this "new" school. For commentary, *cf.* Haberler, 1990.

[20] The principal authors of this current are Krugman, Helpman, Brander, Spencer, Dixit, Eaton, Grossman. See, for instance, Brander & Spencer, 1983 and 1984 ; Dixit, 1987 ; Helpman, 1984 ; Helpman & Krugman, 1985 and 1989 ; and Krugman, 1984 and 1987.

[21] The most significant breach between scientific research and its use by international institutions is evident when one compares, for the same time period, the ways in which foreign trade policy is treated in the African case versus the case of an industrialized country like the United States. See, for instance, World Bank 1987 and Stern, ed., 1987.

[22] See, for example, Bhagwati, 1988 (who accepts anti-dumping measures for industrialized countries) and Bhagwati, 1987 (who refuses them for developing countries under the pretext of the problem of dependency with respect to the world market). The logic of compensatory customs duties is to neutralize the effects of foreign trade policies, or other economic policies, on third party countries.

[23] See Godley, 1982 ; Cripps & Godley, 1976 ; or Denis, 1985 : the position of the New Cambridge School is that, in the case of wage rigidities, protectionism is the only economic policy that can resolve both problems of employment and the balance of payments.

[24] See, most notably, the works of R. Cooper (1987, for example) and, much before him, those of Hirschman : the central theme of their work is that the objective of foreign trade policy can very well be to influence international relations.

peace, international or national stability), this same idea is violently rejected for developing countries, and for Africa in particular.

The introduction of the liberal norm is even more glaring when the World Bank takes on preliminary studies. The choice of economic indicators and hypotheses required for concrete calculations reveals most plainly the practice of partiality hidden by claims to technical and supposedly scientific methods. The most flagrant example is found in the realm of international trade : specifically, the manner in which domestic resource costs - the indicator for comparative advantage selected by the World Bank - are calculated[25].

2. " Six sophisticated ways to simplify economic policy discourse "[26]

The second principle of discourse on reforms is that of the quest for parsimony at all costs. Analysis in terms of partial equilibrium, dependent economies, and rent-seeking leads, given the hypotheses selected, to an indisputable and simplistic commitment to foreign trade liberalization and the challenge of protectionism. The exclusion of all apparently complex measures can of course be explained by the failure of past policies[27] (or rather the perception of such a failure) ; real or apparent inconsistencies between systems of protection ; the avowed existence of waste, rent-seeking behavior or evident corruption ; as well as the hegemony of liberal ideology at the international level since the early 1980s (with Reaganism, Thatcherism, and the Clausen era at the World Bank). In order to assure an appearance of coherence between economic theory and policy measures, the discourse operated by confusing the simplicity of recommended measures and the simplicity of theoretical elements to which these measures adhered. This confusion arose from the intensive use of the " new political economy ", restrictive and implicit hypotheses, the prevalence of lateral effects and unintended consequences in the arguments, etc. Six of these methods are used most frequently.

- Take the simplest versions of theoretical models

There are more refined versions of the Australian model mentioned above. These bring rigidities[28] and rationing[29] into the model. Following certain changes at the World Bank, these versions are now utilized[30]. However, their conclusions and implications for foreign economic

[25] For a general critique of these different indicators of comparative advantage, cf. Coussy, 1993. For a critical analysis of domestic resource costs, see Hibou, 1993.

[26] To paraphrase Hirschman's "Three simple ways to complicate political economy discourse." (Hirschman, 1986).

[27] Past policies whose rationality (explicit, at the time, or, more often, reconstituted after the fact) appears to be relatively complex, integrating externalities, learning curves, external economies, and sometimes non-economic factors.

[28] See Taylor, 1983.

[29] See Cuddington, 1981.

[30] Changes which can be found in many domains, theoretical or not. It is interesting, on this note, to compare the Berg Report, 1981 and World Bank, 1985 and 1987, as well as World Bank, 1989.

policy are largely obfuscated. The only element introduced is currency rationing, which poses problems for trade balance equilibrium due to difficulties in supply response (lack of imported goods for exports and absence of incentives due to the rationing of imported goods). But, here as well, we find only *ex post* analysis of this rationing : the latter are not always introduced into the analysis *ex-ante*. Thus, in the document, *Making Adjustment Work for the Poor : a Framework for Policy Reform in Africa*, these alternatives are evoked, but the political economy principles and analyses of their effects issue uniquely from the simplest orthodox model. The choice is, moreover, explicit : in the Bank's own words, this is a matter of " structuring the reasoning ", choosing a " simple and powerful " model that would be more convincing, and not putting too much emphasis on complexity, which remains " a minor fact "[31]. But the introduction of structural rigidities and, above all, a poor supply response to price variations can provoke inverse effects to those sought after (for example, the preservation of inflation and reduced production).

- Assume certain hypotheses and implicit reductionist norms

The same goes for the repudiation of strategic trade policy mentioned above : the " New International Trade Theory " is refused not only because of its potential protectionist measures, but also due to the complexities it introduces into the reasoning. The multiplicity of possible situations (monopoly ; oligopolies - behaving *à la* Carnot or *à la* Bertrand - facing monopolistic, oligopolistic, or competitive situations with several objectives) necessarily results in a multitude of possible optimal interventions. The multiplicity of reactions (which depends on the elasticity of demand, but also on the oligopoly's strategy and the reactions of other enterprises) leads to paradoxical and not necessarily foreseeable economic effects. Multiple determinants of specialization prohibit the sole pursuit of comparative advantage, and the quantity and quality of required information is such that a single economic indicator is insufficient. The specific treatment of the African case is explicit here. In fact, the argument for multiple determinants for specialization and, more generally, the relevance of strategic trade policy are not rejected for industrialized countries[32].

- *Add* adhoc *explanations in order to choose between solutions*

The simplicity of theoretical discourse also arises through recourse to *ad hoc* explanations. It is thus recognized that export supply is extremely inelastic in African countries and that, therefore, the balance of payments can hardly improve (or does not improve at all) despite the application of reforms. But instead of integrating these rigidities and inelasticities into the select models (a procedure which has been the object of many theoretical developments), analysts continue with the same orthodox models and suggested foreign trade policies are not (or are hardly) modified : the problems with supply response are analyzed separately through " complementary policies ".

- Abuse claims for unintended consequences and lateral effects

Another way to simplify discourse involves systematic use of claims about the risks and dangers of unintended consequences and lateral effects. This is useful. For one, it allows one to reject the most refined and complex solutions in favor of the most diffuse and varied effects. Secondly, it permits one to present these unintended consequences and lateral effects as more influential than the direct effects of measures under discussion. For example, the principle

[31] All quotations taken from World Bank, 1990, p. 12.

[32] See World Bank, 1993 or OCDE, 1987.

of protectionism for new industries is, of course, recognized by the World Bank. But it is ultimately rejected in the name of " experience "[33] : protectionism was apparently diverted from its initial objective, and these interventions supposedly did more harm than good.

- Introduce non-theoretical arguments into the theoretical debate

The parsimony required by the implementation of reforms calls for theoretical justification. As we have just seen, the latter was found in the commitment to simple models, hypotheses or principles, as well as the exclusion of complex models, theories, and hypotheses, etc. But it was also assured by particular choices and interpretations mobilized to support non-theoretical claims. The 1987 *World Development Report* is a straightforward advocacy of this approach : " Levels of protection must be decreased and simplified. The simpler the system, the better "[34]. Often, empirical arguments are used to sway decision. Evaluation of a situation must remain simple (hence the refusal to admit that certain markets are not competitive or that prices are not flexible), the conceptualization of foreign trade policy must be simple (hence the exclusion of foreign policy that requires " excessive knowledge "), the implementation of reforms must be simple (hence the exclusion of refined, selective, particular, partial, etc. measures and the preference for devaluation over all other foreign trade policies).

- Play on words

Finally, word play is not insignificant in the elaboration of a simple discourse. First, we find the abusive assimilation - or confusion - of words, the examples of which are numerous. If reform measures are " selective " and " non-global ", they are " inefficient " and " sources of rents ". The " discretionary " nature of economic policy measures is assimilated with " corruption ". Equivalence is made between " distortion ", on the one hand, and " state " or " economic policy measure ", on the other. There is quasi-systematic slippage from " economic policy " and " state intervention " to " waste ", " inefficiency ", and " non-productivity ". This word play, which also includes the use of vague and subjective terms, such as " natural/artificial " or " good/bad "[35], contributes to the elaboration of a simplistic discourse by allowing for slippage in reasoning.

The quest for simplicity at all costs is, of course, contrary to what is taught in economics as a science. This is made most evident when the World Bank gives concrete definitions to liberalization measures. For example, the choice of a uniform customs tariff cannot be justified by economic theory[36]. Thus the World Bank's claim rests on procedures evoked above : the existence of rent-seeking behavior, unintended consequences, administrative incapacity to manage multiple tariffs, difficulties in calculating the " good " tariff for each product...

[33] See, for example, World Bank, 1987 or 1989.

[34] World Bank, 1987, p. 197.

[35] Consult Hirschman, 1986 or Samuels & Mercuro, 1984 for similar critiques of these usages.

[36] See, for example, Harberger, 1990 ; Edwards, 1990 ; Panagariya & Rodrik, 1991 ; or Greenaway & Milner, 1993.

3. The will to circumscribe the political

The last principle that structures World Bank discourse can be summarized as the will to circumscribe the political while bolstering the choice for liberal norms and the quest for simplicity. Insofar as politics appears to be unavoidable (at least since the mid-1980s), international institutions have sought to avoid the problem by referring to currents in political economy that tend to depoliticize perceptions and interpretations. The exclusion of the political is not new ; it is even consubstantial to the World Bank's approach. However, this approach now manifests itself even more clearly with the increase, both in magnitude and occurrence, of crises on the sub-continent.

The Bank makes use of three ideological trends which are part of liberal political economy : the " new political economy " ; new institutionalism ; and theories of civil society, all of which occlude the substance of politics, or the political. Political actors are analyzed as economic actors only ; methodological individualism and the individualistic postulate are extended to all forms of organizations or institutions, and especially the state. This procedure is such that international lenders apprehend African countries as individuals. This can be seen in the manner in which countries under adjustment are treated and the ways in which their respective performances are recounted : there is no place for contradictory forces or movements, conflict and compromise between internal actors, or internal political stakes[37]. The country, as a whole, is considered to be a " good " or " bad " student. And, following trends, developments, and contexts, such and such country is presented as the exemplary case. In Africa these have included, in succession, the Ivory Coast, then Ghana, and finally Botswana and Uganda. It is most revealing that the World Bank does not *use* more rich and complex concepts, such as the notion of " economic society " proposed by Linz and Stepan[38], even though the Bank cites the works of these two scholars. Here we find another procedure in the elaboration of discourse : mentioning works without using them or only taking up their vocabulary[39]. Moreover, political economy is, for international organizations, a purely technical science which contains truths as well as good and sometimes bad precepts ; it is a science of neutral and politically incontestable concepts. However, numerous works have illustrated, concretely, the meaning of terms constantly used by the World Bank and often taken up by African societies, although used in disparate ways. They have shown that these terms are political (such as the adjective " good " or the word " participation ") or economic (such as the term " efficiency "). Ferguson shows that, for the World Bank, " good " is a technical term while, for Africans, it has a moral connotation[40]. Sachikonye shows that the word " participation " is considered by international lenders as a " justification for liberal ideology " and that it is used in the interest of reform efficiency. On the other hand, it justifies the " tendency for accumulation " of the Zimbabwean bourgeoisie. Anthropologists offer the most interesting commentary on this subject[41]. The efficiency sought after by the World Bank is essentially middle - and long-term

[37] On this point, see the contributions to Meier, ed., 1991

[38] See Linz & Stepan, 1996. "Economic society" is "an ensemble of norms, institutions, and rules which are socio-politically legitimated and implemented, exercising a form of mediation between the state and the market." (p. 11).

[39] See World Bank, 1997.

[40] Ferguson, 1995.

[41] Sachikonye, 1995.

economic efficiency ; for most African agents, operational efficiency is short-term financial efficiency and, above all, a relational and clientelistic efficiency[42]. What we have, in effect, is an outright rejection of Weberian thought, which posits that " the science of political economy is a political science "[43].

- The new political economy

For the most part, international lenders make use of rent-seeking theory[44] and, more infrequently, directly unproductive profit-seeking theory[45] (DUP), as put forth in this current of political economy[46]. " Rent-seeking " translates competition that exists between different economic agents in one particular sector in order to capture " rents " (or " premiums on scarcity ") that result from different forms of public intervention. The main point is that resources used to this end do not generate wealth and only lead to a waste of resources by transferring existing wealth between different groups or different economic agents. DUP theory extends this sort of analysis to all activities which seek to increase profits by using resources without generating wealth.

Public choice theory is, according to P. Evans, " the most visible and the most powerful version of the neo-utilitarian vision of the state "[47]: the state is desegregated and all public officials or political actors behave, like all economic actors, according to the principle of profit maximization. Economic inefficiency is attributed to unfortunate state interventions. These interventions essentially result from interest group action which models the political system, thus reinforcing the rent-seeking system.

- New institutionalist trends

From the repertoire of Olson's research[48], international lenders have selected out the idea of the cost of interest group formation : this cost is a function of the number of members of the interest group. The bigger the group, the more costly and the more problematic " free riders ". In Africa, the work of Robert Bates[49] has been applied : economic inefficiency is attributed to

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[42] See Guyer, 1993 ; Berry, 1993 ; Kopytoff, 1987 and De Boeck, 1997.

[43] In 1895 ; cited by Freund, 1965, pp 14-15.

[44] The first formulation of this theory is found in Krueger, 1974 (the article found in *The American Economic Review* gives the first estimates of the cost of rent-seeking for the Turkish case); as well as Srinivasan & Bhagwati, 1978 ; Bhagwati, 1976. However, the theory originates in the works of Tullock, 1967. For a synthesis of the debates, *cf*. Vousden, 1990.

[45] See, most notably, Bhagwati, 1982 ; Bhagwati, Brecher & Srinivasan, 1984.

[46] The principle representatives of this new political economy are Olson, Tullock, Buchanan and Tollison (see, for example, Olson, 1971 ; Tullock, 1967 ; Tullock, Buchanan & Tollison, 1980). Models of political markets have been developed more recently by Findlay & Wellisz, 1982 and 1984 ; Brock & Magee, 1978 ; Magee, 1984 ; Magee, Brock & Young, 1989, amongst others.

[47] Evans, 1990, p. 4. For a good synthesis of debates over "the new political economy", see Colander, ed., 1984.

[48] See, for example, Olson, 1971. See also the works of Arrow and Blake. For the Indian case, the most well known studies are those of Lipton (1977).

[49] See, on agricultural policy, Bates, 1981 and 1983. More generally, *cf*. Bates, ed., 1988. For a critique of this approach, see, for one, Stein & Wilson, 1993 and Sindzingre, 1996.

the increasing power of coalitions which create rigidities in the heart of the economy. The role of transaction costs and institutions in development is borrowed from North and the " new economic history "[50]. In interaction with the state, transaction costs shape the structure of " property rights " (Coase) and, consequently, economic performance[51]. These structures differ according to the type of economy and, in developing countries, the inadequacy of these rules and the gap between announced and applied rules, which impede economic performance by raising transaction costs. In Africa, an imported colonial administration supposedly imposed organisational forms upon ethnicity : these forms of organization (such as the administration, the bureaucratized state) are supposedly unrelated to internal institutions ; they have no local, juridical or political base. Economic difficulties (and especially administrative and economic policy problems, but also the lack of private entrepreneurs) arise from this " institutional " context.

The notions of " good governance " and " capacity building " issue from this analysis[52] : after " putting prices right " of the 1980s, the " putting politics right " of the 1990s reflects, once again, the mimetic reasoning between the economic and political spheres, and economic and political objects ; only the functional and technical aspects of governing are taken into account[53]. Likewise, references to " social capital " - a concept taken from R. Putnam's work on Italy[54] - reveal a culturalist and overdetermined conceptualization of African societies[55] in their failure to apprehend the multiplicity and especially the ambivalence of cultural repertoires[56]. And, no matter the refinements introduced into concrete analyses, this functionalism is never overcome.

- Theories of civil society

Finally, the analysis of " civil society " represents the last influence of liberal political economy on World Bank analysis. At the onset, this was inspired by the writings of H. de Soto[57], for whom the informal and " spontaneous " organizations of civil society are forms of state resistance and creative responses to state incapacities. For the specific case of Africa, the World Bank used, in often simplified and truncated manner, the works of American authors, political scientists, and anthropologists who underscored the strength, dynamism, and

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[50] See North, 1984 and 1990.

[51] This analysis is founded on Williamson, 1985.

[52] The World Bank's main document on good governance is World Bank, 1992. See also Brautigam, 1991 ; Picciotto, 1995, as well as Dia, 1991 ; and Klitgaard, 1995. For a more subtle but nonetheless uncritical analysis of this approach, *cf*. Jeffries, 1993 ; Bratton & Van de Walle, 1996, or Hyden & Bratton, eds., 1992.

[53] For critique of the notion, see Ferguson, 1995 ; Moore, 1993, Schmitz, 1995 ; Sindzingre, 1996 ; Mkandawire, 1996.

[54] Putnam, 1993, who himself took this concept from the Africanists, Bates and Coleman.

[55] Scholars of Italy have criticized Putnam's analyses due to the reductionist and overdetermining nature of the notion of social capital. Similar criticisms can be made of the culturalism inherent in the World Bank's notion of governance, particularly as it is used in the African context. See, for example, D. Martin, 1991.

[56] For of critique of the culturalist vision of the political in general, see Bayart, 1996.

[57] H. de Soto, 1990 (original Spanish edition, 1986), was used for the first time, officially by the World Bank in 1987.

independence of actors lying " outside " the state[58]. What is most often retained from these writings is the opposition between the state and private actors or the state and the market ; or the dichotomy between the public and private spheres, and so-called informal and formal sectors.

Nonetheless, field work[59] and attentive observation of relations between economic actors challenges this economic analysis based on dichotomies. For one, these studies highlight the overlapping of " sectors " and the fluidity of affiliation. Furthermore, they illustrate the interpenetration between the state, informal networks, and these other " spontaneous organizations " which supposedly represent " civil society "[60]. The simplistic conceptualization of this latter notion reveals, again, the World Bank's will to circumscribe the political. On the one hand, these works justify the allocation of funds to NGOs and other " community development " associations, which allows institutions like the World Bank to withdraw into " pure economy ", leaving the social and the political to private actors[61]. On the other hand, to the extent that actors lying outside the state reproduce ideal conditions for the market and competition, they are supposed to create purely economic conditions and thus escape the constraints of the political.

In fine, these rationalizations demonstrate that liberalization reforms are neither the fruit of the strict application of a specific economic theory (traditionally designated as neoclassical theory), nor in-depth and objective *ex ante* analyses of African contexts. Neither is it a reflection of a technical, economistic, apolitical, or even amoral vision[62]. To the contrary, it suggests that liberalization reforms (but also privatization itself[63]) constitute a discourse constructed out of *a priori* assumptions and hypotheses which instrumentalize the most simplistic forms of economic research, and mostly American scholarship, which is often bowdlerized. The present critical analysis shows that the World Bank's suggested reforms reflect a norm (non-interventionist state, liberalism, free exchange), an obsession (the quest

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[58] See, most notably, the writing of G. Hyden (to whom we owe the expression, "good governance") on the "exit option" exercised by African peasants in Hyden, 1980, 1983, 1985 ; the contributions of Chazan, Rothchild, Mortimer, Azarya, Ravenhill and Callaghy on this choice as it relates to the ensemble of private economic actors, particularly in international trade, in Chazan & Rothchild, eds., 1987 or Chazan, Rothchild, Ravenhill & Mortimer, 1988 ; the works of MacGaffey on the "second economy" in MacGaffey, 1987 and 1991 ; and those of Sandbrook on the importance of non-state actors in development in Sandbrook, 1987 and 1993.

[59] Quite revealing of the ironies of World Bank discourse, field work used to found its relatively simplistic vision is sometimes that which best shows the complexity of relations between actors and the fluidity of borders between "sectors." Such is the case for the work of J. MacGaffey.

[60] On multiple affiliations and overlapping, see, among others, Amselle, 1983 ; Bayart, 1989 ; Berry, 1993 ; Boone, 1992 ; Ellis & Fauré, dirs., 1995 ; Fassin, 1986 ; Geschiere, 1984 and 1990 ; Guyer, 1993 ; Grégoire, 1991 ; Grégoire et Labazée, dirs., 1993 ; Haggard & Webb, eds, 1993 ; Lautier, de Miras & Morice, 1991 ; MacGaffey, 1987 and 1991 ; Morice, 1985 ; Roitman 1990 ; Sindzingre, 1993a and 1993b ; Warnier, 1993. And, for a critique of the World Bank's position on the basis of field work and a review of the literature, see Hibou, 1996. For a critique of the "civil society" concept, see, among others, Bayart, 1989 ; Callaghy, 1994, and certain contributions to Callaghy & Ravenhill, eds., 1993.

[61] Commentary on this strategy can be found in Coussy, 1991 ; Lautier, de Miras & Morice, 1991 ; Sindzingre, 1993a.

[62] On this point, Ferguson, 1995, speaks of "scientific capitalism" (p. 136).

[63] For an attempt at this "deconstruction", see Bienefeld, 1995.

for simplicity to the point of entering into contradiction not only with complex realities[64], but also with the most elementary principles of economic policy[65]), an exclusion (the political), and a mode of thought (dichotomous). The resemblance to colonialism, and especially the work of religious missions, is striking, as has been noted elsewhere[66]. The World Bank's canon is made of economic catechism, as is suggested by the catechists' proclivity for normative adjectives such as " good " or " bad " ; the will to " do good " and to " develop " are reflections of a certain naiveté associated with religious movements, reminding us of their civilizing ambitions ; and the capacity to establish truths not by demonstration, but by repetition and power plays is strangely reminiscent of the Protestant missions in the 19th century. It is also somewhat astonishing to note that this analogy is unconsciously divulged by the World Bank itself. In one recent issue of its information bulletin[67], we read, in an evocatively entitled editorial (" Religious leaders and Wolfensohn find inspiration at Lambeth's "): " Like the Bank, most religious leaders consider it to be *their duty* to *defend certain causes* relating to the poor, the environment, violence, and the construction of social cohesion ".

II.B MISSIONARY DEEDS AND MISDEEDS

Lack of realism and the " evangelical " nature of World Bank discourse does not preclude its implication in the production of very concrete missionary deeds (and misdeeds)[68]. Following the example of its 19th century predecessors, the Bank, as an international organization, implicates itself in dynamics which elude it. The effects of its actions are thus inadvertent and often even opposed to what was expected.

[64] The complexity of certain situations, reform procedures, structures, etc. is, paradoxically, increasingly recognized by international lenders due to the perception of the "failure" of reform in Africa. Today, there is thus a risk of incoherence between analysis, on the one hand, and models and suggested measures, on the other.

[65] For example, the search for simplicity, which led to a maximum reduction in the tools of state intervention in the economy, is evidently in contradiction with the famous Tinbergen rule (see Tinbergen, 1961 and de Boissieu, 1980).

[66] To my knowledge, the first author to suggest this parallel is J.-F. Bayart (in "La Banque mondiale, un libéralisme à visage humain", *La Croix-l'Evénément,* 18 octobre 1989). The original title of this article was "La mission de la Banque mondiale", but the Catholic journal rejected it ! Therein, Bayart writes: "There is something messianic in the developmentalist ingenuity of the Bank. Its reformist zeal gives off the same perfumed aromas of the civilizing works of the 19th century Anglo-Saxon, Protestant missions, whose role in the tasks we now call development has been obliterated from our memory." [translator's translation] The driving force behind the book of S. George & F. Sabelli (1994) is the analogy between the World Bank and the church. However, their approach is not fully developed, compromising its potential. The authors neglect to examine the ability of states under adjustment to trick and outsmart the missionary imperialism of the Bank.

[67] *World Bank News,* vol. XVII, no. 5, 5 March 1998, quotation from p. 1, my underlining.

[68] This is an explicit reference to the journal, *Le Fait Missionnaire : Histoire et Héritage.* This publication, edited in Lausanne under the direction of K. Blaser, aims to disseminate interdisciplinary academic work on the missionary deed and the object of the mission. See Monnier, 1996 ; Péclard, 1995 ; Morier-Genoud, 1996.

1. The inculturation of the World Bank's economic catechism in Africa

The World Bank does not produce missionary deeds in a direct way. This process is rather the result of two convergent movements: the laxism of this international organization, on the one hand, and the capacity for adaptation and interpretation of local actors, on the other.

The Bank's resistance to complex realities does not hinder the daily work of undermining: on the ground, the lending agency cannot avoid the multiple constraints that present themselves. It is thus often forced to deviate from the path etched out in its discourse and by its principles for intervention. Doubtless, this is not particular to the World Bank, or even other lenders: it is the fate of all economic actors. However, given the ideological nature and financial weight of this Washingtonian organization, the consequences of this deviation are important. Indeed, when we observe the Bank's strategy, for a period of ten to fifteen years, we see that it continues to intervene in African countries even though its own economic conditionalities have not been respected. This laxist (and typically missionary...) behavior is not the result of modified perceptions ; it emanates from a certain number of bureaucratic constraints.

All international development banks evolve, by their very nature, in a context of constraints. As a bank, the logic of its actions is shaped by the objective to maximize the number of ongoing projects ; the motivation to disburse funds ; and, above all, the exigency to prove the indispensable nature of its interventions[69] - the *raison d'être* of a banker is nothing other than the logic of credit. As a development entity, the Bank's actions must be continuous and visible. And as a missionary institution, it has difficulties admitting to the problematic conditions of its interventions, the perpetuation of poverty, and especially the inconsistency of results obtained. The idea of the cessation of its actions is practically unthinkable ; this would amount to the suppression of its *raison d'être*. The financial logics of all lending agencies are at the origin of other constraints: when the Bank is pressured to disburse credits on schedule and when it is subjected to the imperatives of reimbursement, it can only close its eyes before slippages and mistakes or flagrant rule-bending of its principles of intervention. Financial constraints (the rapidity of disbursements, the absence of significant and visible financial misappropriations, strict reimbursement deadlines) thus typically lead to partial diversions in objectives and from destinations or designated parties. The third type of constraint is purely administrative: the international bureaucrat, like any salaried person, must manage and succeed in his or her career. This is such that a detailed accounting of problems encountered for any one country is fairly difficult to obtain ; mention of weak economic performances is problematic and the decision to put a stop to a " mission " delegated by a superior is virtually inconceivable. Traps in the administrative machinery are the main cause for indulgent attitudes toward African countries. Moreover, political pressure is often significant: the pressure of bilateral partners (who, in Africa, include France, the United States and, to a lesser degree, England) or fear of the development of civil wars, or for stability, more generally, compels the World Bank to perpetuate and even reinforce its presence. Finally, its internal organization does not encourage targeted and rigorous treatment of specific countries: taken separately, the countries of the sub-continent are not at all important in financial and political terms. Like most international organizations, fear of both a void and novelty, as well as pressure from financing states all serve to perpetuate a laxist treatment of African countries.

[69] It is interesting to note, in this regard, that during the 1980s, the IMF and the World Bank "pushed" for their right to intervene in Africa. This is the case for Cameroon, which had set out on an independent adjustment process. Again, one can only note the analogy with religious missions.

These different bureaucratic constraints inevitably lead the World Bank to expedients, positivist interpretations, and all-out compromises. This is what led it to accept fairly unorthodox budget closings[70], to apply " revisions " to budget accounting such that certain reforms succeed (the case for countries of the Franc zone after the devaluation of the FCFA[71]), to auspiciously ignore moneylaundering operations when these fill state treasuries (the case for customs operations in certain West African countries, and especially Senegal), to permit the acceleration of privatization (fairly systematically in Sierra Leone during the 1980s[72] ; today, this process is evident in many countries, and particularly in the hotel and tourism sectors[73]), or to forego sanctions of abuses and poor performance (the flagrant case of Cameroon for many years now). And these bureaucratic constraints also explain why recourse to severity and rigor usually comes much too late (as in the Goldenberg affair in Kenya, which took place in mid-1993 and was " discovered "...in July 1997).

Furthermore, local actors " work on " state interventions and interpret reforms - to begin with those suggested by lenders[74] - in function of their " social capital "[75]. Without going into a detailed analysis of the latter, suffice it to note that the most important aspects of this " social capital " are, in economic terms, 1) the insertion of all public interventions in the rentier economy and the economy of " plunder " ; 2) the institutional weakness of the banking system and the importance of financial fraud ; 3) the long tradition of customs fraud and contraband ; 4) war or violence as an economic enterprise ; 5) the management of export resources according to the " politics of the belly " and contrary to economic expansion ; 6) severe dereliction in fiscal contributions and appropriations, and extraversion of sources of state financial revenues ; and 7) resistance to and expropriation of international constraints[76].

These historically structured characteristics are in no way defined solely by public action ; they emanate from the organizational schema, strategies, and behavior of numerous political and economic actors. Paradoxically, the World Bank's anti-statist and apolitical discourse does not prevent it from adopting a particularly narrow concept of economic policy. That is, the Bank only takes into account the " construction " of these policies - or the elaboration of economic policy by public authorities and administrations - and neglects their " formation "[77] -

[70] This shortcoming is aggravated by the absence of viable statistics in all African countries. On this point, *cf*. Berry, 1984 ; Hibou, 1996 ; and especially Mosley, 1992.

[71] See Hibou, 1994 and 1995 on the negotiations between France, the IMF, and the World Bank before, during, and after the devaluation of the Franc CFA. This episode is a good example of purely political and strategic behavior : the devaluation *had to* succeed, no matter the rigging and "heresy" used to obtain this result.

[72] Cf. Reno, 1995.

[73] Cf. Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, 1997.

[74] The literature is quite abundant on the problem of conditionality and lack of respect thereof. See, among others, DAI, 1990 ; Stiles, 1990 ; Nelson, ed., 1989 and 1990 ; Gabas, 1990 ; Mosley, Harrigan & Toye, 1991 ; Hyden & Bratton, eds., 1992 ; Gordon, 1993 ; Sorensen, ed., 1993 ; Haggard and Webb, eds., 1994 ; Duruflé, 1994.

[75] In spite of criticism made of Putnam's use of this notion (see note 56), I have taken it up as an expedient in order to designate the cluster of historical trajectories in sub-Saharan Africa, purging it of its determinist and culturalist connotations.

[76] For in-depth analysis of these points, *cf*. Hibou 1996 and 1997.

[77] On the concepts of state "construction" and "formation", *cf*. Berman & Lonsdale, 1992 and especially Lonsdale, 1992. "The construction of the state" is "a conscious effort to create an instrument of control" while "state formation" is "a historical process" which is, for the most part, "an unconscious and contradictory process of conflicts, negotiations, and compromises between diverse groups whose self-serving actions and trade-offs

or the complex and often contradictory historical processes of decisions, market structures, behaviours, strategies of public and private actors, and domestic and international actors. It only considers the thought-out and conscious actions of the state.

In that sense, references to the recolonization of the continent by international lenders, and especially the World Bank, are surely misplaced[78]. We see, rather, the development of two long-term trends, which reemerged in the 1980s, serving economic and political crises in Africa: the practice of double language and, above all, the redoubling (*dédoublement*) of power structures[79]. In spite of the quick adoption of World Bank vocabulary, the latter's discourse and logics were largely obscured by African governments. It often takes statistical manipulations or minimalist interpretations of reforms in order to show that conditionalities have been respected. The instability and arbitrary nature of reforms allows African states to present a façade that conforms to the exigencies of the Bank. Behind this façade, non-orthodox practices abound. The adoption of technical measures or new legislation is sometimes effective, but the maintenance of past practice effaces the meaning of reforms. Often powerless, a lender like the World Bank is by no means unenlightened to these practices. However, caught in its own bureaucratic constraints, the Bank is snatched up in the spiral of " make believe " by accepting *trompe l'oeil* conditionalities. The redoubling of structures of power reflects, in its extreme form (as in the past in Sierra Leone and Rwanda ; or today in Cameroon, Chad, RCA, the Congo, and Kenya) the existence of an occult structure lying beside or internal to the official government. This structure is the veritable space of coercive - as much as economic or political - power. In its most " benign " form, more or less occult networks are implicated in official networks and institutions of power. But, in both cases, the institutional and external visibility of power does not correspond to its reality, and international lenders are not necessarily negotiating with the right interlocutors. Ultimately, the practice of " make believe " and the redoubling of power structures considerably lessen the impact and efficacy of conditionalities.

Clearly, reforms implemented at the instigation of the World Bank escape its very control. In no instance did the Bank seek to induce certain common effects. That is, the World Bank, like other financial lenders, certainly did not seek to give a socio-political, as opposed to economic, signification to reforms. It did not explicitly seek to support governing regimes and to reinforce underground, or criminal, aspects of the African political economy. And, even if it pushed for the acceleration of reforms, the Bank never sought to reinforce the process of delegitimation of public power and its absorption by private interests.

2. The socio-political meaning of economic reforms

The first unintended consequence of reforms represents an instance of economic history thumbing its nose at the World Bank: the meaning and consequences of liberalization reforms

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constitute the >vulgarization' of power." (p. 5). For a commentary on this approach, see Bayart 1994. For an initial application to economic policy, *cf*. Hibou, 1996.

[78] On the return of colonization, read Laïdi, 1989 ; Moore, 1995 ; Bowen, 1992 ; Plank, 1993. Pitcher, 1996, proposes a more nuanced analysis, with particular consideration of different consequences of emergent capitalism.

[79] On double language and processes of "falsification", see Hibou, 1997 ; on the *dédoublement* of power structures, see Bayart, 1989, 1993 and 1997 and Mbembe, 1992.

are less economic than social and political. The international institution's lack of knowledge, or misunderstanding, of the specificity of the state and politics in Africa explains this unintened result.

This is not the place to enter into the (already well documented) debate on the nature of the state in Africa: within the Africanist community, it is already accepted that the state is not " imported "[80] and that we must consider the historicity of the African state[81], even and especially if this takes specific and novel forms and if the present-day process of state formation takes place through crises and wars[82]. Misconceptions about, and ignorance of, these debates and research has important consequences for political economy. For example, in the process of state formation in Africa, all [economic] opportunities merit consideration in the eyes of the political class. In other words, state formation and the formation of the national economy are indissociable. The quest for economic and financial, but also political and social, resources is necessary in a situation where everything is up for negotiation, where conflict is permanent, and where instability pervades the environment. This is another dimension of the " politics of the belly ", which involves more than enrichment and corruption[83]. Recent instability (following independences, economic crises and, in some countries, war or increasing violence) has strengthened long-term trends for the proliferation of social and economic networks and various affiliations: it is more important to reinforce one's capacity to participate, to influence negotiations and compromises, and to mobilize allies and potential supporters than to acquire resources that are not immediately profitable and certainly not as flexible[84]. In this context, wealth acquisition takes place less on an accumulative modality (accumulate the same thing in large quantities) than on the basis of a " compositional "[85] modality (accumulate different kinds of values on different registers) which, *in fine*, means privileging the accumulation of human capital (humans being the only item that transcends various registers of value). Furthermore, for the elites, acquisition of physical wealth (economic and financial) is less important than the control of social and political capital[86]. Factional struggles are the expression of this logic: the " rhizome state's " heterogeneity (Bayart) and the fragmentation of power[87] manifest themselves in conflict, negotiations, and compromises in sites of predation and around sources of wealth. This is the case for struggles over the privatization of public enterprises or marketing boards ; the struggle against contraband or corruption ; and even war for economic and socio-political ends, as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and ex-Zaire.

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[80] On the thesis of the imported state, *cf*. Badie, 1992.

[81] On Africa, see Bayart, 1979 and 1989. For a critique of the thesis of the "imported" state and on the transplant, or graft, of the state in developing countries (with special attention to Asia and the Maghreb), see Bayart, dir., 1996.

[82] On the ongoing process of state formation, see Berman & Lonsdale, 1992 ; Boone, 1992 ; Berry, 1993 ; Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, 1997.

[83] Bayart, 1989.

[84] Berry, 1993. See also Sindzingre, 1993b.

[85] Guyer, 1993. See also De Boeck, 1997.

[86] Kopytoff, 1987.

[87] On Africa, see Bayart, 1989 ; Berman & Lonsdale, 1992 ; Berry, 1993. For a general analysis in terms of fragmentation with respect to developing countries, see Migdal, 1988.

Liberalization reforms can only be understood in this context. The specificity of the state explains non-conformity to the models and, moreover, the socio-political signification of reforms in sub-Saharan Africa. Modifications in economic policies promulgated by the Bank have less impact upon economic mechanisms, modes of production, or the nature of state economic interventions than on the conditions under which the quest for economic and financial, as well as political and social resources, takes place. Privatizations end up being less a modification of management techniques and modalities (the move from " economic nationalism " to the exploitation of " market mechanisms ") than a modification of the techniques and modalities of the " economy of plunder "[88] (the move from the siphoning of public resources by elites to the sharing of the national cake by purchase or participation in newly privatized enterprises by these same elites)[89]. Trade liberalization is less a modification of development strategies (the move from import substitution to export-driven development) than a modification of modalities for accessing resources of extraversion (the move from rents of protectionism - licences, quotas, currency restrictions, entry into public monopolies - to rents of liberalization - the control of private monopolies or oligopolies, access to " informal " networks, access to credit)[90]. This is such that, due to the very nature of the state and politics in Africa, economic reforms have more influence and socio-political significance than economic impact. By modifying conditions of access to resources, liberalization is increasingly a mechanism for social transformation. In the context of economic and especially political crisis, liberalization often operates as a mechanism for exclusion and integration[91].

3. The informal reinforcement of governing regimes

The second unintended consequence of World Bank actions is as far removed from its official statutes. Its unspoken and unintentional implication in the political sphere has served to strengthen governing regimes. This observation, while debated, is often affirmed[92] : by giving priority to existing structures and institutions, and through its inability to push forward true civil and political societies, lenders' financial and human support most often serves to maintain elites and governing coalitions. However, observers rarely note that this involuntary support

[88] I take the term "economy of plunder" from the works of W. G. Hoskins on England under Henry VIII. This term refers to the monopolization of economic resources for private ends by representatives of public power. See Hoskins, 1976.

[89] See Hibou, 1997.

[90] See Hibou, 1996.

[91] See, for example, the works of Sindzingre, 1993a and Grégoire & Labazée, dirs., 1993. Mehta, 1997 develops this argument in a theoretical and abstract manner : for her, "the fundamentally exclusive characteristic of liberalism takes its source [...] from the heart of its theory, and the long list of historical examples of exclusion is an illustration of the theory. It is not because these ideals are theoretically insincere or concretely inapplicable, but rather because, behind the impartial capacities of all human beings, there is a thicker level of social credit that constitutes the real basis of political exclusion." (p. 61).

[92] See Bienen, 1990 ; Callaghy, 1994 ; Schmitz, 1995 ; Banégas & Quantin, 1996 ; Moore, 1993.

operates right beside parallel and " shadow " networks and institutions, thus reinforcing the " informal " and subterranean branches of the state[93].

In some ways, the primacy of politics is recognized in the African case, as demonstrated by the introduction of political economy into economic catechism, as well as international lenders' recently articulated intention to " put an end to the African exception " by obligading these countries to return to a certain " economic rationality ". The conceptualization of political reforms and conditionalities in terms of " good governance " is part of the general project of depoliticization, which seeks to circumscribe the political, or to render the economy autonomous from politics[94]. However, an approach that starts from the ideas of rents, corruption, and the state versus market dichotomy is inoperable and inadequate because it neglects, well beyond vested interests, the very foundations of socio-political conflicts, social structures of different economic sectors, political influence in economic activities, and especially socio-political rationalities involved in economic policies.

By disregarding the reality of the environment in which they act (socio-political conflicts, social structuration of economic sectors, political influence in different activities), lenders cannot see the real effects of their own actions. Hence they produce, in spite of themselves, a certain political dynamic, thus inserting themselves in local events. If this behavior is easy to explain (each lender obeys one or more logic(s) that define it and differentiate it from its African partners ; the mutual knowledge of one and the others is biased)[95], its originary misconceptions are often only operational for actors already well implicated in the socio-political stakes of African political economies. Thus purely technical measures destined to eliminate customs fraud (computerization, administrative restructurings, repressive techniques, privatization of surveillance) obtain particularly poor economic results since they do not account for social and political phenomena that are inherent to fraud. Also, these technical measures benefit those who are most able to take advantage of new modes of accumulation, or to act in the political realm in order to rework fraudulent techniques (e.g., the under declaration of " purchasing " customs agents no longer being possible, it now takes place by " purchasing " foreign provisioners ; by directing repression toward " small " agents or political rivals ; by freezing the application of new legislation when need be ; or by inventing usages of regional agreements).

These resolutely political reforms thus contribute laterally to reinforce the position of elites in the economy. But their position is not a legal one ; it is rather informal and occult. Through new norms, repression and condemnation of practices that lie at the heart of politics incite power holders to displace their strategies of accumulation towards more hidden modalities. In this way, liberalization reforms and privatization abet shadow networks and structures of power. In the contemporary political context, the latter constitute the only spaces (or interstices) of liberty ; they are margins of maneuver between political exigencies and economic constraints. During the 1960s and 1970s, practices of accumulation involved the distribution of public employment, acquisition of rights-of-passage, profits from benefits such as import licences, and privileged access to currency or procurement of " non-reimbursable credits ". Today, such practices have migrated to the fringes of legality: protection of or access to informal

[93] The rare exceptions are Reno, 1995 on Sierra Leone, and Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, 1997 and Mbembe, to be published, for sub-Saharan Africa more generally.

[94] On this depoliticization project, see Ferguson, 1990 ; Coussy, 1991.

[95] For a case study (Cameroonian plantation project), see Warnier, 1994.

commerce[96], control of criminal activities[97], control of violence for economic ends[98], and the development of various kinds of fraud[99].

The World Bank's role in this is surprisingly ambiguous. On the one hand, the Bank deploys a set of resolute and sincere reforming actions. But, on the other hand, the Bank involuntarily supports reigning power elites ; while the latter's management practices are criticized, the Bank does not tackle the political logics of various regimes. Ironically, the Bank's own practices undermine the longstanding material bases of governments, and hence the latter's capacity to implement reforms ; through this, the Bank participates in the slide towards illegality. It is interesting to note that these same ambiguities, although different in form, were denounced at the turn of the century by North African leaders on the eve of colonization[100].

4. The contribution of economic catechism to the delegitimation and privatization of a mode of government

Finally, the World Bank's attitude, which insists upon desired results and disregards the means by which they are obtained, has one last unintended consequence. The priority placed upon objectives (" more market ", " less state " and " reforms at all cost ") over means used to arrive at them is certainly the most important missionary misdeed: the Bank, and most other international lenders, is particularly tolerant as to the ways and means by which African countries liberalize and, above all, privatize. For the Bank, the emergence of capitalism depends upon the concentration of wealth and the rise of an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. Moreover, the adoption of management techniques by rational enterprises and the anchoring of market mechanisms constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for development[101].

[96] See MacGaffey, ed., 1997 and 1991 ; Grégoire & Labazée, dir., 1993 ; and Hibou, 1996.

[97] Few academic works are dedicated to this subject. See, however, Reno, 1995 ; Klein, 1994 ; Ellis, 1996 ; Mbembe, 1993 ; Roitman, 1996 ; and Hibou, 1997. The mains sources of information on the subject come from international organizations (Interpol, United Nations), European or American agencies (see especially, United States Senate, 1992 ; Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, 1995) ; Observatoire géopolitique des drogue, 1995) and the specialized press (*Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens, Africa Analysis, La Lettre du Continent, Africa Confidential, Nord-Sud Export*).

[98] Mbembe, 1990, 1993 and to be published ; Bayart, 1993 and 1997 ; Reno, 1995 ; Hibou, 1997 ; Roitman, 1998 ; Martinez, 1998.

[99] Fraudulent techniques have increased over the last years in Africa. The most well known amongst them are the acts of the "Feymen", or Cameroon con artists ; the "419" Nigeria, which involves "advance fee fraud" organised by well structured guilds ; or "Bindo", a betting game very much in vogue in Zaire during 1990-91. Games and tricks are used for enrichment, and they are never far from the world of crime. See Hibou, 1997.

[100] See the very interesting book by Khayr ed-Din, who was the Tunisian Prime Minister from 1873 to 1877. He demonstrates the ambiguous role of the Europeans who, on the one hand, pushed for economic, administrative, and military reforms while, on the other, supporting violations of the most basic rights (such as the suspension, in 1964, of the 1861 Constitution), backing populist revolts that challenged these reforms, and inciting the system of "protection" which aimed to divert large amounts of wealth from the Tunisian fiscal system. Khayr ed-Din, 1868 (1987 edition).

[101] This is particularly obvious when one reads institutional texts on privatization: see, for example, CFD, 1996 ; World Bank 1996 a and b. The reactions of these same institutions (World Bank, Caisse française de développement) to the publication of *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa* (Bayart, Ellis & Hibou), and especially to a section on privatization (pp. 107-111), are even more revealing : while recognizing the accuracy of the opinions expressed, these institutions' functionaries continued to think that criminal modes of

Finally, the Bank is not all that concerned with either modalities for accessing wealth or, following its apolitical principles, socio-political processes that accompany transformations in economic management.

In the African context[102], however, it seems that quite troubling socio-political effects can result from particular manners of implementing reforms. By neglecting the role of public policy and economic behavior in state formation, by underestimating the weaknesses and even criminal aspects of administrations, by treating deficiencies in fiscality as a mere financial matter, and by only taking into account the economic performance of privatized industries, the World Bank participates, in spite of itself, in two disconcerting trends on the sub-continent: the loss of legitimacy of public power, on the one hand, and the privatization of the state and its modes of government, on the other.

The loss of legitimacy of public authority is, above all, an internal process. But international lenders involuntarily contribute to this process in at least four ways.

First, through its expertise and conditionalities, the World Bank intervenes in increasingly subtle ways in the very definition of economic policy and, more generally, the modes of action available to the state. Its intrusion into the modeling of public finance, the conception of public service, and the definition of public sectors is a preeminently political act[103]. Secondly, the World Bank contributes, along with other international lenders, to the breakup of the state's centers of decisionmaking[104]. The dispersion of power and controls affects administrative efficiency, and hence its legitimacy. Furthermore, by aggravating the fragmentation of the bureaucracy and society, central political power becomes more and more limited[105]. Thirdly, the practice of " good governance ", " accountability ", and state " capacity building " led, for the most part, to perverse effects. The World Bank takes these concepts to be instruments for the relegitimation of the state[106]. But, as for all economic reforms, its capacity for influence and for implementation is extremely limited. For one, and as we have seen, some of its interventions reinforce governing regimes ; and yet these regimes often prove to have little legitimacy. Also, in contributing to the weakening of public bureaucracy[107] (through adoption of the liberal and anti-statist norm, a technocratic disposition that disregards a great part of the administration in favor of small teams working with foreign experts, and the vicious circle of proliferating reforms which are impossible to implement), the World Bank abets the loss of political and economic credibility of public agencies. And, last but not least, the supremacy of the international, as opposed to domestic, legitimacy of governments is particularly pernicious. Insofar as political

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privatization contribute to the emergence of large, productive and viable enterprises. On the basis of a specific reading of economic history, they are persuaded that, in the long term, "good" management and the market will overcome archaic and mafia-esque methods.

[102] And, according to Linz & Stepan, 1996, for in Eastern Europe as well.

[103] On the influence of the World Bank in Africa, *cf*. Mosley, Harrigan & Toye, 1991. For an analysis of lenders and "agencies of restraint", *cf*. Collier, 1991. See also Sindzingre, 1996.

[104] Coussy, 1994.

[105] Here we find a characteristic of the French Ancien Régime : fiefs, cities, provinces and the privileged classes benefited from exemptions and rules of exception in order to avoid ongoing conflicts and compensate for the lack of a strong center in absolutist power. But this privileges contributed to and reinforced centrifugal tendencies that had a strong presence in the heart of the monarchy. On the Ancien Régime, see Hoffman, 1994 and Dessert, 1984.

[106] Ferguson, 1995.

[107] Hibou, 1997.

leaders depend largely on external resources to balance their budgets (direct public funding ; access to international financial markets because of " credibility " stemming from the signature of structural adjustment programs with Bretton Woods institutions ; fiscal receipts obtained from large international investors - oil, mining - assured by the adoption of reforms), they tend to pay more attention to the financial exigencies of international lenders than the economic and political demands of their citizens. Most notably, in situations of fiscal crisis, African governments have come to be much more concerned with international respectability - even if only superficially - than internal legitimacy. The political consequences of this inversion are, of course, great: because international legitimacy is economically and financially critical, this reversal relegates the quest for political and social legitimacy to second rank. The loss of legitimacy of public power is thus accelerated by this external priority. This reaction is not specific to Africa. The responsability of international lenders, such as the World Bank, for these internal crises is noted elsewhere: Linz and Stepan show how, in Eastern Europe, the process of constructing political and economic societies on the basis of an inversed pyramid of legitimacy (economic actors being more legitimate than economic institutions, and the latter being more legitimate than political institutions) has damaging consequences for democratization[108].

This dissipation and loss of legitimacy are powerful motors for the privatization of the regalian functions of the state and its modes of government[109]. Indeed, today we witness the extension of processes of privatization which, from classical operations of the transfer of public enterprises to private interests, has developed into more diffuse forms: the private appropriation of natural resources and economic resources, more generally ; the privatization of development ; and the privatization of state functions, including the monopoly over the means of coercion. These different processes all share three characteristics: first, private interests in different economic sectors are always the same personalities, mostly being political figures ; second, in all cases, there is slippage from economic deregulation towards political deregulation ; and, finally, all these trends profoundly modify the mode of governmentality (*gouvernementalité*), with an increasing " discharge " (*décharge*)[110] onto private interests closely linked to spheres of power which are often occult and implicated in the parallel, or even criminal, economy. In short, a sort of private indirect government, both fragmented and recentred, emerges from this situation.

Privatization concerns, above all, economic resources. Privatizations of public enterprises, although slow, are more and more frequent in African countries due to pressures put on by both lenders, who often make it a conditionality, and elites. Some privatizations correspond to a real modification in economic management, especially when the take-over involves foreign control. But the majority reflect the logics of political strategies, which are not devised simply for personal enrichment and accumulation[111]. Rather, this is a matter of a direct or indirect

[108] Linz & Stepan, 1996, esp. fourth section. The others observe the same mafia-esque trends as those noted for Africa, and remark on the political consequences : "A pyramid of inversed legitimacies is especially problematic for countries where, as in Russia, privatization takes place almost without rules, in an extremely inegalitarian and often illegal manner." (p. 438).

[109] The work of Luis Martinez, 1998 with respect to the extreme but exemplary case of Algeria underscores this link in very clear ways.

[110] The term "discharge" is taken from Max Weber, who, in his Economic History, studies different forms of the privatization of power based on the analysis of fiefs and seigneuries.

[111] For a general discussion, see Hibou, 1997; Mkandawire, 1994. For case studies, *cf*. Reno, 1993 on Nigeria ; Konings, 1989 on Cameroon ; Contamin & Faure, 1990 on the Côte d'Ivoire.

instrument of control (when the new directors are foreign, more or less tacit accords with local elites are always made). But the privatization of economic resources takes on other, non-institutionalized and more subterranean forms in instances of the appropriation of natural resources (wood, precious stones, oil, mining, ivory, hunting)[112] and goods (theft of land, art objects, economic banditry)[113]. This appropriation takes place through power and violence to the benefit of major political figures, and (especially) to the profit of members of shadow or occult structures of power, which include main figures of the parallel economy[114]. Moreover, development is also privatized. The proliferation of NGOs in certain countries is such that the state is unable to follow their activities and their modes of functioning. This loss of control leads to the privatization of NGOs by local elites or political straw men associated with state power[115]. The World Bank's attempt to instrumentalize NGOs and decentralize initiatives (in order to promote its catechism[116]) cannot succeed. It is difficult to locate a bounded " civil society " and, under such conditions, international financing is captured and put to alternative economic and political ends ; that is, elites or political factions privatize these development projects to their own profit[117]. Finally, privatizations increasingly involve the regalian functions of state. Following a World Bank initiative, customs services are often delegated to foreign private entities (like the tenant farms of the French Ancien Régime[118]) even though customs revenues represent between a third and one half of fiscal receipts for African countries. Not only have customs revenues not increased - or imperceptibly so - but private companies now responsible for this public service cannot escape the socio-political logics of the various countries in which they work. Furthermore, through " apprenticeship " effects, the delegation of public service can inspire informal or undomesticated privatizations[119]. The fiscal rapport and the fiscal system, which is at the heart of the political definition of power and is a determining element in state formation[120], is left to the abritrary logics of local elites, eminent political figures,

[112] On this subject (as for the following), most information comes from the specialized press mentioned in fn. 97, as well as the local African press. On the diamond sector, cf. Misser & Vallée, 1997 and "Les massacres de Katekelayi et de Luamuela (Kasai oriental)" in *Politique africaine*, no. 6, May 1982 ; on precious stones, *cf.* Chachage, 1995 ; on ivory, cf. Reeve & Ellis, 1995.

[113] On art objects, *cf*. Schmidt & McIntosh, eds., 1996.

[114] On Mozambique, Bowen, 1992 ; on Sierra Leone, Reno, 1995 ; on South Africa, Ellis, 1996 and 1997 ; on Cameroon, Geschiere & Konings, dirs., 1993. More generally, Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, 1997.

[115] For the Mozambican case, see Bowen, 1992 ; for Tanzania, see Kiondo, 1995.

[116] Schmitz, 1995 gives a particularly good argument for this point.

[117] See MacDonald, 1995 ; Kiondo, 1995; Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, 1997. In the case of Costa Rica, MacDonald notes the same process. She writes : "As the Costa Rican case shows, the ideology of the self-direction of a society, based on NGO-sponsored activities, is perfectly compatible with the actual privatization and dismantlement of Third World states." (1995, p. 224).

[118] Due to the magnitude of fraud, the World Bank has long proposed that inspection of customs figures be delegated to private companies, such as SGS, Veritas or Cotecna. Today, due to low rates of customs revenues, the Bank is increasingly in favor of the temporary but practically complete privatization of customs. On the Ancien Régime, *cf*. Hoffman, 1994. It is interesting to note that, for political reasons, Montesquieu had already warned of this system (book XIII of *L'Esprit des Lois).*

[119] It is the case in Cameroon or Mozambique, where ports find themselves privatized by foreign companies with the complicity of local leaders. Interviews, 1996 and 1997.

[120] The link between fiscality and politics and, above all, fiscality and state formation, is very well documented by historians of Europe. See, for example, Hoffman & Norberg, eds., 1994 ; Dessert, 1984 ; Grenier, 1996. In

and private companies[121]. Public service is more often held by private salaried parties than by public officials. And when citizens must pay to obtain an official form or stamp, when bureaucrats must pay to receive their monthly wage, or when ministers must pay to make use of a credit line - as in Cameroon today - we are not in the midst of corruption, but rather the privatization of public services[122]. This is also the case when private enterprises take the initiative to construct roads in desolate regions[123]. More and more, the main monopoly on public violence is violated: the development of militias and private police corps, increasing recourse to private security services and other surveillance companies, and the emergence of a veritable " mercenary market " all speak to the point that the privatization of violence to political and economic ends is not specific to countries at war[124].

This process of the privatization of the state and economic governmentality (*gouvernementalité*) belongs, of course, to the particular trajectory of the sub-continent: it illustrates a new phase in the ongoing process of state formation. It is marked by both the constriction of socio-political space and intensified political domination of economic society ; the extension of modes of indirect government due to the corrosion of the administrative apparatus ; the increasing fragmentation of society in a context of expanding political control over wealth ; and the rise in violence, most notably for economic ends. The economic crisis, the spread of political instability, and constant increases in the material base required for the formation of a dominant class incite those in power to take over certain sectors of the national economy and to recenter material resources around a more and more limited political core. In the context of political-economic networks and struggles, contemporary political reconfigurations (the quest for control over diminishing resources), and economic constraints defined by liberalization and decreased public interventions all contribute to the process of privatization. Even if this recomposition of power is inscribed in a new international environment, it reworks past configurations[125] - such as indirect rule, the use of violence to economic ends, the significance of the invisible and the occult - giving them new modalities and new forms. Again, the World Bank is not the cause of these phenomena. But it participates fully in this process through its beliefs (a positivist apolitical stance ; simplicity ; the adoption of a simplified liberal norm ; and especially tolerance for a variety of means, provided that reforms advance from a technical point of view) and the " perversion " of reforms by local actors (recourse to NGOs ; increased decentralization ; recourse to private security companies ; priority to finances ; the

Book VIII of *L'Esprit des Lois* (1748), Montesquieu underscores the relationship between taxation and regime type. In Africa, to the contrary, this theme is hardly studied. See Guyer, 1991 ; Mbembe, 1995 and Roitman, 1996. And studies inspired by the IMF and the World Bank make no reference to this fundamental topic. For an example, *cf*. Tanzi, ed., 1990.

[121] Source : interviews (1996-1997) and field work in Senegal (November-December 1995), Cameroon (April-May 1996), the Ivory Coast (May 1996), and Mozambique (February 1997). We can thus note that local elites have preserved certain taxes that had been annuled on the national level (the case for northern Cameroon) ; and the arbitrary logics and ongoing negotiations between major financial figures and a few members of the political inner circle (including the head of State and his entourage), albeit as "private" parties (the case for all countries citied). See Hibou, 1997.

[122] Sources : personal observations (April-May, 1996) and interviews (1996-1997). See also, Roitman and Mbembe, 1995 (who develop this kind of analysis in terms of the founding logics of crisis).

[123] As we have seen in ex-Zaire. *Cf.* MacGaffey, 1991.

[124] Marchal, 1993 ; Marchal & Messiant, 1997 ; as well as the excellent article on Executive Outcomes, "The Mercenary Business" by J. Harding in *The London Review of Books,* 1 August 1996.

[125] See Bayart, 1997.

abolition, at all costs, of public entities ; public interventions ; repressive practices ; straddling between the private and public sectors).

CONCLUSION

The 1997 *World Development Report,* which is devoted to the state, is presented as a turning point in the World Bank's approach. After human capital (1960s and 1970s), and then economic policy (1980s), institutions - and specifically the state - are now at the center of attention[126]. The report looks, in particular, at the aims of the state and the ways in which it must proceed to obtain them in the contemporary international environment. Given this, one wonders whether the critique presented herein remains relevant. Has the World Bank's discourse changed ? And are the characteristics described herein (the norm of the minimalist state, the quest for simplicity at all costs, the negation of politics) still operational ? Insofar as I consider misconceptions about the state to be central to the production of missionary deeds and misdeeds, are the latter not something more than the vestiges of a bygone era ?

Doubtless, the *1997 Report* exhibits the evolution of World Bank discourse. Herein, the Bank generally recognizes not only the importance of the state, but also the fact that its deterioration poses more difficult problems for the management of the economy than does its omnipresence. The Bank confesses to having used overly simplistic reasoning as to the role of the state in the implementation of reforms. The limits to technical assistance, most notably in the administration, are acknowledged as well. More importantly, the Bank admits that international lenders may have contributed to the deterioration of countries' institutional infrastructures by exacerbating the fragmentation of central power[127]. With respect to Africa, the World Bank puts forth an analysis that is no doubt closer to reality than that elaborated in previous documents: it mentions the rise in criminality, the increasing use of violence to economic ends, and the collapse of numerous states[128]. It highlights the transgressions brought about by the state's inability to protect property rights, ensure a working judiciary system, maintain stable rules, etc. It recognizes that corruption does not have the same consequences everywhere in the world and that its presence is less significant than its forms and meanings[129]. All this is new to the World Bank's discourse and illustrates its capacity to integrate criticism.

Given that, we should not exaggerate about the reversal. On the one hand, analyses in terms of good governance, capacity building, and civil society have been developed, at least for Africa, for several years now ; as many authors have shown, these studies have not modified the World Bank's fundamental philosophy. This last report is more a systematization and extension of themes developed over the past years in Africa to other continents than a

[126] World Bank, 1997, p. 1

[127] World Bank, 1997, pp. 83-84.

[128] World Bank, 1997, pp. 162-163.

[129] World Bank, 1997, p. 34.

radical repositioning. On the other hand, and most critically, the principles that have structured the World Bank's discourse during the 1980s and 1990s are still present even though they are formulated differently. For example, the analysis of the causes and consequences of certain types of behavior is largely reductionist and culturalist : " culture " continues to be something that is static and homogenous, as shown in the attempt to take the " ethnic factor " into account[130]. And although the deficiencies and even perversions of NGOs are now recognized by the Bank, civil society is still analyzed as being totally independent from the state. Lucidity about the situation of reforming states (and especially African states) does not prevent the Bank from neglecting the analysis of the very mechanisms that produce such results ; and these mechanisms continue to be apprehended as faults and signs of dysfunction. As Sara Berry remarks, the argument that the crisis is due to state incapacity and inefficiency is a description and not an explanation[131]. The World Bank's discourse never enters into the debate on the nature and the workings of the state, and it is even less prepared to integrate such information (socio-political bases, multiplicity of actors and logics, ongoing practices of " straddling "...) in its analysis of the state's role in the economy. The apolitical principle is, here, even more flagrant than in reports on economic policy : if it is assumed that particular interests are at play in the heart of the state, the process of state formation is completely occluded. Hence, even if political and, more typically, social factors are mentioned in discussions of countries' relative economic performances[132], the political and economic analyses remain separate. The principles behind suggested reforms (liberalization, privatization) are not challenged : even if the virtues of Asian privatization strategies - which are based less on the privatization of public enterprises than on the emergence of state-linked private enterprises - are noted, these are not relevant to other developing countries, and least of all to Africa[133]. Politics is always treated in a technical and overdetermined manner : once a country is classified in the category, " weak states ", the World Bank knows what this country's state should and shouldn't do ; priorities are fixed and state functions are defined[134]. The World Bank's interference in issues of state sovereignty is patent ; and the consequences for the centrality of power and especially the inversion of the hierarchy of legitimacies seems to remain pertinent.

It seems, then, that the 1997 reversal is similar to that which brought us " good governance " at the end of the 1980s. Undoubtedly, the forms of the discourse have changed, taking into account the possibility of complexity, but the philosophy and the missionary deeds remain the same.

The transformation in modes of government taking place today - essentially involving the privatization of the regalian functions of state and, more generally, the " discharge " of public

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[130] World Bank, 1997, p. 162 or p. 30 (figure 2.1).

[131] This was noted with respect to the African agricultural crisis (Berry, 1984, p. 90). On this point, we should note that the World Bank's discourse always turns around the theme of "good" and "bad" policy (even if it is now admitted that "good" policy is insufficient in the absence of a "good" state).

[132] The Bank affirms that social fundamentals are as important as economic fundamentals : World Bank, 1997, p. 27.

[133] World Bank, 1997, pp. 62-63. Here, we should note that the procedures of the discourse remain unchanged : when an experience is "troubling" to the doctrine, an *ad hoc* argument is put forth in order to exclude its application to other countries. The successful "model" obeys a logic that is not reproducible since it is founded on a very specific particularity. Here we find, once more, the culturalist vision characteristic of the World Bank.

[134] World Bank, 1997, pp. 25-27.

powers to private interests - is the fruit of very complex events and movements: the worsening of the economic crisis, the criminalization of the administration and the segmentation of decisionmaking centers, political crises and the loss of legitimacy for political power, social and political fragmentation, attempts to take over economic resources by a circumscribed power structure, etc. In this context, the impact of the World Bank's acts and discourse appears, as with other international lenders, to be quite marginal. Indeed, the present-day context is marked by the readaptation of historical configurations: the instrumentalization of international economic dependence in order to further domestic control, the use of violence for political and economic accumulation, and the tendancy for social organization around a merchant and rentier economy[135].

Nonetheless, if public policies are not only " constructed " by the state, but also " formed " by an ensemble of economic and political actors, then the World Bank (or other significant international lenders) contributes fully to these new forms of governmentality. The Bank's contribution to these changes is in part voluntary. If we agree that " the state makes fiscal policy, but fiscal policy also makes the state "[136], its involvement (as that of all foreign actors, such as France in the franc zone or the IMF) in the formulation of fiscal policy is entirely an act of mismanagement. The same is true for the definition of public sectors or the state's role in the economy and in social life in general. By submitting African states to conditionalities, the World Bank knows, whether it admits it or not, that it is participating in state formation on the continent today. But its contribution is also, and perhaps mostly, involuntary to the extent that the consequences of reforms are not, in most cases, either foreseen or desired. The work of interpretation, adaptation, and circumvention performed by various local actors on measures elaborated by the World Bank has become so important that the Bank's most recent discourse refuses to account for what is complex and political. The Bank is thus incapable of imagining the effects of its recommendations. This is evident with respect to the informal, or even illicit, reinforcement of governing regimes ; the inversion of legitimacies ; or the diffusion of the principle of privatization of public enterprises to modes of government.

By emphasizing the " paradoxical " nature of economic change[137], this article invites the World Bank to take the leap into a reading of Max Weber, who reminds us that " one does not create capitalist economic mentality with economic policy "[138].

[135] On these historical configurations in general, see Lonsdale, 1981 ; Cooper, 1981 ; Goody, 1977. On the role of violence, see the works of Cordell, 1985, on the trans-Saharan slave trade ; Miller, 1988 on the Angolan slave trade ; Mbembe, 1996 on the southern Cameroon protectorate. On the similitude between past and present situations in Sierra Leone, see Richards, 1996 and Reno, 1995. And see Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, 1997 for a systematic analysis of these historical developments.

[136] Hoffman & Norberg, eds., 1994, p. 303 with respect to the formation of European states.

[137] Weber's "L'éthique économique des religions mondiales" (1925-1920) is in part dedicated to this theme. For a contemporary analysis, see Bayart, dir., 1994.

[138] Weber, 1915-1920 (1996, p. 394).

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