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The US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken's statement on his country believing that it is time to "stop "treating Africa as a subject of geopolitics" and "start treating it as the major geopolitical player it has become," shows that Africa is clearly having an increasing importance in the United States foreign policy agenda. Moving from the bottom of the priorities to being a major focus of the US government implies that the United States is engaged with Africa and playing an active role in fostering its vision in the region. In light of the Sino-Russian presence in Africa, a rising consensus among the American ruling elite shows that the US is falling behind in the continent.

Original peer reviewed articles which deal with the US-Africa social and political relations in this issue are meant to address the US policies towards the continent. They aim to advance knowledge of the different geopolitical regions along with many other US-Africa bilateral political, economic and social relations. Keeping up with the same line of themes in the previous issue, this yearly issue of 2020 contains five papers, three in the section of "US-Africa" and two in the section of "African Issues".

Maciel Santos' paper titled "Rents in the Political Economy of Colonial Angola – from the Coffee Boom to the Cabinda Gulf Oil Corporation" deals essentially with the complex relationship between rents and politics in Angola during the last three decades of colonial administration and extends to the US involvement through the Cabinda Gulf Oil Corporation. Santos explains the profit cycles in Angola and focuses major points such as: the fall and rise of the Angola super-profits and the state partnership in the super-profits where he provides an understanding to different policies in support of rent incomes along with their impact on Angola politics. The challenges to Cabinda Gulf rents and what the entire region stands for are also discussed in the last part of the article. Santos concluded to the fact that from the moment when capital exports could dispose of workforces of much lower prices than in the markets from where those capitals came from,

the political forces which provided access to that advantage got entitled to participate in the distribution of differential rents.

The paper titled “US Administrations and Morocco from 1974 to 2021: The Double Standards of a Political Machine in Regard to the Western Sahara Conflict” by Isabel Lourenço traces back the different US administrations’ stances towards the Western Sahara conflict. Lourenço provides an account on how the United States has been “instrumental” in the Western Sahara conflict through their continuous support to the Kingdom of Morocco and its military occupation of Saharawi territory. The author demonstrated the importance of the study through the various presidents’ “fickle” positions which were not always being in accordance with the US Senate and the personal envoys of the UN Secretary Generals.

Soror Oumeddour in turn authored a paper titled “US Cultural Exchange Programs in Algeria: Opportunities and Challenges” where she analyzed the US reliance on exchange programs to promote its own interests in the region. Ongoing programs of scholarships for students’ mobility are based on the strategies that aim at strengthening the universities’ international dimension. Oumeddour stresses the importance of the ongoing programs of scholarships for students’ mobility as a strategic soft power tool with long-term impact to Americanize the world. The paper’s case study focused on US Cultural Exchange Programs in Algeria between opportunities and challenges.

The “African Issues” section contains two papers in French with a major focus on African realities. Bahdon Abdillahi Mohamed introduced an article titled “Dialogue ou diversion des membres de l’élite leader en Afrique francophone” focusing on the end of the 1990s that was an era of constitutional and political change. According to the author, although some Africanists were quick to talk about democratic change back then, Thirty years later, apart from Benin, the Cape Verde Islands and Ghana, the results are not positive in the political sphere and in institutional functioning.

Bahdon thinks that the continent is witnessing the establishment of hybrid regimes in many countries, even though they are not the continuity of former authoritarian regimes.

The second paper in the “African Issues” section is titled “Coopération de défense et de sécurité au Sahel: Enjeux et implications du partenariat stratégique entre les puissances étrangères et les Etats de la région depuis la fin de la guerre froide”. In this article, Ibock explains the issues and implications of the strategic partnership between foreign powers and states in the Sahel region since the end of the Cold War. Ibock’s approach to that, focused on the defense and security cooperation in attempt to provide an understanding to the ramifications of the foreign interventions in the region.

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# US-AFRICA

## Rents in the political economy of colonial Angola - from the coffee boom to Cabinda Gulf ☐

Maciel Santos<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Angolan agricultural and mining capital benefited from a long-lasting boom until the mid 1950s but afterwards the world market of tropical commodities changed and agricultural capitals entered into a trend of falling profit rates.

This paper tries to evaluate this fall and to describe how it was countered by public policies. In fact, during the last two decades before 1974 the colonial State implemented expenditure amounting to more than a 1 billion USD. The State expenditure was funded by the taxation of mineral rents, mainly coming from the diamond and oil sectors.

The local reinvestment of mineral rents, as the recent evolution of the petro-states shows, was an exceptional historical experience. In late colonial Angola capital accumulation came to depend on an increasingly smaller number of rent-generating corporations (in fact, two) and so did the State military expenditure, which included a colonial war budget. This situation generated a political flaw: one of those corporations, *Cabinda Gulf Oil*, was an affiliate of the Gulf Oil Corporation and the visibility of this association led to a public campaign in the US led by a Congregationalist Church.

The campaign against the presence of Gulf in Angola was obviously not successful. Still this model of rent-distributing could have hardly last in a

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capitalist world market and therefore it survived the United Church efforts for only one year more.

**Keywords:** Rent; Profit rate; Angola; Oil; Cabinda Gulf Oil.



## Introduction

“For the economist, rents refer to “excess incomes” which, in simplistic models, should not exist in efficient markets” (Khan, 2000: 21).

This definition of rent by orthodox economics is a *contradictio in terminis*. If a capitalist market exists for any given commodity (and the definition does not apply to any other type of market), while individual costs of production will be different there will be just *one* market price and therefore unequal net results. Some capitals will inevitably yield profits above the average rate (the “excessive incomes”, a designation which assumes the average rate as the fair income)<sup>1</sup>. Above-average profits, in other words, super-profits within each productive branch are not only possible but necessary and the accumulation of capital depends upon it (Marx, III: 693). The mass of profits for any given capital can be easily notated, as in the following equation (1):

**P** the mass of profit;

**R<sub>p</sub>** the regulatory market price for the commodities produced in the branch;

**I<sub>c</sub>** the individual cost of production<sup>2</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> The absence of rents in the so-called competitive markets assumes that any rise in demand will generate a rise in marginal costs for all producers. But why should marginal costs increase? And why would they increase for all producers? For a demonstration of producer surplus (the above-average profit of the branch in “efficient markets”), see Khan and Jomo (2000):28-29. The so-called resource-based theory conceptualizes differential profits within the framework of orthodox theories. For an update, see Dong (2016).

<sup>2</sup> In capitalist accounting, the cost of production of every commodity is different from its value because it does not include the total surplus value produced. As the “cost of production” only debits the expenditure of capital, interest (*i*) is only the fraction of the surplus-value which is added to costs. Interest (*i*) is added because it is considered a charge accruing from capital use, be it borrowed or not. Denoting this conceptual difference, according to labour-value theory, the cost of production in capitalist accounting is **I<sub>c</sub> + i** whereas the total value of commodities is **I<sub>c</sub> + P**, **P** being the total mass of surplus-value (Marx, 1977: III, 46).

and  $Q$  the physical output produced, thus

$$P = (R_p - I_c) \cdot Q$$

Profits above the average rate are usually short-lived if they rely on favoured conditions, with no barriers preventing the entry of competitors (Marx, 1977: III, 589-90). Conversely, if super profit factors rely on non-reproducible or exclusive conditions, such as the qualities of certain “natural”<sup>3</sup> resources, the time-lag of the super-profits may be extended. As in this world, favoured environments (be it land, fishing banks, intellectual property or, as will be shown in the case of colonies, special labour markets) are always owned by someone, property rights or political power may open them to investment for longer periods. Mining concessions, for instance, used to last for almost a century. Renting out comes at a cost: the owners will force capitals operating therein to split the difference between their revenues and the earnings of marginal producers in the branch (that is, capitals whose sales just yield the average rate of profit). The transfer of all or part of that difference is therefore just a particular case of the distribution of super-profits within each branch and occurs every time the split is time-framed by formal procedures of any kind. In this sense, “rent” includes rentals, taxes, royalties, cartelised prices, copyright fees or bribery schemes.

When super-profits relying on favourable conditions do pay a rent defined as above, the surplus-labour sharing may be achieved in two ways: through differential and absolute rents. When a rent holder pockets the super-profit which the non-marginal capital would otherwise retain (if for instance,

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<sup>3</sup> Fertility and location depend on the available means of production and transportation. This said it is a fact that competition in the production of, say, coffee or sugar, works only among tropical producers because there are technological limits to the artificial replication of climates and natural environments.

vacant lands were cultivated), the title of property just transfers a share of the value of commodities whose price it did not contribute to setting. In other words, this kind of rent is not the cause of the “excessive income”: rather, it is income diverted from capitalists to the rent-holders. The great bulk of rents paid in mineral or agricultural branches belong to this category of rents, known, since it was coined by Ricardo, as differential rents. For instance, the output of *Diamang*, the Angolan Company of Diamonds, had a value per carat higher than the average output because it usually contained a higher percentage of jewellery stones (during the years 1960-70, stones of this class represented in average 72 per cent of the carats produced)<sup>4</sup>. Point 3 shows how much of *Diamang*'s super profits were paid as differential rents to the owner of the subsoil (and of the social environment), in this case the Portuguese colonial government.

However, even marginal resources do not enter the market for free: their owners will always demand compensation for allowing them to be exploited. For this to happen, market prices must steadily rise to a level that allows for the average profit *plus* the payment of a rent. This second category of rent is designated as absolute because it contributes to setting market prices higher than the level at which it could be sold without them (Marx, III: 683-4). Absolute rents paid by marginal exploitation are thus associated with rates of profit close to the average rate. This was the case of *Petrangol*, the first oil exporter in Angola: during the period 1958-1973 in which the company split its surplus value with the colonial government on a fifty-fifty basis, *Petrangol*'s average rate of profit after taxes was just 5.5 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Companhia dos Diamantes de Angola, Exercícios 1960-1970.

<sup>5</sup> Companhia de Petróleos de Angola (Petrangol), S.A.R.L., Relatório e Contas. All values are given in current USD.

Rents of both kinds<sup>6</sup> tend to increase with economic growth. This was the case in Angola during the last three decades of colonial administration, which is the main focus of this paper. As all kinds of rents are deducted from the mass of surplus value produced and this mass depends on the rate of profit, the following sections focus on the profit cycles in Angola.

## 2. Angolan rents and rent-cycles

Colonial Angola can be seen as a typical example of a rent-generating economy. During the years 1953-1973, exports ranged between 27 and 38 per cent of the gross domestic product to which they were closely correlated<sup>7</sup>. A small number of commodities (and exports destinations) were included in the total value of exports. The aggregate share of six of these commodities (three from the agricultural sector, i.e. coffee, sugar and cotton and three from the mining sector, i.e. diamonds, iron ore and oil) went from 51 in 1950 to 77 per cent. in 1973<sup>8</sup>. Most importantly, exports allowed for some branches of agricultural and mining capital to yield abnormally above-average profits. For instance, during the boom phase that lasted until the mid 1950s, the average profit rates of *Diamang* (diamond mining) and *Cotonang* (cotton agriculture) were as shown in Table 1 below:

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<sup>6</sup> Absolute rents raise the price of commodities above the average price of production but generally below their value. A third kind of rent which results from a monopoly production of any sort, may raise prices even above the value. The world market of tropical commodities, especially for the ones produced in Angola, was too competitive for monopoly rents to play any role in Angolan exports and can therefore be ignored in the following points (Marx, 1977: III, 705).

<sup>7</sup> In 1953-73, Angolan exports and the GNP showed a 0,993296 Pearson correlation. For the exports, Banco de Angola; for the GNP, Roque (1991: 327).

<sup>8</sup> The concentration trend continued afterwards in Angola and in the rest of Subsaharian Africa ( Pimenta and Silva, 2011: 6).

**Table 01 – Diamang and Cotonang – Profit after taxes**

	Average Rate of Profit
Diamang (1949-1954)	34,6
Cotonang (1948-1955)	30,8

Source: Companhia Geral dos Algodões de Angola, Relatório do Conselho de Administração...; Companhia dos Diamantes de Angola, Exercícios.

Diamonds and cotton were by then enjoying a seller's market and commodities exported from colonial or low-cost labour countries benefited from an additional advantage in their increasing (**Rp-Ic**) gap. Apart from the “natural” advantages of fertility and location that certain areas were supposed to offer, capitals operating therein could benefit from a higher rate of surplus value<sup>9</sup>. In colonial territories such as Portuguese Angola, forced labour and contracts without negotiation were still the rule. The framework of the colonial labour market could thus counter the effects on wage rises that an increased demand for labour in societies with almost no proletarianization, would otherwise cause.

It is true that the higher rates of surplus-value resulting from coercive labour policies could benefit all branches of capital investment and not just agriculture or mining. But agriculture and mining remained capital branches with low organic composition<sup>10</sup> and the benefit of being able to access cheap labour was consequently maximized in these branches. Besides, coercive

<sup>9</sup> Using the notations of the labour theory of value the value added of every commodity in capitalist production is defined as  $v + s$ , being  $v$  the value corresponding to the labour time paid to the worker as wages and  $s$  to the non-paid labour time transferred to capital as surplus-value. The rate of surplus value is  $s/v$ .

<sup>10</sup> The organic composition of capital relates the value of the means of production (equipments, other fixed assets, raw materials) to the amount of labour required to operate them. If  $c$  stands for the value of the means of production, the organic composition of capital is  $c / (v + s)$ . For the discussion of this concept, see Emmanuel (1974: 114-16).

labour was more compatible with the tasks of a minimally mechanised agriculture or mining sectors than with those of industry (which by then employed an important proportion of the skilled workforce). The purchase of its most important input, wage labour, gave colonial investments an advantage over competitors located elsewhere. During the recessive phase from 1954-55 to 1962 in which firms were increasing outputs to counter the fall of export prices (see point 2.1), more than a third (34,5 per cent on average) of the Angolan agricultural workforce relied on state-organized schemes of recruitment (*contratados*)<sup>11</sup>. The same facilities applied to mining capital: in its respective recessive phase, *Diamang* also employed an average of 34 per cent of such workers (in 1953 they reached 40,5 per cent.)<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the availability of that very particular labour market<sup>13</sup> which mining or agricultural capital owed to governmental policies, a fraction of its super-profits was to be transferred to the State as rents (in the sense defined above). These rent-transfers, independently of their legal form (profits-share clauses in mixed capital corporations, dividends, royalties, taxes, loans at zero or at symbolic interest rates) became an increasing percentage of the incomes of colonial States, especially in booming times (see point 3).

### 2.1. The fall and rise of Angola's super-profits

The super-profits shown in Table 1 were made during the expansion phase (1948-55) of a business cycle in which the main factors of differential rents

<sup>11</sup> The so-called “contracts with intervention of authorities”. Percentage estimation based on Mendes (1966: 56) and Silva (1969: 155).

<sup>12</sup> Companhia de Diamantes, Relatórios. In 1947, *Diamang* was granted a monopoly over recruitment in the whole district of Lunda. According to Portaria n.º 5.889, the workforce of the Lunda was available only “to the corporations operating in district”, that is to *Diamang* only.

<sup>13</sup> In 1972, according to Correia e Silva, the surplus value rate in Angola was above 400 per cent. (Silva, 1966:62-63).

were acting at the same time in Angola: a large recruitment of cheap labour, rising export prices and the beginning of a public investment programme of infra-structures. Afterwards, only the third factor was enhanced.

Understanding profit rates in Angola is easier if one starts with the figures of foreign trade: the territory had an export-driven economy and it was generally accepted that trade statistics were the most reliable indicators for assessing effective growth. The pace of Angolan foreign trade was impressive and government officials in late colonial years often stressed it: from 1963 to 1972, for instance, its yearly rate was 19 per cent.<sup>14</sup> However, evolution of export prices after the mid 1950s (**Rp** in the basic profit equation), was far less positive. Table 2 shows the average yearly growth rates during the two downward phases of prices (B1 and B2).

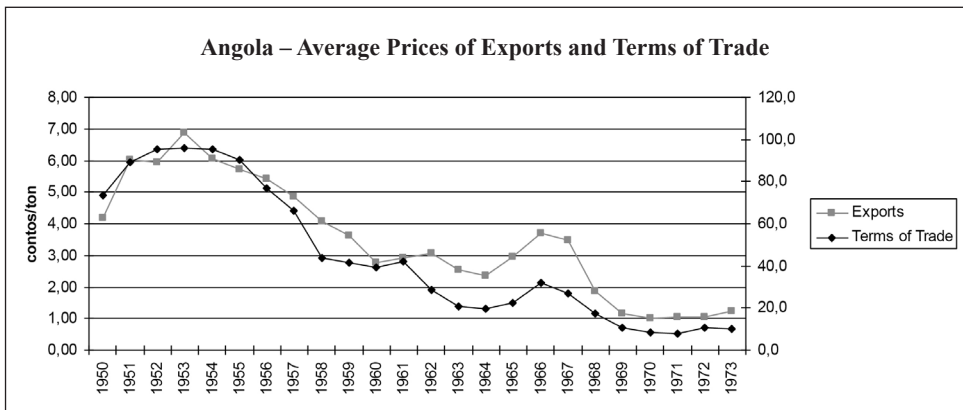
**Table 02 – Angolan Exports:  
Average Unit Prices and Terms of Trade – 1953-1970**

Cycle Phase	Yearly Growth Rate	Terms of Trade* (at the terminal year of each phase)
B1: 1953-1960	-12,1	54
B2: 1966-1970	-27,8	12

Source: Banco de Angola.

\* Year base = 1950

<sup>14</sup> In absolute figures, from 311,7 to 883,3 million USD (Republica, 1973:222).

**Graph 1 - Average Prices of Exports and Terms of Trade**

Exports prices fell with only a six -year interval between the two recessive phases (B1 and B2) and during the second phase (1966-1970) more than double the rate of the first one. In current escudos of 1970, one ton of Angolan exports was worth on average less than 15 per cent of its 1953 price. The fall of export prices was not matched by imports, whose prices remained stable (with an average change of less than 1 per cent) in the periods shown in Table 2. In 1970, the volume of Angolan exports would have to be multiplied by a factor of 11 to pay for the imports of 1953.

The concern about the deterioration in the terms of trade was more about its effects on the balance of payments rather than its effects on the balance of trade itself<sup>15</sup>. Angola used to have a trade surplus and within the period of Table 2, only six out of eighteen years registered a trade deficit<sup>16</sup>. It was widely accepted that the last two deficits (1967 and 1968) had been

<sup>15</sup> The usual deficits in Angola's balance of payments were partially due to the fact that *Diamang* did not convert most of its foreign exchange income into *escudos*, as it was obliged to. There was usually hope that the trade surplus would counter the deficits of the capital-balance.

<sup>16</sup> Four in phase B1 (1957 to 1960) and two in B2 (1967; 1968).

caused by exceptionally high imports of mining equipment, which was obviously seen as a positive indicator of future growth<sup>17</sup>. In addition, it was not only the increase in the organic composition of capital of rent-generating branches that was pushing imports. State expenditure was also growing fast (see point 3) which generated a multiplier effect which led to worsening trade imbalances. Between the years 1962 to 1968, industrial branches grew at a yearly rate of 28 per cent and although at the time they contributed to trade imbalances increasing, they were meant for import-substitution in the near future (Oliveira, 1970: 11).

In fact, the main problem with the deterioration of the terms of trade lay elsewhere: in the deterioration of the **(Rp-Ic)** gap and consequently, of the profit rate. To investigate the extent of this gap, this paper considers a sample of four Angolan-based corporations that regularly generated super-profits. Three of them operated in the agro-industrial sector: *CADA* in coffee, *Cassequel* in sugar and *Cotonang*, as introduced above, in cotton. The fourth corporation, and the only representative of the mining sector, is *Diamang*, the largest Portuguese colonial corporation as regards to profits (and for a long time, also in terms of assets).

The timeframe of Table 3 comprises the recessive phases (B1 and B2) of two business cycles, considered according to the profit rate of each of these corporations<sup>18</sup>. The indicators of the profit rate for each phase are the average rates. In order to provide for an order of magnitude of the changes, the first line gives the peak rate of each corporation before the start of its respective B1.

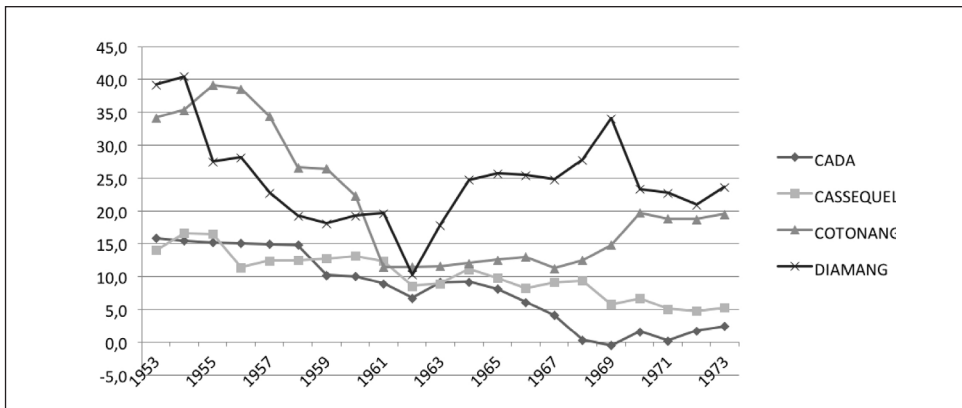
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<sup>17</sup> Reassuring statements about the health and temporary effect of these deficits are common place in studies of Angolan foreign trade (See for example, Marques (1971-8-9); Antão, (1972:11-12); Republica (1973: 222)).

<sup>18</sup> *Cotonang* profit rates show no phase B2 and did not decrease after its lowest rate in 1961 but the non-interrupted growth that followed until 1973 registers a much lower average rate.

**Table 03 – Profit rates in Angola – 1953-1973**

Cycle Phase	CADA	Cassequel	Cotonang	Diamang
A1 (peak year)	1950	1954	1955	1954
	26,4	16,6	39,1	40,4
B1 (average)	1950-1962	1954-1962	1955-1961	1954-1962
	14,0	12,9	28,4	22,8
B2 (average)	1964-1969	1964-1972	1961-1973	1969-1972
	4,5	7,8	14,4	25,2

**Graph 2 - Profit rates in Angola – 1953-1973**

It is not hard to see a direct correlation between the average export prices of Angola (Table 2) and the profit rates.<sup>19</sup> However, while the average fall in international prices (**Rp**) was clearly a factor in the downward movement of the profit rates, it cannot fully explain the decrease. Fluctuations of prices

<sup>19</sup> The Pearson correlation coefficient between Angolan average export prices and the rate of profit for the years 1950-1973 for each corporation is as follows: *CADA*, 0,795475; *Cassequel*, 0,859729; *Cotonang*, 0,7549605; *Diamang*, 0,527634.

of the different commodities were not uniform but, most importantly, rates of profit are not determined by market prices but rather by profit margins. Based on the assumption that profit margins can be taken as proxies of the rate of profit, Table 4 takes a closer look at how they changed according to the three other variables of the mass of profit (as in equation (1)). The periods under consideration are the recessive phases B1 and B2 (the two recessive phases of profit rates for each corporation as in Table 3).

**Table 04 – Angola – Variables of profit in two recessive phases**

<b>B1</b>	<b>Rp</b>	<b>Ic</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>Ic/Rp</b>
CADA	10,2	8,5	8,5	0,84
Cassequel	9,9	8,6	10,5	0,88
Cotonang	11,0	8,0	9,4	0,72
Diamang	10,7	9,0	12,9	0,84
<b>B2</b>	<b>Rp</b>	<b>Ic</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>Ic/Rp</b>
CADA	9,0	8,3	6,6	0,92
Cassequel	9,9	9,2	11,0	0,93
Cotonang	9,9	9,3	21,9	0,93
Diamang	8,5	6,2	11,1	0,73

In Table 4, the **Rp** and **Q** figures are the index numbers for the average changes in the prices and volumes produced (assuming a base value of 10 at the starting year of each phase and according to the figures given in the company reports); **Ic** is the value found in function of the rate of profit (**Pr**) of each capital (**K**)<sup>20</sup>. *Caeteris paribus* for every case, if through each

<sup>20</sup> Average profit rates were calculated accordingly to the balance sheets of the corporations. Table 4 assumes that: 1) the margins of profit relate to capitals of the same magnitude, say fractions of 100 monetary units (it considers neither the size of the invested capitals nor

phase (B1 and B2) the respective average profit rate **Pr** remains constant, then the value of **Ic** indicated in Table 4 is the only one compatible with the changes in the index numbers for **Rp** and **Q**.

To put it another way, from equation (1) follows (2):

$$P = Pr.K = (Rp - Ic).Q \Leftrightarrow$$

$$Ic = Rp - ((Pr.K) / Q)$$

If **(Rp-Ic)** is the profit margin, the changes of the ratio **Ic/Rp** may be used as an index of profit margins. As the ratio ranges from 0 to 1 (1 being equal to no profit at all), an increase in **Ic/Rp** indicates a lower profit margin. If Table 4 is adequate for the purposes of modelling what happened to super profits in Angola, the main conclusions are as follows:

- The profit margin **(Rp-Ic)** of agricultural corporations declined since 1953. Table 4 shows that by the end of B2, the three corporations had increased their **Ic/Rp** ratios when compared to B1. These firms were then close to yielding no rents. In fact, this was already the case for *CADA* during phase B2 (see Table 3: profit rate of 4,5 per cent).
- The profit margin **(Rp-Ic)** of the agricultural corporations declined even when there was barely any change in the average market price (the prices of sugar and cotton went up and down, thereby cancelling each other out during the B phases of profits). Meanwhile, *Cassequel* and *Cotonang* managed to increase their volumes of output (the cotton firm even doubled it) but in spite of that both came closer to being marginal producers.

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the different turnover ratios); 2) the mass of profits of each capital was determined by **Rp** and **Q** changes of just one commodity (it neglects the fact that in *Cada* and *Cassequel*, for instance, commodities other than coffee or sugar were – even if in small percentages – part of the sales proceeds).

- Mining was a different matter, at least for diamonds. In phase B2, *Diamang* was the sole corporation to have increased its profit margin (decrease of **Ic/Rp** from 0,84 to 0,73). This occurred regardless of an average fall of 15 per cent in export prices and with just a 10 per cent increase in its physical output. This result is compatible with the net results the company balance sheet constantly showed.

Contrary to what was said during the first recessive phase (Figueiredo, 1962:22), it seemed unlikely that in the mass of profit the declining profit margins could be countered by an increase in the volume of output, at least for most of the agricultural commodities. The income elasticity for agricultural commodities is less than one and was decreasing: global demand was not expected to go beyond a yearly growth rate of 3 per cent.<sup>21</sup> The overproduction of coffee, for instance, was by then almost twice that of world consumption.<sup>22</sup> Anyway, for *CADA* increasing output was hardly an option as its coffee yields per unit went into steep decline from 1962 onwards<sup>23</sup>. Something similar was happening with *Cassequel*, which despite a decade-long squeeze on its profit margins<sup>24</sup> had not been able to

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<sup>21</sup> Silva (1966:68-69). In addition, agricultural commodities show higher elasticity of substitution than manufactured outputs (i.e. it was more likely that consumers would switch from Angolan to Kenyan coffee than from Volkswagen to Renault (Amin, 1988: 150)).

<sup>22</sup> In 1960, it was estimated that the stocks would reach 4,4 million tons while world consumption was estimated at 2,5. From 1963 onwards, the main producers including Angola, organized a cartel which managed to establish quotas to improve the market (Cada, Relatório: 6.)

<sup>23</sup> Its average yield for 1964-69 (B2) was 329 kgs/ha, that is, 12 per cent less than for the period 1953-62 (B1). Apart from droughts, the catastrophic harvest was caused by pathogenic agents (*Fusarium* species, vulgo“sudden death”) (Cada, Relatórios, 1967:15; 1968:6).

<sup>24</sup> Angolan sugar companies were forced to sell their output at State regulated prices. Cassequel’s administration often complained about government listed prices (which had remained the same since 1964) while production costs were rising (Sociedade Agrícola, 1962:3-4; 1972:5-6).

increase its tonnage of sugar per hectare since 1963. In the late 1960s, both companies were already switching investments to other staples: *Cada* to cotton and *Cassequel* to sisal<sup>25</sup>.

By contrast, diamonds are raw materials with a very different market. Sold throughout a powerful cartel<sup>26</sup> its sales boomed with rising inflation, resourceful advertising campaigns and even with rearmament programmes<sup>27</sup>. These factors kept international prices on the increase for ten successive years, despite competition in the form of artificial stones and the enlargement of production areas (from Africa to Siberia). Meanwhile, *Diamang* had made some important mining discoveries, had fully mechanized most of the mining operations and Tables 3 and 4 cast no doubts about the outcome as regards profitability. Diamond mining in Angola certainly did not become a marginal investment and demands for new claims were booming. In 1971, *De Beers* joined *Diamang* to start *Condiama* and four other stock corporations followed suit.<sup>28</sup> Most of the other mining staples were much less profitable. Iron ore prices, for instance, had been in decline since 1957

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<sup>25</sup> Cotton crops of *Cada* seemed not to have been successful (*Companhia Angolana, Relatório, 1969: 6-7*). On the other hand, *Cassequel* was doing better with sisal (*Sociedade Agrícola, Relatório, 1973: 4*).

<sup>26</sup> From 1931 onwards, *Diamang* sold its output to the Syndicate, controlled by the Anglo-American Corporation which became later known as the Diamond Corporation Limited. (*Companhia de Diamantes, 1931:9*).

<sup>27</sup> Diamonds had been used as a store of value for sometime, especially after the devaluation of currencies between the first and second world wars. After 1945, the Syndicate's advertising campaigns for "popular" diamond rings and the military stockpiling of industrial diamonds during international crises (e.g. Korean War, Suez, etc.) gave the industry a sustained boom. For a full description of the diamond market, see *Companhia de Diamantes (1956:8-9; 1968:18)*.

<sup>28</sup> *Condiama* was granted the concession in the former area of *Diamang* (1023 thousand square kilometres out of 1246 of total Angola!), when the claims ended in 1971. Three more concessions were granted in the same vacant area (*Companhia de Diamantes, 1971: 41-42; Oliveira, 2005: 78; Guerra, 1979:34*).

and the first net results of the largest mixed<sup>29</sup> corporation of Angola, the *Companhia Mineira do Lobito*, only appeared in 1970. By that time Angola mining was about to embark upon the oil cycle (see point 3).

At the end of phase B1, it was already plain to see that if fractions of Angola's agricultural super profits were to keep flowing as rents to the colonial government and if an increase in **Q** was becoming less feasible, something had to be done about profit margins. Restoring the **(Rp-Ic)** gap meant a general increase in the surplus value rate and an acceleration of the capital-output ratio of the Angolan economy. Such tasks required new corporate and public policies which were to be progressively implemented from the late 1950s onwards.

### 3. State partnership in Angolan super-profits

For many decades, the State had shared the super profits generated in Angola. Point 3 attempts to describe its main purveyors of rent incomes independently of the fiscal procedures of collection i.e., taxes, contract provisions, royalties or dividends.

The Angolan government had been a shareholder in *Diamang* since 1919 when the first concession gave the State 5 per cent of the capital stock. Further contracts came to enlarge its share to 11,65 per cent. Most importantly, since 1937, these contracts ensured that the State was to be given half of the yearly net results. Adding dividends to this 50/50 split, the State was entitled to cash 55,8 per cent of the year profits<sup>30</sup>.

It is a fact that the contracts also allowed *Diamang* to cover a large amount of profits under depreciation and reserve accounts but it is also a fact that the company remained subject to special national and local taxes before

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<sup>29</sup> The Portuguese State owned 20 p.c. of a share capital of 1,2 million contos, around 41,5 million USD. Guerra, 1979: 33; *Companhia Mineira*, 1970: 5.

<sup>30</sup> *Companhia de Diamantes*, 1963: 13-15; Oliveira, 2005:78.

the split. The company was also regularly asked to grant credit at special-favoured conditions to the Angolan government. Table 5 provides an overall view of *Diamang* rent payments (State share of the profits) and of the balance of loans made to Angola government at an interest rate of 1 per cent, showing the yearly averages during the III Plan of *Fomento*<sup>31</sup>:

**Table 05 – Average yearly payments and debit balance of the Government to *Diamang* (million USD)**

	Profits and dividends – share of the State	Loans – Government Debit to <i>Diamang</i>
1968-1973	17,8	24,8

Source: Companhia de Diamantes, Relatórios 1971-1973.

Over the six years of the Plan, which coincided with a B phase for the corporation, *Diamang* paid under profit-share clauses and dividends to the Angolan government, amounting to \$106,7 million USD. In addition, more than one loan was renewed so that in 1973, the government debit balance was still 31,1 million. As one of the company's publications put it, their payments and credit represented “a truly remarkable contribution” to the Angolan budget (*Companhia de Diamantes*, 1963:15).

Oil turned out to be an even larger rent-source of State income but not such a rapidly increasing one. The first Angolan oil field had been discovered in 1954, not far from Luanda, by the *Companhia de Combustiveis do Lobito*, later *Purfina*, a subsidiary of the Belgian *Petrofina* (Gomes, 1962:38)<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> The *Fomento* plans were investment programs covering the whole *escudo* area and were being implemented since 1953.

<sup>32</sup> Prospection had started in 1952. *Purfina* ceased its oil search activities in 24-10-1957 when the concession was transferred to *Petrangol*. *Companhia de Combustiveis do Lobito*, Relatório, 1957: 6.

In 1957, *Purфина* transferred the concession to *Petrangol*, a mixed capital corporation with *Petrofina* still the largest stakeholder. *Petrangol* already had 14 productive wells but produced less than 1 million tons/year until its big discovery in 1961. *Petrangol's* net results rose from 0,3 to around 9 per cent in 1960-61 and in 1965 a new concession contract was signed.<sup>33</sup> However, *Petrangol* oil fields turned out not to live up to their promise. During the following four years (1966-69), the accumulated amount of taxes paid by *Petrangol* contributed just 13 million USD to the Angola government, slightly more than just the *yearly* amount paid by *Diamang* in 1969 as profit-share and dividend (12,2 million USD). *Petrangol's* results were close to being marginal incomes (average rate of profit of 5,7 per cent. during its B2 phase) and consequently, the State could just tax it up to the equivalent of an absolute rent<sup>34</sup>.

Another oil subsidiary operating in Angola for as long as *Petrangol* had quite a different trajectory: *Cabinda Gulf Oil Corporation*, affiliated to US Gulf Oil, obtained its first concession in the northern enclave in 1957. This concession obliged it to pay a 12,5 per cent royalty, to be credited before the split, which was a 50 per cent tax based upon sales prices. The government was also entitled to 20 per cent of the stock capital. The following eight years of on-shore prospecting came to nothing in terms of results and between 1958 and 1966, the State only earned a yearly rental of 0,164 million USD. In 1966, the first off-shore drill found a significant oil deposit. The Government immediately started renegotiations under which the area to a water-depth of 200 metres was added to the concession, in exchange for a cash bonus of 0,699 million USD. As a result of the offshore

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<sup>33</sup> Negotiations seem to have been difficult, which might explain the four year-lag after the Tobias discoveries (Oliveira, 2005: 79; Companhia de Petróleos de Angola, 1965: 6).

<sup>34</sup> In 1973, the State held 300,000 shares of *Petrangol* stock (Murteira, 1997:111). Framing *Petrangol's* performances in Table 4 shows that during the period 1967-1973 in which the average profit rate fell from 12,6 to 1,6%, the average **Ic/Rp** ratio was 0,95.

concession being too complex and vast to be fully exploited during the legal term of the contract, *Cabinda Gulf* entered into a second round of negotiations. The Government accepted the terms but in exchange for 7 million USD in advance on taxes, plus 2 million USD as a renewal payment and 1 million USD in advances to the Mining Development Fund and rentals. The agreement deferred “relinquishment of any acreage” until 1971 by which time a new arrangement would have to be negotiated based on the OPEC standard<sup>35</sup>. Table 6 shows the rent effectively paid by Cabinda Gulf in the period 1969-71:

**Table 06 – Cabinda Gulf Payments to Angola Government (million USD)**

	Royalties	Mining Fund	Concession Renewal	Rentals	Income tax	Total
1969	0,4	0,4		1,7	4,0	6,5
1970	15,1		2,0	0,7		17,8
1971				0,7	5,0	5,7

Source: AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Gulf Oil – Updated statement.

Accumulated payments of 30 million USD during a three-year span came as a smaller wave of windfall profits compared to the diamond boom. But Table 7 below shows that the golden days still lay ahead because oil prices would take off after 1971 and as predicted, the new contract raised the Government share to 70-80 per cent of net results (Farber, 1972: 24).

In mining branches other than diamonds and oil the State partnership achieved varying results. An extreme case was the *Companhia Mineira do Lobito* which exploited the Cassinga iron deposits (Southern Angola). The Company never registered net results for distribution and was only floated

<sup>35</sup> AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Gulf Oil Corporation, Summary of Concession Agreement, p. 14.

because of State support. In 1971, its borrowed capital was almost nine times higher than its stock and about two thirds of it came from public loans or were guaranteed by the State<sup>36</sup>.

Revenues from other big companies in transport or industry were small and irregular: corporations such as the *Benguela Railways*, *Sonefe* or *Companhia de Combustiveis do Lobito*<sup>37</sup>, just like *Petrangol*, were far from generating super profits; indeed, sometimes they struggled to achieve even net results. Agricultural corporations were mainly taxed by export duties<sup>38</sup> and other special tax regimes. Coffee firms, for instance, were obliged to pay a special “overvaluation tax” but point 2 leaves few doubts about the downward trend of this revenue.

The outcome of these contradictory trends as regards fiscal revenues is summarised in Table 7. The period considered is the last complete cycle of profit rates in colonial Angola, 1962-1972 (which includes phase B2 of Table 3). As mineral rents were increasingly determinant both for Gross Product<sup>39</sup> and State budgets, the *Diamang* profit cycle may be taken as a proxy<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> The State only held 41,8% of its stock but in 1971, it had lent or guaranteed about 139 million USD (Companhia Mineira, Relatórios, 1971:6; Murteira, 1997: 111).

<sup>37</sup> The State had a part in the net results of the *Benguela Railways* but as mining exports from Zaire and Zambia declined, so did public revenues: from 1966 to 1973 they fell from 1,3 to 0,1 million USD. In 1969, *SONEFE*, the energy corporation in which the State held 10 per cent of the stock, paid just 0,45 million USD. *C<sup>a</sup> de Combustiveis do Lobito*, the *Purфина* distributor of refined products in Angola and former oil prospector, as seen above, was a big business only at the Angolan scale (nominal capital of 8,4 million USD). In 1969, the State share yielded just 0,04 million USD (Banco de Angola Relatorios). For a full list of the State share (10 per cent minimum) in big colonial business, see Murteira (1997:111).

<sup>38</sup> It was estimated that export duties on agricultural exports represented 10 per cent of its FOB value; conversely, diamond exports were tax-free (Figueiredo, 1962: 44-45).

<sup>39</sup> The percentage of the mining sector in Angola gross product shifted from 5 to 9 per cent in the period 1966-1970 (Republica, 1973: 383).

<sup>40</sup> The end period of Table 7 is 1973 (and not 1972 as it is in the *Diamang* cycle) so that it includes the full implementation of the III *Plano de Fomento* (1968-1973). The III Plan

Rent-transfer impacted all the fiscal headings, namely the “indirect taxes” under which export and import duties were accounted for. Yet in the Angolan budget, the revenues derived from State shareholding (as it occurred in the contracts signed with *Diamang* or the oil firms) and from taxation of rent-generating corporations were encompassed under three headings: “Industries under special regime of taxation”<sup>41</sup>, “State corporations and State’s shareholdings” and “stocks and bonds”. The average percentages of these headings in the ordinary revenues<sup>42</sup> were:

**Table 07 – Angolan Government Budget  
Revenues derived from Rents (%)**

Phase	Industries under special regime of taxation	State corporations and State’s shareholdings	Stocks and bonds	Aggregate average %
1962-1969	14,0	8,7	1,4	24,1
1969-1973	26,4	7,0	1,1	34,5

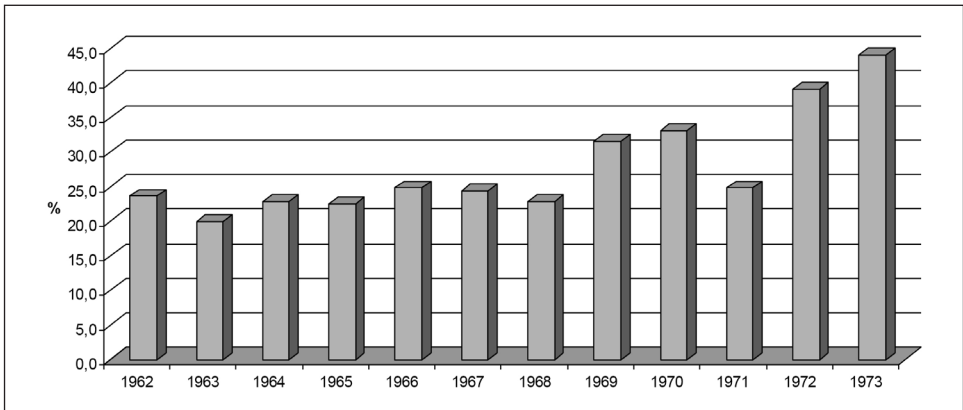
Source: Based on Banco de Angola, Relatórios.

started in the same year of the first year of *Cabinda* oil exports and ended in the last “normal” colonial year.

<sup>41</sup> The industries under the “special taxation regime” included, other than oil related items, taxes on the consumption of tobacco, sugar and beer. From 1969 to 1973, the average percentage of sugar under this heading was 1,9 per cent.

<sup>42</sup> Ordinary Revenues net of Earmarked Revenues.

**Graph 3 Angolan Budget – Rent-related Headings (%)**



Average percentages fail to show how fast these rent-related State revenues increased after 1969: in 1973, their aggregate amount reached 156,1 million USD, that is, 44 per cent of Ordinary Incomes (net of earmarking revenues). By the same year, the heading “Indirect taxes”, usually the traditional purveyor of rent funds to the Treasury represented just 26 per cent. On the other hand, Table 7 does show that the increase in the aggregate headings based on rents came from the industries “under special regime” in which about two thirds (65,7 per cent on average) were paid by oil corporations.

Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dependence on rent cycles had already been a recurrent story of the Angolan government: rubber, coffee and mining rents followed suit. From the mid 1960s onwards, the concentration trend operated also within the mineral rents: diamonds (a close second to coffee) and oil made up the bulk of taxed super profits. Table 8 shows their absolute and relative part in government revenues during the III *Fomento* Plan:

**Table 08 – Oil and Diamonds in the Angolan Ordinary Revenues**

Years	Revenues* from Oil and Diamonds corporation (million USD)	Oil and Diamonds in Ordinary Revenues** (average %)	Oil in Ordinary (average %)
1968-1973	322,4	23,1	16,8

\**Diamang* loans and dividends not included

\*\* Ordinary Incomes net of Earmarking Revenues

Source: Based on Banco de Angola, Relatórios.

The rising star among State rents was oil revenue: its percentage in Ordinary Revenues went from 7,5 per cent in 1968 to 28,8 in 1973. Within oil taxation, one single corporation, *Cabinda Gulf*, became the main government fund purveyor.

### 3.1. State policies in support of rent incomes

In 1961-62 the downward phase of the profits rates was over (see Table 3). By that time, around 25 per cent of the government ordinary revenues still came from the budget headings of Table 7 but comparing peak and bottom years, the rate of profit of agricultural capital had plummeted: it was divided by 2 in sugar, by 3 in cotton and by 4 in coffee. The seven years of “lean cows” (Figueiredo, 1962) left little expectations about the restoration of the regulatory market prices: the overproduction of tropical commodities, especially of coffee, was getting worse every year. It was widely accepted that the reversal of the profit margin (**Rp-Ic**) could only be achieved by cutting costs of production.

Cutting costs meant an increase in the surplus-value rate. As there were no conditions to extend working times since the 1961 uprisings, a higher surplus value rate implied a higher *relative* surplus value rate<sup>43</sup>. For the

<sup>43</sup> The surplus value rate (**s/v**) is determined by working time, work intensity and productivity. The relative surplus value rate increases when work intensity and productivity cause **s** to increase proportionally more than **v** (wages).

policymakers, it was clear that work intensity could not be implemented without wage rises and the establishment of a new work environment<sup>44</sup>. Part of the changes were unintended: the starting of the colonial war in 1961 led to the repeal of the Native Labour Code dating from 1928 which had allowed for all sorts of colluding between colonial authorities and employers. There was now the risk that Angolan capital would no longer be able to access a large enough labour force once the coercive schemes were dismantled. In fact, in spite of the efforts displayed by local authorities to keep as much as possible the old *status-quo* under the new legal devices, the worker's struggle made it impossible<sup>45</sup>.

The assurance of a regular supply of labour and of a more “productive” one became *the* priority of the Angolan government's development policies<sup>46</sup>. This was vital for investments of capital of higher organic composition requiring a more motivated and more qualified work force. Importing the necessary “human capital” was no solution because it would decrease the surplus value rate, precisely the opposite of what was needed<sup>47</sup>. If the branches with high capital-labour ratio and benefiting from increasing profit margins such as the oil industry could afford it,<sup>48</sup> that was certainly not the case for the low-organic and low profit-yielding capital in agriculture.

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<sup>44</sup> “In fact, African entrepreneurs always lived by the rule that they would become as rich as their wage bill got smaller. Not willing to offer wage incentives to recruit labour, they would rather rely on forced labour. These routines could not help but generate an evil system” (Loureiro, 1962: 29-30).

<sup>45</sup> For labour conflicts and income distribution after the new Labour Code of 1962, see Santos (2016; 2017).

<sup>46</sup> For the Angolan labour policies under the 1962 Labour laws, see Mendes, 1966.

<sup>47</sup> The coming of a Metropolitan qualified work force would also widen the wage gap with African workers and the political conditions did not favour such policies. Diogo, 1969: 43.

<sup>48</sup> In 1972 Cabinda Gulf was paying its expatriated staff (16 p.c. of total employees) *just* five times more than to locals. ADP, Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411 - Summary of Concession Agreement, 31-03-1972

The Angolan government therefore started a massive educational programme which in seven years, multiplied total enrolled students in primary school by a factor of seven and doubled those in high school. Popular housing schemes were launched in all the districts from 1961, particularly those in charge of the *Instituto do Trabalho*.<sup>49</sup> Health programmes were also fostered and in 1968, the Angolan government boasted to being the fourth African country as regards the coefficient of health units and medical staff per capita<sup>50</sup>. The changes in the composition of work went along with policies to extend the size of the working class. Costly “development” programmes were implemented to increase the integration of the peasantry in labour markets and to change their work attitudes<sup>51</sup>.

The outcome of these policies was partially successful. There were no disruptions in labour supply, the moneyed economy spread across all rural areas<sup>52</sup>, the fall of the surplus value rate was reverted and, at least in mining branches, it was certainly increasing (Santos, 2017)<sup>53</sup>.

However, a stable or even a higher surplus-value rate was not enough. The recovery of profit-margins in the agricultural branches, which in

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<sup>49</sup> Since 1962 *Instituto do Trabalho* was the new label for the organization supervising labour policies and its budget included “important allocations” for housing schemes. Diogo, 1969: 61-62.

<sup>50</sup> Nunes, 1968: 104 (mentioned by Diogo, 1969: 66).

<sup>51</sup> Even before the establishment of the *Instituto do Trabalho* labour enquiries about absenteeism and work motivations were being carried out by Portuguese staff. (Ferreira, 2017).

<sup>52</sup> During the years 1966-1970 non-moneyed flows went from 20,6 to 14,9% of the Angola Gross Product. Republica Portuguesa, 1973: 218.

<sup>53</sup> From 1953 to 1962 the average surplus value rate had gone from 133 to 118 percent (Presidência, 1970: 606-607). But in 1966, the wage bill was estimated in just 20 percent of the domestic income, which clearly indicates a significant rise in the surplus-value rate (Correia e Silva, 1966: 63). In the mining branches the average surplus value rate of the years 1970-71 was above 190 percent. (República, 1973: 388).

1970 still represented two thirds of Angolan exports (Presidência, 1970: 81), also required savings of constant capital. Location is a key factor of rents and most of the Angolan commodities with low value density (most of the agricultural ones or iron ore) had long been affected by heavy transportation costs (Figueiredo, 1962: 47-49). As late as 1969-73, about two thirds of the combined *Fomento* items were to be spent on roads, ports, railways and power facilities. Mechanization lacked cheap electric power and a complex programme of hydroelectrical power plants was implemented. Environmental changes due to extensive agriculture made advanced agronomical support vital for the support of old agricultural areas. In the following years, higher capital-output ratios went along with an increased productivity<sup>54</sup>.

As regards state capital, *Fomento* (development) policies led this vast budgetary change. From 1962 to 1973, the yearly growth rate of Ordinary Expenditure was 17,6 per cent. According to official figures, the average percentage of the heading *Serviços de Fomento* was almost three times higher than those of military expenditure (respectively 37 and 13 per cent). But this was not all because an yearly “Extraordinary Expenditure” was added to Ordinary Expenditure. On average, more than 63 per cent of the “Extraordinary” headings were programmes of the *Plano de Fomento*. From 1968 to 1973, the combined expenditure invested for *Fomento* (Ordinary plus Extraordinary expenditure) amounted to no less than \$1,151 billion (1973 USD).<sup>55</sup>

Most of the public investment went towards infrastructural works as demanded by agricultural and mining corporations. State policies obviously increased the multiplier effect through the Angolan economy

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<sup>54</sup> For the modernization of the Angolan economy, see Oliveira (1970); Torres (1983); Ferreira (1985).

<sup>55</sup> *Serviços de Fomento* contributed with \$801,8 million and *Plano de Fomento* \$350,4 million. Banco de Angola, Relatórios.

and were sufficient to explain the pace of industrial growth of the 1960's. Contrary to the standard expenditure of the petro-states of that time (and of post-1975 Angola), a large share of taxed rents was channelled into gross fixed capital formation. In fact, there was no alternative policy if the State wanted to support a waning rent-generating agriculture. But governmental expenditure whose volume came as a surprise for many<sup>56</sup> was in itself an effect of rents themselves: more precisely, of oil rents, as shown by Tables 7 and 8<sup>57</sup>. Public policies were simply redistributing them to the remaining branches as outright grants for capital accumulation and military protection

This rent redistribution eased the fiscal and borrowing pressure on most of Angolan agricultural big business and contributed to a higher average rate of profit for Angolan corporations. The more public expenditure was funded by taxes levied on (foreign) super profits, the more capital would be released for self investment or to invest in other profitable branches. Table 9 shows how during the period of the III *Plano de Fomento*, the Bank of Angola progressively spared the contribution of Angolan “forced” borrowers<sup>58</sup>:

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<sup>56</sup> Silva Cunha, the former Minister of Overseas, felt obliged to refute the idea that the volume of expenditure of the II and III *Planos do Fomento* could be linked with the Angola situation (war and the falling economy, “o marasmo”). As he mentioned, “there was even those who made the bad joke of asking for the erection of a monument to terrorism”. Cunha, 1977:145.

<sup>57</sup> The Portuguese government finally began to implement budget expansionist policies but maintained the colonial principle that colonies should pay themselves. Of the 1 billion USD planned investment of the III Plan, the metropolitan budget was supposed to contribute 7,9 per cent (Banco de Angola, Relatorio 1968: 224).

<sup>58</sup> The corporations were: *Companhia das Aguas de Luanda* (Water company) *Diamang*, *Petrangol*, *CUCA* (beer), *Benguela Railways* and *TAP* (airlines).

**Table 09 – Funding sources of Angolan public debt**

	Bank of Angola	Angolan Rent-generating Corporations
1968	8,8	17,7
1973	23,8	4,9

Source: Banco de Angola, Relatorios.

Before 1968, State loans were used to mobilize large fractions of the corporation's cash funds, freezing profits and even circulating capital. Although big business like *Diamang* considered that as late as 1974, the risk of involuntary loans to the Angolan government remained high and kept avoiding it as much as possible<sup>59</sup>, oil rents (from *Cabinda Gulf*) were now available to replace part of them and therefore to accelerate capital accumulation in Angola.

### 3.2. The rent impact on Angolan politics

If rises in the work productivity and intensity were mainly a business issue, the military control of the rent-generating areas was a State affair<sup>60</sup>. Some of the most important, which were located in border areas or had become military hotspots<sup>61</sup>, were directly linked to foreign capital.

<sup>59</sup> *Diamang* investments out of the branch included informatics, banking, insurance: anything was better than to keep loanable cash reserves. (*Companhia dos Diamantes*, 1971:37).

<sup>60</sup> As percentages of the Portuguese budget military expenditures went from an average of 26 in 1960 to 40 in 1961-70 (Murteira, 1997: 30).

<sup>61</sup> That was the case for most of the UPA-raided coffee areas in the northern districts, of Cabinda (where MPLA is credited to have for some time suspended *Cabinda Gulf* operations in 1961) and of the *Diamang* concession in Lunda. AHD Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Pan-African Movement, 28-10-1971 (quotation of Chilcote, R. H., Portuguese Africa); Farber, 1972:25. Committee: 1971: 12.

Until the *Cabinda Gulf* net results of 1968, super profits made in Angola mainly benefited Portuguese capital and the colonial state. The US investment in Angola was irrelevant outside the oil branch<sup>62</sup> but therein, it suddenly became out of proportion. In 1970, *Cabinda Gulf* alone had already invested about 150 million USD, that is, 60 per cent of the 250 million USD of total Angolan oil investments. The scale of the oil industry was beyond the standard size of colonial investments: by then *Diamang* had a nominal capital of 35 million USD and *C<sup>a</sup> Mineira do Lobito*, the largest as regards fixed assets, of 48 million USD.

Western oil corporations developed the West African oil industry for good reasons. The region was then producing 1,7 million barrels/day and it was still out of the OPEC cartel. Even if the region's oil countries were later to enter into OPEC (as Nigeria would), big oil corporations were still counting on pocketing larger rents based on location (the region's oil fields were closer to European and North American markets) and sometimes on oil quality.<sup>63</sup> An additional advantage was that enlarging non-OPEC production would weaken the cartel. West African oil concessions were then part of a strategy of big oil companies which estimated that if all non-

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<sup>62</sup> In 1973, the stock capital of *Diamang* owned by US shareholders represented just 4,5 per cent while the Portuguese (private and public) owned more than 62 per cent (Oliveira, 2005: 77-78.). In diamond prospecting, the firm *Diversa* was mentioned in 1973 but was only just starting operations. General Electric had provided a credit of 1,2 million USD to *Companhia Mineira do Lobito* but in 1971, that represented 0,5 per cent of its borrowed capital. The big investment was a 50 million USD investment from *Tenneco* to exploit a sulphur deposit (AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411; Pan-African Liberation Committee, 28-10-1971; CIA, Intelligence Hand Book. US interest in Africa, CIA-RDP79S01091A0003000500001-3, p. 25). Other American interests were related to trade and banking but not to the renting branches ( for a full list of US investments in Angola, see AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Pan-African Liberation Committee, 28-10-1971.

<sup>63</sup> "West African oil is particularly desirable because it is near the big markets of Western Europe and North America and contains little sulphur" (CIA-RDP85T00875R00170003, *Intelligence Memorandum*, 01-02-1972).

OPEC net exports could be captured by Western corporations, around one fourth of the anticipated import needs of OECD nations could be met. By 1968, Angola was already producing almost 7 per cent of West Africa's total oil exports and its market value was expected to rise.

Gulf Oil had entered early in Portuguese Africa<sup>64</sup> but in Angola faced problems even after its offshore success. Initially, the problem was that the oil was too waxy and at times excessively salty (Faber, 1972). This was followed by faulty storage facilities, leading to cutbacks in pumping output. Once these technical problems were resolved, the Portuguese government imposed an OPEC-style contract which Gulf officials “had hoped to avoid” (Faber, 1972:24). The result was that the “government has squeezed rather hard”. Nonetheless, Gulf Oil went on to become “the largest single American investor in Portuguese Africa” and regarding *Cabinda Gulf* as “one of the major growth areas in the corporation” (Ibid.,1972:24).

By then, there were other American oil corporations in Angola. In 1967, the association of *Getty Oil* with *Sunray (Sun Oil)* and *Clark Oil* was granted a three-year concession<sup>65</sup>. In 1969, *Texaco* associated with *Petrangol* for the exploitation of oil fields in the Congo basin and in 1974, so did *Amoco*, *Occidental* and *Iberian* for the offshore area of the Kwanza<sup>66</sup>. As none of them got close to the net results of the *Cabinda Gulf*<sup>67</sup>, the taxation of

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<sup>64</sup> *Gulf* entered Mozambique before Angola: in 1948, the subsidiary Mozambique Gulf Oil Corporation won a first non successful concession (CIA-1953-05-25 RDP83-00423R000500580001-2, CIA, 25-05-1953).

<sup>65</sup> AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Southern Africa Task Force, 28-10-1971.

<sup>66</sup> Companhia de Petróleos, Relatório, 1969:9; 1974:10.

<sup>67</sup> The association *Petrangol-Angol-Texaco* for the Congo basin produced 68,9 thousand tons in 1972 and 222,8 in 1973 (Companhia de Petroleos, Relatório, 1973). The Angol-Texaco group was expected to invest \$5 million in deep sea oil research by 1975 (AHD Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Pan-African Committee, 28-10-1971).

the oil rents remained dependent on just one firm which was the core of American interests in Angola. It was only natural that political objections in the US to Portuguese colonial rule would centre on the role of *Cabinda Gulf*. A series of events that took place in the years 1971-72 brought into public discussion the link between rents and political power in colonial Angola. It may be useful to compare what was argued with some of the trends described in previous points.

### 3.2.1. Challenges to *Cabinda Gulf* rents

In February 1971, three *Gulf Oil* shareholders acting on behalf of the Southern Africa Task Force of the United Presbyterian Church<sup>68</sup> sent the Gulf Oil Board four proposals to be presented at the Company's annual meeting, to be held in April in Atlanta, Georgia.<sup>69</sup> The Task Force had been organised by the Church General Assembly of 1969 "to co-ordinate the programs and concerns of the church regarding racism, colonialism and apartheid in Southern Africa". The proposals were: 1) to establish a Committee to examine Gulf involvement in Portuguese Africa; 2) the disclosure of donations and gifts (to the Portuguese Government), 3) to enlarge the Gulf Board to up to 25 members; 4) an amendment of article 2 in *Gulf*'s Charter in order to forbid operations in territories under colonial rule.

An immediate goal of the campaign was "to get *Gulf* out of the Portuguese colonial areas". In addition, the Church also wanted to take advantage of the "educational possibilities of the *Gulf* campaign to build support for the

<sup>68</sup> The Presbyterians were the third largest denomination in the USA with about three million members, disposing of a network of 10,000 ministers throughout the country (Evening Star, Church Challenges Gulf Oil , 06-04-1971).

<sup>69</sup> "Timothy H. Smith, owner of 5 shares, David W. Robinson, Jr, owner of 200 shares, and Wilbur K . Cox, Jr, owner of 2 shares" (AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411 Southern Africa Task Force, 24-3-1971).

greater objective: to end the U.S. support for Portugal's colonial wars."<sup>70</sup> Needless to say, although the *Gulf* Board had accepted the four proposals to the shareholders meeting (with a negative recommendation and after a first attempt to nullify them), they were rejected by 98 per cent of the votes.<sup>71</sup> The Church expected nothing less but the campaign had been launched. Some Congressmen joined in and colleges, foundations, banks and other institutions were asked to adhere. The Task Force published a list of 39 universities owning *Gulf* stock which showed that, all together, they owned 1,1 per cent of the shares; but it was expected that public opinion could be moved if they were convinced to sell them out.

Harvard University was particularly focused: of the 39 institutions, it had the larger share (that is 0,3 p.c. of the *Gulf* stock) and it was considered that its attitude would have a greater political impact: "if Harvard can be made to sell its shares, others can certainly be made to follow suit"<sup>72</sup>. The University was wealthy enough to gain time by sending "a representative, Stephen J. Farber, to Angola to provide first-hand information". His report, clearly biased towards the continuity of the *Gulf* presence in Angola, as well as much of the material published during the campaign, provide important information for an assessment of the political effects of the Angolan rents and particularly, of *Cabinda Gulf*.

The Task Force was right in pointing out that the colonial war "were placing a tremendous strain" on the Portuguese economy but certainly was not when it considered this to be "the one factor that forced her to open her African colonies to foreign investment in the mid-60's". *Diamang* contracts since 1919 show that the colonial government never missed a chance to

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<sup>70</sup> AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Southern Africa Task Force, 24-03-1971; American Committee on Africa, 01-02-1971.

<sup>71</sup> AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Southern Africa Task Force, 28-10-1971; Gulf Oil Corporation, 12-05-1971.

<sup>72</sup> AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Charles Diggs, 28-10-1971.

become a rent partner of any capitalist corporation, whether national or foreign, all the more in a recession. The exchange decree of 1931 which allowed foreign capital in Angola to repatriate profits before all others is an example of the regime's priorities (Clarence-Smith, 1985:170).

The situation was similar by the mid 1960s, when the deterioration of terms of trade was decreasing the import capacity and thus, reducing the renewal of equipment vital for cutting production costs. According to official economists, the only alternatives to slow growth would be either a big oil discovery (which prophetically would occur that very year in *Cabinda*) or a massive flow of foreign capital (Correia e Silva, 1966:68-69). Foreign capital did begin to flow at a faster pace after 1965 but that was related just to the mining boom and not to any change of governmental policies. It is a fact that Portuguese government favoured the buying of foreign profitable corporations by nationals whenever possible and even mobilized public money for this purpose (as it happened with the transfer of *CADA* from the Belgian *Hallet* group in 1943-44 with the financial backing of *Caixa Geral de Depositos*, the State bank). But repatriation of profits and capital guarantees had “always been an integral part of Salazar of Salazar's dealings with foreign investors” (Clarence-Smith, 1985:204). As *Gulf* acknowledged, despite the new contract, the Portuguese Government never requested retroactive payments and “unlike some other governments, it showed a predictable quality”. (Farber, 1971:24).

The qualitative advantage of oil self consumption and therefore, its direct use in the war machine, was also stressed by several Task Force publications.<sup>73</sup> *Gulf's* reply to that showed that it had a more accurate perception of the Angolan political economy than the Church. It was a reminder that all of

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<sup>73</sup> An interview with the Angolan Governor Rebocho Vaz talking about the “valuable support of Angolan oils for our armed forces” was often quoted in papers of the Task Force (AHD, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Arquivo Emb. Portuguesa em Washington, P. 411, Southern Africa Task Force, 24-03-1971).

Angola’s oil and refinery needs were supplied by *Petrangol* and its refining complex and most importantly, that in oil contracts, all governments had the right to take in kind 50 per cent of the output. Still “these particular government rights have never been exercised” in Angola, not because this would trigger a penalty but rather, because the Government preferred tax revenues<sup>74</sup>.

The central focus of the United Church campaign was the direct contribution of *Cabinda Gulf* to the colonial war effort. To counter this, the Farber report repeated the *Gulf*’s point of view that “the Angolan insurgency was almost in its seventh year before *Gulf* discovered oil” and referred to the low figures of the pre-1971 payments. The report was correct in pointing out that much of the budget figures were *para ingles ver* (in Portuguese in the original meaning: fake statistics). But the fact is that even the published official sources could not hide the undeniable reality. The *Banco de Angola* data make it possible to compare the cumulative amount for military expenditure and oil-related taxes during the years of the III Plano:

**Table 10 – Angola – Military Expenditure and Taxation\*  
of Oil industry – 1968-1973**

A – Military Expenditure (million USD)	B – Oil-related Taxation (million USD)	B/A
367,1	200,4	54,6

\*Excluding taxes on the consumption of refined products

Source: Based on Banco de Portugal, Relatorios.

<sup>74</sup> Farber added that the *Petrangol* refinery could hardly use Cabinda oil due to its high paraffin content and that as Cabinda crude was especially appropriate for the refining of fuel oil, it was better to export it, considering the limited market in Angola (Farber, 1972:25).

These figures were not available to Farber at the time of compiling his report but it was no secret that the crude oil-industry – mainly *Cabinda Gulf* – was paying for more than half of the colonial war effort. The realistic prospect was that it in the near future it would pay even more because “less predictable factors” were emerging: the blast of oil prices decided by OPEC at the end of 1973 (with effects on revenues of 1974) and the premium that West Africa would benefit from after another closure of the Suez Canal (in the aftermath of the Middle East war of 1973).

But that was not all and even the Task Force underestimated the possible effect of an oil-rent vacuum in colonial Angola. Were it to come true, it would not just lessen the military performance of the colony but shrink its support base. Namely, the modernization of its infrastructure depended on the taxation of (oil) super profits<sup>75</sup> and a large part of colonial profits now depended on that state-led modernization. As section 3.1 showed, the 1968-1973 *Fomento* Plan redistributed taxed super profits of mining branches as indirect subsidies to the less prosperous branches of agro-industry, once the main exporters. Local industrial incomes were also expanding but even this could not save the amounts required by the public investment programmes (during the III Plan years, total expenditure kept growing at a yearly rate of 16 per cent). In fact, the demand for import-substitution commodities was itself a side effect of the rent-induced boom. The projection for the near future was that “growth” was not sustainable without public investment which still represented 30 per cent of capital accumulation in Angola (Patinha, 1972). In short, given the ongoing trend of the profit rate in non-mining capital, capital flight and its political consequences were to be expected if there were no more oil-profits to tax.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> For a description of the distribution of surplus value available in Angola, see Silva (1966:263).

<sup>76</sup> The Farber report considered the scenarios emerging of a Gulf withdrawal from Cabinda (government take over, replacement by Petrangol or other concessions) only to rule out the

## Conclusion

It is established that as production conditions change so do distribution rules. Recent studies confirm that shares of surplus value paid as rents or taxes were – and increasingly are – due to a wider range of “scarce” goods than classical economics has tended to include. Coercive labour was one of those. From the moment that capital had access to a cheaper workforce than in the markets it came from, political forces providing access to this advantage were entitled to participate in the distribution of differential rents. The colonial labour environment had a competitive edge but came at a cost and capital exports and colonial administrations intertwined for decades.

The allocation of the surplus value (as profits, land rents or taxes) depends on its volume which is determined by the rate of profit. The assessment of the rate of profit in late colonial Angola is the core of section 2. Angolan agricultural and mining capital benefited from a long-lasting boom until the mid 1950s. Afterwards, the world market of tropical commodities changed and its capitals entered into a trend of falling profit margins. The available data show that:

- the profit rate declined along two long recessive waves, the most recent lasting until the end of the colonial administration;
- profit margins decreased much more in the agricultural sector than in the mining sector;
- an ongoing trend was to reduce the number of rent-generating branches and within each one, to reduce the number of rent-generating corporations.

These factors changed the surplus redistribution. The proportion to which the surplus value is distributed among capital and *rentier* classes (including the

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idea that such withdrawal could be harmful for the Portuguese government. It is certain that much would depend on the time span of the income disruption.

State as tax collector) is a key issue of debate since “classical economists”. The outcome of it has not changed much since then: considering that profits are said to be the only source of capital accumulation, “it was better that the social surplus should consist of profit rather than rent” (Meek, 1979: 84). The class-allocation of the surplus determined whether it would be invested or “wasted”, that is spent in non-productive uses. This is surely the reason why current orthodox economics, even if it rejects the labour-value theory which grounds the concept of surplus value, has developed such a long tradition of association of rents to inefficiency “or lost growth opportunities”.<sup>77</sup>

Empirical evidence shows that the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s labels for the fractions of the surplus value mass (profits, rents and taxes) no longer corresponded to the role economists had assigned them. In current capitalist societies, big corporations tend to “waste” more and more profits in non-productive uses (Baran and Sweezy, 1978) and conversely, landlords and the State have been credited to have played an important role in capital accumulation during many “development” processes (from feudal Japan to centrally-planned capitalism in modern China).

The case of colonial Angola contributes to this discussion and section 3 focused on how taxed super profits were spent by the administration. It showed that the colonial state redistributed rent in counter-cycle policies. Just in six years (1968-1973), the State expenditure in the implementation of more efficient labour markets and infra-structures amounted to more than a 1 billion USD. A large part of the mineral rent was put back into “development” policies in order to raise the organic composition of work<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> For the classical source of identity between taxation and non-productive expenditure, see Ricardo (1978:173).

<sup>78</sup> The concept of organic composition of work is related to the costs of education and training. In an analogical comparison with capital organic composition, Emmanuel developed Marx’s idea that the same labour time can produce different value outputs according to its qualitative differences (simple or qualified work force) (Emmanuel, 1974: 122-123).

and of capital. By doing so, it also progressively integrated peasant society within the market economy.

But does this kind of income distribution really deserve to be considered a case of “good rent” use according to orthodox standards?”<sup>79</sup> Growth in capitalist production means only profit-growth: net results not gross results. One of the most striking contradictions of capital accumulation in Angola during this period showed itself in the State budget: on the one hand, a concentrated dependence on an increasingly smaller number of profit-generating branches (in fact two) and on the other hand, more and more governmental expenditure to enlarge the capitalist social relationship for the sake of the low-profit branches. Coffee, for instance, was seen by the coffee producers themselves as an unrecoverable *rentier*-branch since 1961<sup>80</sup> but that did not prevent the State from undertaking significant and costly infra-structural implementation (in road building and development programmes both in the Central plateau, where its labour force came from, and in the coffee-growing districts). *Companhia Mineira do Lobito* lost (State borrowed) money in all but one of its years of activity and yet the *Fomento* Plan kept funding the building of one of the three biggest ore carrier harbours in the world (Mossamedes).<sup>81</sup>

There is still insufficient available data on Angola corporations to definitely validate the trend of falling profits drawn from Table 3. Even if that sample

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<sup>79</sup> For “good” and “bad” rents”, see Khan, Jomo (1979: 20-69), Goumeziane (2003) and the *rentier*-theory, that is, several attempts of the bourgeois economy to evaluate the role of rents in the world market. For an overview of *rentier-theory* applied to the Angolan case, see Carneiro (2004).

<sup>80</sup> Coffee producers such as CADA were diversifying crops (see footnote 26) and economists had been advising them to do this since 1961 (Pires, 1961: 61-63). The short recovery of coffee profits in the mid 1960’s did not change the trend.

<sup>81</sup> In the words of the president of the 1974 Inter-Ministerial Board for assessing the mixed colonial corporations inherited by the new regime, “the lack of a coherent strategy for public capital is striking” (Murteira, 1999:111).

is confirmed, this should not rule out the possibility of super profits being made outside oil and diamonds. Certain branches were recovering from low prices and also low profits, as for instance sisal in 1972-73. Rises in profit rates would certainly result from the public and private investments to increase the relative surplus value rate. It is also possible that the multiplier effect of oil and diamond rents could be increased, especially as more and more mining concessions had been granted since 1971. The taxable mass could also be extended (in the fast-growing industrial sector).

But irreversible negative trends were also on-going. In the market of tropical commodities, the traditional agro-industrial staples of Angola such as coffee, sugar, cotton or palm oil faced the competition from more favored suppliers or just from massive peasant production, all of them contributing to the decline of Angolan rents and profits. Under these conditions, as the demand for Angolan wage labor was falling and capital intensification was coming to a halt, only the State was enlarging labour markets and productive infrastructures in order to meet a demand curve which no longer existed for Angolan exports. For some officials, the “Angolan model” of growth, i.e. State-led capital accumulation in “extensive”-low profit sectors, had reached its limits<sup>82</sup>. These limits were of course those set by the world market which imposed only labour-saving growth and was pulling capital outwards: precisely the opposite to what late colonial administration was doing<sup>83</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> A “simple model” showed that with an output-capital ratio of around 0,36 (“necessary to respond to international competition”) a yearly growth rate of 7 per cent would require investment of something close to 20 per cent of the GNP in Angola. It was not foreseeable that “inner initiatives” (that is, Angolan capital) might implement such investments. It was also expected that decline in mineral rents would lead to “a certain contraction of public expenditure” (Serrão, 1972: 54-55;64).

<sup>83</sup> The regimes after 1975 complied much better with the capital accumulation logics, both in Portugal and in Angola (from where most of the oil rents are fleeing to be invested abroad). One of its leading ideologists and official economist, Silva Lopes, wrote about the previous era: “The New State gave private initiative the fundamental role in economic activity but was not much a believer in the market economy” (Lopes, 1996: 267). Lopes had been severely criticized by the

Rent transfer is part of class struggle. Angolan differential rents would have never been as high as they once were without the political control of the work force. But as the international division of labour started undercutting them in the branches which used to employ labour on a large scale, the colonial administration was becoming politically useless, even more as it insisted on diverting its surplus value shares to subsidize non profitable capital<sup>84</sup>. As neither colonial nor post-colonial Angolan governments would ever leave the world market nor develop alternative policies to capital accumulation, this contradiction could not last long.

During the last three years of colonial rule this model of rent-distributing developed an additional flaw: it increasingly relied on the most political of all commodities, oil<sup>85</sup> and on one corporation, *Cabinda Gulf Oil*, an affiliate of an oil-multinational exposed to a large international visibility. The United Church campaign against *Gulf Oil* in 1971 could have hardly succeeded but was framed in a context of changing public opinion about colonial regimes that neither big business<sup>86</sup> nor the Portuguese government<sup>87</sup> could ignore on the long run.

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high staff of colonial Angola for his policies of submission to international capital.

<sup>84</sup> Sedas Nunes, a leading sociologist of the academic establishment would openly define the criteria of the development policies to be implemented as “non-capitalist”. Sousa, 1965: XXI. For a discussion of the sustainability of the model as regards the integration of Portugal and Angola in the European capitalism, Torres, 1983.

<sup>85</sup> Oil is 10 per cent economics and 90 per cent politics” (David Yerguin quoted by Lopez, 2006:9).

<sup>86</sup> The same year, the Episcopal Church organised its own campaign against the \$125 million investment of General Motors in the South Africa. ( The Evening Star, *Church Challenges Gulf Oil*, 06-04-1971).

<sup>87</sup> The correspondence from the Portuguese Embassy in Washington shows that much more attention was paid to this campaign than it looks by reading the memoirs of the former Ambassador (Themido, 1995:99).

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## US Administrations and Morocco from 1974 to 2021: The Double Standards of a Political Machine in Regard to the Western Sahara Conflict

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### Abstract

The United States has been instrumental in the Western Sahara conflict through their continuous support to the Kingdom of Morocco and its military occupation of Western Sahara. Even though the support was not always public, given that international law is clear on the status of Western Sahara as Non-Self-Governing Territory, the public USA image, and what we can infer from its confidential correspondence and secret meetings, demonstrate a double standard since 1975, in terminology, speech, and even action. This is further demonstrated by the various presidents' fickle positions, not always being in accordance with the US Senate and the American Personal Envoys of the Secretary Generals of the United Nations. The goal of this paper is to show the different political stances of the US and their active contribution to the stalemate existing in Western Sahara, by analyzing and synthetizing the political support to Morocco and the influence in the United Nations. Financial and military support will however be excluded from this analysis.

**Keywords:** Morocco, Western Sahara, US politics, US Presidential Office.

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## Introduction

This paper tackles the issue of the public vs concealed policies and statements done by the US Administrations throughout the years, regarding Western Sahara, from 1974 to 2022. This will be attained by opposing public statements with internal communications and private letters/documents that have been published or/and declassified over the years, as analyzed by Ohaegbulam the US “... *could have supported instead of obstructing UN efforts to organize a free and fair referendum in the Western Sahara. [...] The policy has betrayed not only U.S. realism but also U.S. moral values and principles*” (Ohaegbulam 140). And yet they choose to support an illegality, and a violation of International Law that only resulted in a stalemate (Ohaegbulam 138-139) of the conflict and recently the return to armed conflict, putting in danger the stability of the entire region.

Since President Richard Nixon the support of the US to the Moroccan military invasion of Western Sahara has had various aspects. The “long lasting” relation with Morocco, allegedly since 1777, is often invoked to justify the commercial, military and friendship ties between the Kingdom and the United States. What we can attest is that, in 1777 Sultan Sidi Muhammed Ben Abdullah sent a letter to George Washington, though he had to wait a considerable amount of time for an answer from the later, according to Mary V. Thompson: “*On December 1, 1789, George Washington sat down to write a letter to an old friend from his country. Ironically, however, the letter’s recipient was someone Washington had never met.*” (Thompson).

The territory of Western Sahara was one of the two Spanish territories in the African continent after its colonial distribution following the Berlin Conference in 1885. In fact, Spain named its colony, Province 53 of Spain, making the Saharawi population, Spanish nationals by default.

Until today Spain remains administrator *de jure* of the territory, since the decolonization process was never finished, even though the United Nations urged Spain to hasten the process and to enable the Saharawi population to exercise their right of self-determination, through a referendum, as established in Article 73 of the United Nations Charta and UN General Assembly Resolution 1514.

*“According to scholar Stephen Zunes, based on interviews with former Saharan colonial officials in 1990, the US government had threatened to cut off all military aid and technology assistance to Spain, and even threatened to impose a broader embargo if Spain confronted Morocco militarily.”* (Neutrality or complicity? The United States and the 1975 Moroccan takeover of the Spanish Sahara 303)

Instead, Morocco started its military invasion of Western Sahara on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1975 and on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November, under the name “Green March”, a propaganda move, composed by 350.00 of Moroccan settlers (and of dozens of thousands of military personnel), that entered Western Sahara, chanting the Moroccan anthem, and carrying the Coran in one hand and the Moroccan flag in the other (Bertolozzi 2) There were also flags from Jordan, the United States, and Saudi Arabia.

This move was orchestrated in order to allow Spain to exit the territory, leaving the Saharawi population unprotected and at the hands of the Moroccans, who immediately started a genocide (Sumario 1/2015), with bombings and attacking Saharawi civilians including by using napalm and white phosphorus which led to a mass exodus mainly of older men, women, and children to the Algerian desert (Beristain, Torres and Villa).

Few days after the March, on 14 November 1975, Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania signed an illegal treaty, the “Madrid Accords”, to divide the Western Sahara and share its resources. Mauritania would however withdraw from the territory in 1979 and recognized the SADR (Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic) (Pereira 22). Spain continued to have

commercial benefits from the Natural Resources and Morocco occupied almost 80% of the territory. The Polisario front that had already fought for independence during Spanish ruling, and without major support. In fact, Algeria never supported Polisario in any ways before October-November 1975. Polisario's main support during the Spanish era came from Libya. Kaddafi started supporting the Saharawi movement after Martyr El Wali made his first visit to Libya in 1972 few months before the official foundation of Polisario. In the period of 1970-1973 a group of Saharawi activists were already seeking support from Libya. Basiri had in fact already sent a letter to Kaddafi before 1970 to ask for support and weapons. Undermanned and with extremely weak military means Polisario was able to confront the Moroccan army and win important battles to the surprise of the Kingdom and its allies. The US did not want any confrontation between Spain and Morocco (Pereira) and was convinced that Polisario could develop into another socialist state, like other ex-colonies, and also underestimated the resistance of the Saharawi people, their organization, unity, and political resilience. As for Algeria, the formative years of its leaders along with their political socialization have shaped their stance towards the cause (Elaggoune and Aty 36). This stance is a form of commitment to the principle of self-determination (Elaggoune and Aty 37).

Although the military invasion took place during the Cold War, the Soviet Union never recognized the SADR or the Polisario Front (Zunes 430), in fact the only two European States to recognize the SADR were former Yugoslavia (November 28, 1984) and Albania (December 29, 1987).

Morocco was losing the war. So, in order to regain control, it started in the 1980's the construction of a military wall that has become known as "The Berm" (Mundy 221), which currently is almost 3000km making it the longest heavily armed military wall in the modern world and turned Western Sahara into one of the most mined territories on the planet (Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor). In 1991 under the auspices

of the United Nations and the African Union, of which the SADR is a founding member, a cease-fire agreement was signed by Morocco and Polisario, with the holding of a *referendum* as one of the principal points of the agreement. To date no *referendum* was held, since Morocco never accepted, after the cease-fire, any of the several solutions presented by the UN mediators (Soroeta). In November 2020 after a serious violation by Morocco, which attacked Saharawi civilians that made a non-violent protest in the Buffer zone, the cease-fire ended, and the second war started between the Moroccan army and Polisario Front (CEAUP).

MINURSO (Mission of the United Nations for the Referendum in Western Sahara) was not able to enforce its mandate which consists in the monitoring of the cease-fire and the implementation of the *referendum*. The inclusion of a human rights component in its mandate has been denied by France that threatens with a veto if it is ever proposed (Besheer; Bolopion)

The US also integrates a so called “Group of Friends of Western Sahara”<sup>1</sup>. This group was initially created to help MINURSO implement the Settlement Plan. However, France, the US, and Spain (a non-U.N. Permanent Security Council Member) – which is unwilling to risk its bilateral relationship with Rabat over the issue – generally support Morocco, with notable differences in the vehemence with which they do so, France is more open in its support and the US more discreet. Being this group one of the major roadblocks of the Peace Process. Russia, the fifth member of this group has been standing alone in defense of a more balanced position towards the resolution of the conflict.

### **President Gerald R. Ford (1974-1977)**

It was during President’ Fords Administration that the invasion of Western Sahara by Morocco and Mauritania took place, as well as the rushed and

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<sup>1</sup> Composed by France, Spain, Russia, the US, and the UK

unilateral withdrawal of the Spanish forces, ignoring the UN resolutions (that counted with the positive vote of the USA) and the opinion issued in October 1975 by the International Court of Justice at the Hague, that was clear stating that neither Morocco nor Mauritania had any ties that would constitute legal sovereignty over Western Sahara (International Court of Justice). Morocco was neck deep in social and economic problems (Hodges) and King Hassan II, who suffered two successive coup attempts (1971 and 1972), intended to divert the attention of the infernal problems (Gari), the plunder of the natural resources of Western Sahara (Western Sahara Resource Watch), and create jobs for the huge mass of Moroccan unemployed citizens that led to civil unrest. The Madrid Accords, signed by Spain, Mauritania and Morocco is illegal and was never recognized neither by the OAU nor the UN, nor the US as a state or by the UN security council. In fact, the UN Security Council adopted resolution (S/RES/380 (1975)), condemning the invasion and calling on Morocco to withdraw from the Territory. The USA, as a permanent member with veto power in the Security Council, had therefore to vote this and all following resolutions. (United Nations Security Council).

*“In 1975 Secretary of State Henry Kissinger told President Gerald Ford that he hoped for “a rigged U.N. vote” affirming Moroccan sovereignty over the territory.”* (Smith).

King Hassan II had written two letters on the Western Sahara issue, one year prior to the invasion of the territory, one to US President Nixon delivered on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1974, and a second to President Ford on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1974. President Nixon never answered the letter since it arrived shortly before the end of his term in the White House. It has fallen, therefore, on President Ford to answer both letters. The content of the reply, however, was not a settled issue in the administration. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1974 a *memorandum* by Rosemary Niehuss, of the National Security Council Staff, to the Secretary of State Kissinger, stated that she had a problem with the recommendation that the letter of King Hassan

should be answered focusing heavily on responding in substance on the Spanish Sahara issue.

Mrs. Niehuss added that she did not see the merit in using the answer in order to raise the Spanish Sahara issue along the lines that State has suggested in the draft reply. Mrs. Niehuss further strongly recommend avoiding raising this issue at the highest level unless absolutely essential and there was a natural way of doing so by confining President Ford's reply to a response to the congratulatory message.

*"I have problems with this recommendation. In principle, I do not believe that President Ford needs to respond to the letter to President Nixon. In particular, I do not see the merit in using that peg in order to raise the Spanish Sahara issue along the lines that State has suggested in the draft reply. It seems to me that we want to avoid raising this issue at the highest level unless absolutely essential and there is a natural way of doing so by confining President Ford's reply to a response to the congratulatory message.*

*5<sup>th</sup> of September 1974 a memorandum by Rosemary Niehuss"* (Niehuss 2)

The advice of Mrs. Niehuss was taken in account and the answer to Hassan II was circumstantial without substance and not making any remarks on Western Sahara (Niehuss 3).

So, it is clear that, a public support of Morocco by the US on the issue of Western Sahara was avoided at all costs, although on the background the military training, advise and equipment sales was ongoing as well as lobbying in the international forums.

In 1976, a Special Representative concerning Spanish Sahara, was sent to Western Sahara, for the first time directly by Secretary General of the United Nations Kurt Waldheim (MINURSO). It was the Swedish ambassador Olof Rydbeck, who visited the Saharawi refugee camps and saw first-hand the atrocities committed by the Moroccan military against

the Saharawi civilians, namely the injured survivors of the Napalm bombings. (Waldheim). Only brief references in the Algerian press about his arrival and departure and some oral testimonies from Saharawi leaders that accompanied Ambassador Rydbeck reflect the horror at the sight of these victims.

*“Dans les camps d’accueil des refugies Saharaouis a Tindouf  
M. Rydbeck constate les crimes perpetree par les forces d’invasion  
Maroco-Maruitaniennes  
Tindouf –  
..... Au cours de sa visite dans le camp de refugies « Chahid  
Boudjemma » M. Olof Rydbeck a vu de nombreux citoyens sahraouis  
mutiles par les eclats de roquettes et brules par le Napalm laches par  
l ?aviationmonarchiste au dessus des differents camps situes alors a  
l’interieur di Sahara Occidental. Il a vu notamment des enfants grievement  
brules par les bombes incendiaires marocianes. Pluseus Femmes ont  
montre a l’envoye di sectreaite general des nations Unies des eclats  
de bombes ramasses apres le passage des bombardier marocainens au  
dessus des camps des refugies. ” (Waldheim).*

Illustration 01 – 1<sup>st</sup> April in the newspaper «El-Moudjahid»

th 1/4

UNATIONS  
NEW YORK

93 ZECGEN FOLLOWING PUBLISHED TODAY 1 APRIL IN "EL-MOUDJAHID"  
ON RYDBECK'S MISSION QUOTE

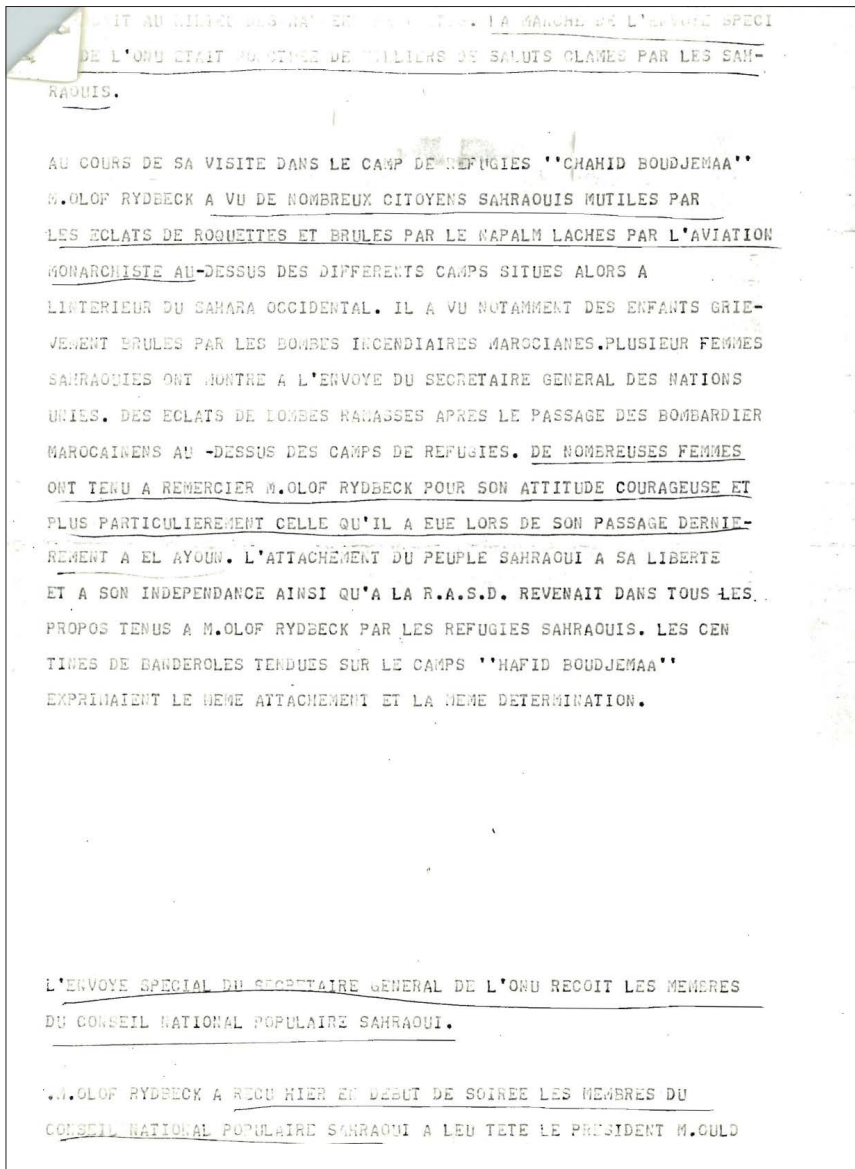
DANS LES CAMPS D'ACCEUIL DES REFUGIES SAHRAOUIES A TINDOUF

M. RYDBECK CONSTATE LES CRIMES PERPETRES PAR LES FORCES D'INVASION  
MAROCCO-MAURITANIENNES

TINDOUF - M. OLOF RYDBECK, ENVOYE SPECIAL DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL  
DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LE SAHARA OCCIDENTAL A VISITE  
HIER APRES MIDI LE CAMP D'ACCEUIL DES REFUGIES SAHRAOUIES "MAFID  
BOUDJEMAA" SITUE DANS L'ACCELERATION DE MASSI ABALLAN (OIRA  
DE TINDOUF). M. RYDBECK QUI ETAIT ACCOMPAGNE DE MR. HADJ AZEOUT  
ET NOUREDDINE HARS, RESPECTIVEMENT CHEF DE LA DIVISION DES RELATIONS  
INTERNATIONALES ET CHEF DE LA DIVISION AFRIQUE ASIE AU MINISTERE DES  
AFFAIRES ETRANGERES ET PAR LE WALI DE BECHAR. M. SEMMACHE MOHAMMED  
A ETE ACCUEILLI A L'ENTREE DU CAMP DES REFUGIES "MAFID BOUDJEMAA"  
PAR PLUSIEURS MILLIERS DE SAHRAOUIES AINSI QUE PAR DE NOMBREUX  
RESPONSABLES DU FRONT POLISARIO. PENDANT QUE M. RYDBECK ET LES PERSON-  
NALITES QUI L'ACCOMPAGNAIENT, MARCHAIENT AU MILIEU D'UNE HAIE D'HON-  
NEUR CONSISTUEE PAR LES FEMMES ET LES ENFANTS SAHRAOUIES ET LES BANDERES  
POL'ATTACHEMENT A LA REVOLUTION  
SAHRAOUIE ET AUX REVOLUTIONNAIRES DU SAHARA OCCIDENTAL D'ELEVAIENT  
AU-DEVANT DES VISITEURS, ECRITES ET PLUSIEURS LANGUES  
UNE ATMOSPHERE POIGNANTE RECHAUFFAIT AU CAMP TANDIS QUE LE CORTEGE  
AVANCAIT AU MILIEU DES RANGS DE TENTES. LA MARCHÉ DE L'ENVOYE SPECI

Source: (Waldheim)

## Illustration 02 – 1<sup>st</sup> April in the newspaper «*El-Moudjahid*»



Source: (Waldheim)

## **President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981)**

The Moroccan Kingdom started to build the longest military defense wall in the world, during the Carter Administration, adding extensions to it during all US Presidencies that followed him. According to Stephan Zunes *“As a result of initiatives by the United States ... a ten-foot-high, 400-mile-long sand barrier with land mines and sophisticated electronic devices was built. Since then, with U.S. assistance Morocco has gradually expanded the wall to include much of Western Sahara...”* (Zunes 424).

President Carter also had some correspondence with Algeria and Morocco as we can see below.

*“Letter From President Carter to Algerian President Boumediene  
Washington, June 29, 1978*

*Dear Mr. President:*

*Thank you for your letter of May 20. I attach great importance to our relations with Algeria and am glad for this opportunity to renew our dialogue. I was pleased too that Secretary Vance and Foreign Minister Bouteflika were able to have such a useful discussion, when the Minister delivered your letter.*

*I completely understand your concern about events in the Sahara. The United States is in the fortunate position of enjoying good relations with all three governments involved in this question. While maintaining a position of neutrality ourselves, we will continue to urge our friends in each country to seek a peaceful settlement. I was encouraged to learn that there have been some discussions, and I earnestly hope these eventually will prove successful, for we would like to see peace restored in North Africa.”* (64. Letter From President Carter to Algerian President Boumediene)

*“Letter From President Carter to King Hassan II of Morocco  
Washington, December 13, 1979*

*Your Majesty:*

*I would like to take the occasion of Ambassador Duke’s arrival in Rabat to reiterate our interest in a continuing close relationship with a strong Morocco at peace with its neighbors.*

*Now that we have begun the process of notifying Congress of our intentions to provide Morocco with new forms and quantities of military equipment, I hope that you will move boldly toward the achievement of a negotiated settlement of the dispute in the Western Sahara. Such an initiative would be particularly useful to us as we proceed with the process of Congressional consultations on specific sales. I hope an occasion will arise soon which will provide the opportunity for a tangible step toward negotiations.*

*The volatile nature of current world events makes it all the more important that the Western Sahara dispute be resolved peacefully before it can be exploited by other interests. I was particularly pleased when Deputy Secretary Christopher reported to me that you have a plan for negotiations in 1980 that you will communicate to me at the appropriate time.<sup>2</sup>*

*Ambassador Duke has my full confidence and I hope you will speak to him as you would to me personally. In particular, I hope you will feel free to convey to him your views on how a peaceful settlement of the Western Sahara dispute might be achieved.*

*Sincerely,*

*Jimmy Carter” (250. Letter From President Carter to King Hassan II of Morocco)*

In these examples we can see the double standards of the US political machine. To the Algerian president Boumediene he conveyed the “neutrality” on the Western Sahara Conflict, while in the Letter to King

Hassan II, President Carter informed that the US would provide Morocco with new forms and quantities of military equipment and, hoped that Hassan II would move boldly toward the achievement of a negotiated settlement to the dispute in the Western Sahara. The transfer of military equipment that could “help a negotiated settlement” and, at the same time, encouraging Hassan II to be “bold”, represented a clear US hazard to Polisario and a clear support to Morocco.

In December 1980, President Carter contacted the Polisario Front, and sent Mr. Edmund Hool, a State Department Official to the refugee camps near Tindouf, Algeria. The goal of this visit was to present a proposal of the Carter Administration regarding a solution for the conflict through a form of autonomy for Western Sahara within the Moroccan Kingdom (Bender, Coleman and Sklar) This proposal was rejected by the Saharawi leaders.

### **President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989)**

When the Reagan Administration took office, the official contact initiated by President Carter with Polisario Front were immediately cut. President Reagan let it clear that his support of Morocco was untouchable (Liebenow 100). Morris Draper, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department’s Bureau for Near-eastern and South Asian Affairs addressed the Congress in January 1981 stating that: *“Morocco is important to broad American interests and occupies a pivotal strategic area. We intend to maintain and re-enforce our historically close relationship with reliability and consistency as our watchword”*. (Daramola)

Polisario Front was winning the war, despite of the military capacity of the Moroccan Armed Forces. President Reagan sent not only General Vernon Walters to reassure King Hassan II of the US support but also the Assistant Secretary of Defence Francis West, who made a reconnaissance tour on board of a Moroccan helicopter in order to assess the situation. As a result, 30 US military instructors were sent to Morocco (Bender, Coleman and Sklar).

In May 1982 King Hassan II visited the US and had an official meeting with President Reagan. In the published Remarks after the meeting President Reagan said:

*"I deeply value the depth of experience and breadth of vision that His Majesty brings to the issues of profound mutual concern. His Majesty briefed me on the latest developments in his efforts to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Western Sahara. And I expressed my admiration for his support of the OAU, Organization of African Unity, referendum."* (Reagan)

Once again, the public speech of the US Administration, differs from the covert actions taken by the Administration, that consisted in a guaranteed support to Morocco, which did not have any goal of a peaceful solution.

*"1 July 1985 – 11 August 1988*

*A joint effort of good offices UN-OAU culminates in the presentation to Morocco and the Polisario of the 'Settlement Proposals' for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. These proposals are reiterated in the Secretary-General's Report S/22464, of 9 April 1991, and adopted by Security Council Resolution 690 of 19 April 1991. It would know as 'Settlement Plan'.*

*"30 August 1988*

*The two parties agreed on the UN "settlement proposals," which pushed for a ceasefire (effective in 1991) and the holding of a referendum to enable the people of Western Sahara to choose between independence and integration with Morocco."* (MINURSO)

### **President George H. W. Bush (1989-1993)**

George H. Bush's Presidency took a step back in the support of Morocco's claim. President Bush had no interest to have problems with Algeria due to the economic interest of the US at that time (Daramola). We can, therefore,

see a more neutral approach from the Bush Administration, which stated clearly to the Moroccan King, that the conflict was to be solved under the auspices of the United Nations and in their framework to obtain a peaceful settlement of the conflict (Daramola).

It was also during this administration that the United Nations, seemed to finally take action in regards of the Western Sahara issue. With the US as penholder of the UN resolutions on Western Sahara and permanent member of the Security Council, the UNSC Resolution 690 established UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in 1991 with the mandate to implement the settlement proposals during a transitional period in which the referendum would be organized. The plan also created the IDC (Identification Commission) to determine the voters (Resolution 690 (1991))

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1991 the first contingent of 100 MINURSO military observers arrived in El Aaiun, capital of occupied Western Sahara.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1991, in the wake of an agreement with the parties (Morocco and Polisario Front), Javier Pèrez de Cuèllar, UN Secretary-General announces the cease-fire. Both sides suspend the military operations.

### **President Bill Clinton (1993-2001)**

During most of President Clinton's two terms, U.S. policy continued to be that of an apparent neutrality but in fact the Bill Clinton Administration encouraged Morocco to abandon the idea of a referendum in Western Sahara and "opt for a negotiated solution through direct talks with the Polisario." (Berger 4)

The first US Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary General was appointed during Clinton's presidency. James Baker III, a former US Secretary of State. He was able to conduct a round of talks between Morocco and Polisario Front, which led to the adoption of the Houston Accords and

restart of the identification process that had been suspended in 1996. (MINURSO)

The declassified documents, released on May 2, 2020, reflect the strength of US support for Morocco, in the Western Sahara question.

In the memoranda, dated July 25, 1999 penned by security advisor Samuel Berger, he emphasizes that there is no future in the plans for a referendum in Western Sahara and that Morocco will not “countenance any outcome under which it would lose sovereignty over the area.”

### **President George W. Bush (2001-2009)**

Similarly, to the previous administration, and on the contrary of his father’s administration, George W. Bush’s presidency, maintained its “neutral” stance on the Western Sahara. Although, it is clear that, this apparent neutrality favored the autonomy plan of Morocco. Nevertheless, the White House changed its stance on two separate occasions. The first, when John Bolton (former US ambassador to the UN) threatened with the withdrawal of MINURSO and the second occasion when the administration suggested to change the Western Sahara issue from chapter VI to VII of the UN, which would mean that the UN resolutions would be enforced and had to be respected by the parties (Slimi).

In June 2001, James Baker presented a “Framework Agreement” (‘Baker’s Plan I’), in which the *referendum* would be replaced by a vote on limited autonomy. Morocco would control the territory, while the Saharawi would have an exclusive competence over local issues (MINURSO). The framework was accepted by Morocco but rejected by the Polisario. The plan presented did not comply with International Law nor with the UN resolutions, nor was autonomy a realistic approach due to the Moroccan constitution which does not foresee autonomy.

Two years later in 2003, James Baker proposed another plan (Baker Plan II) which provided for a *referendum* in four to five years’ time and offered

the inhabitants a choice between independence, autonomy, or complete integration with Morocco. The plan was accepted by Polisario, Algeria and the Security Council but was rejected by Morocco, a sign that Morocco was not sure of the outcome of the *referendum*. (MINURSO)

In July 2003 James Baker presented a revised version which included safeguards that won Algerian and Polisario support. In this revised version Moroccan settlers were able to vote, but Morocco rejected the plan again, not trusting the voting intentions of its own Moroccan settlers. (MINURSO).

The Bush Administration released a statement supporting the Baker plan II. President Bush, however, was cautious and reiterated that nothing would be “imposed” on Rabat, once again the US double standard concerning Western Sahara was apparent.

In 2007, U.S. Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns stated that Morocco’s 2007 autonomy plan was “a serious and credible proposal,” (Aljazeera) and the State Department in 2008, urged the parties to focus on the possibility of establishing a mutually acceptable autonomy regime in their negotiations.

As the penholder on the Western Sahara issue in the UN Security Council, the US introduced and changed, more and more, the terminology of the resolutions in order to approach the autonomy proposal and avoid words like occupation and occupied Western Sahara, referring to the territory as west or east of the Berm (Moroccan military wall).

*“The 2007 Western Sahara Country Report on Human Rights Practices by the US Department of State also noted that political rights for residents in Western Sahara remained circumscribed. It added that “international human rights groups and Sahrawi activists maintained that the Moroccan government subjected Sahrawis who were suspected of supporting either Western Saharan independence or the Polisario to*

*various forms of surveillance, arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention, and in many cases, torture.”” (MINURSO)*

### **President Barack Obama (2009-2017)**

In January 2009, the second US Personal Envoy for Western Sahara of the Secretary General of the UN was appointed, the former United States diplomat Christopher Ross.

*“After taking up his post, Ross held talks in New York and then in February headed to the region for consultations with Morocco, Algeria and the Polisario. He visited Madrid and Paris and met the new US administration in Washington. While still in listening mode, he made clear that he would try a new approach and not call a fifth negotiation round (Van Walsum held four) until the ground had been prepared sufficiently to make some progress possible.” (MINURSO).*

Christopher Ross held talks, visited the neighboring countries, and held meetings with the two parties, yet he did not achieve any momentum nor solution, due to the stern refusal of Morocco to accept any proposal that would not be the autonomy plan.

*“Successive administrations of both parties have supported the Kingdom, which has since 2019 purchased billions of dollars’ worth of American weapons. The Clinton Foundation has secured \$12 million in donations from King Mohammed VI and private Moroccan corporations, after which Secretary of State Hillary Clinton encouraged Morocco to abandon the U.N.-sponsored referendum in favor of a negotiated settlement with the POLISARIO. Doing so would have had the effect of relegating Sahrawi leadership to a Moroccan puppet regime, as many Palestinians now view the Palestinian Authority as pandering to Israel post-Oslo.” (Smith).*

During the Obama Administration, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Morocco in November 2009. During the visit, Mrs. Clinton, stated that there had been “no change” in U.S. policy on Western Sahara, meaning that the United States supported the UN led mediation effort and, would not stake out positions about how the UN mediation might best resolve the issue (Voice of America)

This statement is awkward, in the sense that the US are the penholder and permanent member on the UN Security Council and, therefore, are the element with most power on the Western Sahara issue and on the UN proposals.

Hillary Clinton reaffirmed in 2011 in a meeting with Moroccan Foreign Minister Fassi Fihri, that Morocco’s autonomy plan was “*serious, realistic, and credible – a potential approach to satisfy the aspirations of the people in the Western Sahara to run their own affairs in peace and dignity.*” And reiterated U.S. support for the UN backed talks with the goal to “*resolving this issue.*” (Congressional Research Service 8)

In January 2012 meeting Algerian Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci, Clinton stated, “*We continue to support efforts to find a peaceful, sustainable, mutually agreed upon solution to the conflict. We support the negotiations carried out by the United Nations, and we encourage all parties, including Algeria, to play an active role in trying to move toward a resolution.*” (Congressional Research Service 8). In several other occasions this support to the Autonomy Plan was voiced not only by Clinton, but also, by other members of the Administration, as was the case of a joint statement following President Obama’s meeting with King Mohammed VI at the White House in November 2013.

#### *“The Issue of the Western Sahara*

*The President pledged to continue to support efforts to find a peaceful, sustainable, mutually agreed-upon solution to the Western Sahara*

*question. U.S. policy toward the Western Sahara has remained consistent for many years. The United States has made clear that Morocco's autonomy plan is serious, realistic, and credible, and that it represents a potential approach that could satisfy the aspirations of the people in the Western Sahara to run their own affairs in peace and dignity. We continue to support the negotiations carried out by the United Nations, including the work of the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy Ambassador Christopher Ross, and urge the parties to work toward a resolution. The two leaders affirmed their shared commitment to the improvement of the lives of the people of the Western Sahara and agreed to work together to continue to protect and promote human rights in the territory." (Office of the Press Secretary)*

For the first time the US tried in 2013 that the resolution of the UN Security Council on MINURSO would include a Human Rights Component, the pressure from several US high ranking politicians and US NGO's like the Kennedy Foundation denounced the brutal human rights violations against the Saharawi population in the occupied territories. But the final text did not mention the inclusion since Morocco and France blocked the US attempt.

*"This year, the question of the violation of human rights was at the core of discussions. The United States' initial draft resolution attempted to include a proposition to install UN observers to monitor human rights violations and abuses in the occupied Western Sahara. However, in response to fierce resistance from the governments of Morocco and France at the UN Security Council (UNSC), Washington dropped its demand." (Abderrahmane)*

## President Donald J. Trump (2017-2021)

President Trump did the unthinkable and recognized the Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in a personal tweet:

### **Illustration 04** – *Donald Trump tweet recognizing Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara*



**Donald J. Trump**   
@realDonaldTrump

...

Today, I signed a proclamation recognizing Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara. Morocco's serious, credible, and realistic autonomy proposal is the ONLY basis for a just and lasting solution for enduring peace and prosperity!

8:09 AM · 12/10/20 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

29.7K Retweets 4,244 Quote Tweets 178K Likes

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Source: (Trump)

*“Proclamation on Recognizing The Sovereignty Of The Kingdom Of Morocco Over The Western Sahara*

*FOREIGN POLICY/Issued on: December 10,2020*

*The United States affirms, as stated by previous Administrations, its support for Morocco’s autonomy proposal as the only basis for a just and lasting solution to the dispute over the Western Sahara territory. Therefore, as of today, the United States recognizes Moroccan sovereignty over the entire Western Sahara territory and reaffirms its support for Morocco’s serious, credible, and realistic autonomy proposal as the only basis for a*

*just and lasting solution to the dispute over the Western Sahara territory. The United States believes that an independent Sahrawi State is not a realistic option for resolving the conflict and that genuine autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the only feasible solution. We urge the parties to engage in discussions without delay, using Morocco's autonomy plan as the only framework to negotiate a mutually acceptable solution. To facilitate progress toward this aim, the United States will encourage economic and social development with Morocco, including in the Western Sahara territory, and to that end will open a consulate in the Western Sahara territory, in Dakhla, to promote economic and business opportunities for the region.*

*NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim that, the United States recognizes that the entire Western Sahara territory is part of the Kingdom of Morocco.*

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-fifth.*

*DONALD J. TRUMP” (Trump)*

Why did President Trump do this? The response could lie in a diplomatic move in favor of Israel, by gaining the favor of Morocco. However, neither did the deal advance as he wished nor did his unilateral proclamation have any legal basis.

Trump's decision was as illegal as was the Spanish retreat from Western Sahara without ending the decolonization process. It is simply not legal to hand over, sell or deliver a territory and its people. International Law does not allow to transmit the sovereignty of a Non-Self-Governing Territory without the acquiescence of its People, this is also the basis that makes

the Madrid Tripartite Agreements radically null and void, and for this reason alone, Spain continues to be the Administrative Power *de jure* of the territory and Morocco is only an occupying power as indicated in resolutions 34/37 of 1979 and 35/19 of 1980, although often Morocco is mentioned as Administrative Power *de facto* which is a realpolitik terminology.

Trump seemed completely unaware of all the above, as well as his legal advisers who did not know the legal nature of the territory of Western Sahara, although the USA attends the sessions of the 4<sup>th</sup> Committee of decolonization of the United Nations and is a Permanent Member of the Security Council. Or, we even worse, they are aware but simply discard International Law when it doesn't suit them, which is a dangerous precedent for all countries and peoples in the world. Donald Trump also said that he would open a consulate in Western Sahara, another illegal action, but to this day no US consulate was opened nor a “virtual online version” that was presented by his Ambassador to Rabat, at the time, as an alternative.

The comments by diplomatic, academics and US elected politicians were swift to condemn Trump's “recognition”:

The United States of America Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Jim Inhofe, also one of the most influential members of the Republican party, expressed “sadness” and “disappointment” at the decision of President Trump, pointing out that such a step will never change the positions of the international community on the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination,” stressing that the White House' announcement alleging Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara is “shocking and deeply disappointing.” (Inhofe)

For his part, senator Patrick Leahy affirmed that Donald Trump “can't ignore the international law and the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination.” (Leahy)

The democrat Congresswoman of Minnesota Betty MacCollum said that the actions of Trump, who will leave the White House on 20 January

2021, render “dangerously legitimate the illegal annexation of the Sahrawi territory.” (McCollum)

Former US national security advisor John Bolton also reacted in many occasions to the decision of Trump who abandoned, according to him, “thirty years of American policy on Western Sahara.”

*“Trump was wrong to abandon thirty years of US policy on Western Sahara just to score a fast foreign policy victory,” he lamented.” (Bolton)*

Head of the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, democrat Eliot Engel, warned that this decision threatens the efforts of international diplomacy to resolve long-standing conflicts. “[...] *I am concerned this announcement upends a credible internationally supported UN process to address the territorial dispute over Western Sahara which successive administrations of both parties have supported,*” he added. (House Foreign Affairs- Committee)

Former Secretary of State James A. Baker, III Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Western Sahara from 1997 to 2004, who has been out of the radar for decades, released the following statement on the issue:

*“While I strongly support the Abraham Accords, the proper way to implement them was the way it was done with the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan, and not by cynically trading off the self-determination rights of the people of Western Sahara. I agree with Senator James Inhofe when he characterized this development as ‘shocking and deeply disappointing.’ It would appear that the United States of America, which was founded first and foremost on the principle of self-determination, has walked away from that principle regarding the people of Western Sahara. This is very regrettable.” (Baker III).*

Also Mr. Christopher Cross who served as Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Western Sahara from 2009 to 2017 made a public statement on Facebook.

*“This foolish and ill-considered decision flies in the face of the US commitment to the principles of the non-acquisition of territory by force and the right of peoples to self-determination, both enshrined in the UN Charter. It’s true that we have ignored these principles when it comes to Israel and others, but this does not excuse ignoring them in Western Sahara and incurring significant costs to ourselves in terms of regional stability and security and our relations with Algeria.*

*The argument that some in Washington have been making for decades to the effect that an independent state in Western Sahara would be another failed mini-state is false.”*

*Ross clarified that the Polisario Liberation Front of Western Sahara has demonstrated in setting up a government-in-exile in the Western Saharan refugee camps in southwestern Algeria that it is capable of running a government”. (Cross).*

The former UN Personal Envoy highlighted that the US has always expressed support for both the UN facilitated negotiating process and, since 2007, for Morocco’s autonomy plan as ONE possible basis for negotiation.

*“The word ONE is crucial because it implies that other outcomes might emerge and thus ensures that the Polisario stays in the negotiating process instead of retreating into a resumption of the open warfare that prevailed from 1976 to 1991. It was in that year that Morocco and the Polisario agreed to a UN settlement plan that promised a referendum in exchange for a ceasefire. Thirteen years were spent trying to reach agreement on a list of eligible voters, the last seven of them under the supervision of James Baker. In the end, these efforts failed because Morocco decided that a referendum was contrary to its (claims of) sovereignty and, in doing so, got no push back from the Security Council. In 2004, this caused Baker to resign.” (SPS)*

Referring to the resignation of the most recent envoy in 2019, former German President Horst Koehler, Ross (SPS) said that the official reason for his resignations was “for health reasons” however, Ross thinks that it is “more likely out of disgust for Morocco’s lack of respect and efforts to impede his work (as they did with me), the UN Secretary-General is looking for yet another envoy. Those approached to date have demurred, probably because they recognize that Morocco wants someone who will in effect become its advocate instead of remaining neutral and that, as a result, they would be embarking on “mission impossible”. (SPS)

Ross is very clear regarding the consequences of Trump’s decision

*“President Trump’s decision to recognize Moroccan sovereignty weakens any incentive for the Polisario to remain in that process. It also threatens US relations with Algeria, which supports the right of Western Saharans to decide their own future through a referendum and undercuts the growth of our existing ties in energy, trade, and security and military cooperation. In sum, President Trump’s decision ensures continued tension, instability, and disunion in North Africa.” (SPS)*

### **President Joseph R. Biden (2021- )**

So far, Biden’s administration isn’t clear concerning Western Sahara. Although the recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over the territory was not seconded by the Biden administration, the approach seems to be not to anger Morocco and therefore to say as little as possible on the subject. It is still too soon to draw conclusions since the end of the cease fire and resumption of armed conflict in November 2020 has still not reached its peak. However, in the recent African Lion maneuvers, Morocco adopted an aggressive tactic. The Moroccan press said that part of the joint military exercises with the US would take place in Western Sahara. But this was revealed to be false and simply propaganda. Below are the press statements regarding the Western Sahara issue by the Biden administration.

*“Question: As the administration continues to condemn and take action against Russia’s invasion on Ukraine, are there any plans to revisit, review, revoke the Trump administration’s recognition of Israel’s annexation on the Golan Heights and Morocco’s annexation of Western Sahara? MS. PSAKI: I don’t have any updates on that front. I’d point to the State Department.” (The White House).*

Finally, on Morocco and Algeria and the conflict in Western Sahara: We now have a U.N. Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, one of the world’s most experienced diplomats. We worked closely with the parties and with the Moroccans to ensure Staffan was appointed to that post. And he is now hard at work, which we think is quite important for keeping that conflict in check and trying to find a political resolution.

(Background Press Call on Broad Middle East Regional Year-End Discussion)

*“Question Western Sahara – also, President Trump, as you know, recognized sovereignty – Morocco’s sovereignty of the Western Sahara region. Now Spain is asking for a U.N. resolution or U.N.-brokered solutions. Spain is a former col- – colonizer of Western Sahara, asking for a U.N. – brokered solution on this issue. Has the administration completed its review on this particular Trump deal? Because it does, you know, deal with the overall Abraham Accords policy. And what is your position on it?*

*MS. PSAKI: As you know, we are reviewing all of the – many Trump positions, including the Abraham Accords. But I don’t have an update today for you on it.” (The White House)*

*“Question: And second and lastly, how is the U.S. following the current tension between Morocco and Spain over a couple of issues – Western Sahara immigration, some enclaves there? And in this regard, can you update us about the review towards the Western Sahara recognition, the U.S. recognition of Western Sahara as Moroccan land? And does this*

*administration plan to honor the previous recognition of the Western Sahara as Moroccan land? Thank you so much.*

*Answer: When it comes to the relationship between Spain and Morocco and Western Sahara, we discussed this a bit yesterday. The United States is a partner to both countries. We are – don't have anything additional to say when it comes to our recognition of the Western Sahara, however.” (The White House).*

On the 21st of July 2022, U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), ranking member of Senate Armed Services Committee, questioned two key military nominees about U.S. national security priorities in Africa and an alternative site for the African Lion military exercise that previously had been hosted by Morocco. Lieutenant General Michael E. Langley, to be general and Commander, United States Africa Command, and Lieutenant General Bryan P. Fenton, to be general and Commander, United States Special Operations Command, both agreed with Senator Inhofe who already had the agreement of Secretary Austin.

*“Inhofe: And Western Sahara – General Langley, as I mentioned in my office, I am deeply concerned about the plight of the people of Western Sahara. For more than five decades, the Sahrawi people have been subjected to repeated broken promises and vicious attacks by the Moroccan government. Morocco has done nothing to repair the damage that they've done to the Sahrawi people after all these years, and they've done nothing to show they're serious about resolving the crisis. Instead, they've misled multiple American administrations on their willingness to negotiate – or I'd say unwillingness to negotiate – a mutually agreeable outcome to that issue. That's why I've spoken to Senator Rounds and other members of this committee on this issue and why I have pushed DOD to look at the alternative locations for the annual African Lion military exercise that's been hosted in Morocco previously. I'm pleased that Secretary Austin is in agreement with me on this issue and so I'd ask each one of you to respond as to whether or not you are also in agreement.” (Inhofe).*

## Conclusion

The US administrations have always supported Morocco in Western Sahara conflict more or less publicly, more or less actively. The fact remains that the stalemate of the issue is largely due to the actions not only of the US administrations in support of Morocco as well as to its deceiving position in the UN Security Council.

The transcripts, letters and statements of the different administrations are proof of just that, on one hand, on the other hand all UN resolutions have been favorably voted by the US, certainly due to the fact that the US is the penholder and therefore introduces the changes it wishes to approximate the text to the desires of Morocco.

This political double standard, clearly demonstrate that the US, is playing a dangerous game, that ultimately could lead to complete erosion of the International institution's, like the UN Security Council, and potentially, void of power and especially meaning, everyone could question decisions of TIJ, ONU, EU, and others, creating a dangerous void where, extremisms could, once again, gain traction, dividing the world into polars and spheres of influences, not seen, since the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

The US Senate Appropriations Committee allocated to the State Department for its foreign operations and other related programs addressed the Western Sahara issue in August. In the explanatory memorandum of the budget bill the committee deals separately with the Western Sahara Issue without ever mentioning the Moroccan Kingdom. The Committee also urged the Secretary of State to promote the establishment of a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the issue of Human Rights within the MINURSO (UN Mission for Western Sahara) mandate. Regarding the possible opening of a consulate in the occupied territory of Western Sahara that had been announced by the Trump administration the committee is clear and recommends that none of the funds allocated or made available by the 2023

finance law or previous laws can be used to support the construction or operation of an American Consulate in Western Sahara.

*“Western Sahara.—The Committee urges the Secretary of State to promote the establishment of a human rights monitoring and re- porting mechanism within the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. The Committee recommends not less than the prior fiscal year level, within funds provided for the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative, for programs to improve education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and for other assistance for the Western Sahara, and directs the Secretary of State to consult with the Committees on Appropriations on the planned uses of such funds.*

*None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by the act or prior acts may be used to support the construction or operation of a U.S. consulate in the Western Sahara.”* (United States Committee on Appropriations 73).

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## U.S. Cultural Exchange Programs in Algeria: Opportunities and Challenges ☐

Soror Oumeddour<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The internationalization of the higher education sector in Algeria is one of the government's most important priorities to catch up with the contemporary trends towards fostering internationalization in higher education in the twenty-first century globalized world. The U.S. Embassy in Algeria has added a valuable support instrument in this respect through its cultural exchange programs. Ongoing programs of scholarships for students' mobility based on the strategies that aim at strengthening the universities' international dimension have been created. The U.S. Embassy in Algiers provides different types of programs which are perceived as useful and important as they create further opportunities for the learners and the institutions to open up to the increased international environment of the higher education sector. Nevertheless, there seems to be major challenges and hindrances limiting its full potential as a strong tool for sustainable development and better higher education quality. As a strategic soft power tool with long-term impact, American cultural exchange programs seek to Americanize the world via spreading the American values, principles, and ideals abroad through impressing the program participators with the American culture and ideologies. In other words, the Americans assign to themselves the role of reinforcing and supervising peace and democracy in the world. To achieve

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that, they use the various cultural and educational exchange programs as a soft power mechanism to promote and emphasize the superiority of the American system, ideology, and identity in the world. The seriousness of these programs lies in the pre-selection of the participants. They select the youth with a special focus on their abilities to affect and influence others, along with the potentials they have to be future leaders in their countries to pursue and reinforce the American interests. Ideologies are associated with power structures. Indeed, American Policymakers rely on cultural exchange programs to fashion an international atmosphere that is supportive and conducive to the U.S. interests and values worldwide.

**Keywords:** Algeria, Cultural Exchange Programs, Higher Education, United States.

## **Introduction**

Algeria and the United States have witnessed a productive and strong diplomatic relationship and partnership over history. Algeria was among the very first countries to recognize the American independence, and has since worked to strengthen relations of peace and friendship with the United States. Then after, Algeria and U.S. built a strong diplomatic relationship that has improved politically, economically, and culturally. When John F. Kennedy was a senator, he spoke in support of the Algerian independence to *The New York Times* on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1957, and during his presidency Kennedy congratulated Algeria after it took its independence from the French colonization on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1962 (Rakove, 2012). After the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Algeria offered its support to the US and continued to play a vital role in the international war against terrorism. It has been working since then closely with the United States to eliminate transnational terrorism.

In 2012, Algeria and the U.S. established a Strategic Dialogue, which enables the two countries to meet on a regular basis and take an in-depth look at their level of coordination over a wide array of political, economic, cultural, educational, and security issues of mutual interest. The Algeria-United States Strategic Dialogue makes a significant contribution to the advancement of Algerian-American cooperation in the economic, cultural, technical, and educational areas as well. In education, for instance, the U.S. Embassy in Algiers offers a number of cultural exchange programs that allow Algerians to visit and study in the United States. These programs include good opportunities for young Algerians, students, and professionals to develop their careers. Yet, it is important to mention that such cultural exchange programs can cause dangerous political and ideological threats.

### **1. English Language in Algeria**

It has been noticed that there is an increasing demand for learning English language in Algeria, especially, by university students in different fields.

Algerian youth nowadays are much more interested in learning English than in any other time. This interest in the English language is natural because of the openness to the world and globalization. Since the independence of Algeria in 1962, the English language has been taught to the majority of learners from the middle level. In July 2022, Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune announced that primary schools would start to teach English in late 2022. The president went further by saying that English should be offered as a subject earlier as it is the language of instruction at university for those studying medicine and engineering (Rouaba, 2022). This implies that English becomes highly important and crucial in Algeria. The changing economic policies and the openness to the world raises the need for English as a lingua franca and a medium of a great deal of the world's knowledge, especially in areas such as economy, science, and technology (Crystal, 2003). Thus, the Algerian government and even learners are becoming more conscious of the status of English as an international language par excellence.

## **2. U.S. Cultural Exchange Programs in Algeria**

Foreign exchange programs provide learners with the opportunity to study in another country and environment, experiencing its history and culture, as well as meeting new friends to enrich their personal development. International exchange programs are also effective to challenge learners to develop a global perspective (Daly, 2011). Exchange programs occur when partner institutions accept and allow students from different countries to carry their studies. Exchange students live with a host family or in a designated place such as an apartment, or a student lodging. Costs for the program vary by the country and institution. Participants fund their participation via scholarships, loans, or self-funding (Jackson, 2010). Learners' exchange programs became popular after the Second World War to increase the participants' understanding and tolerance of other cultures, as well as improving their language skills and broadening their social horizons.

In the current globalized world, intercultural education seeks to boost understanding, communication, and cooperation among international learners of different cultural backgrounds (Ayano, 2006). This means that the international academic institutions not only seek education “at home,” but also use academic exchange programs as an important internationalization strategy. The U.S. Embassy in Algiers offers a number of exchange programs that allow Algerians to visit and study in the United States. These programs include opportunities for young Algerians, students, and professionals to develop themselves. Cultural exchange occurs when learners develop a deeper understanding and knowledge about another country, its culture, its customs and its day-to-day practices through person-to-person contact (Creese et al., 2006). According to the U.S. Embassy in Algeria, U.S. cultural exchange programs in Algeria support youth entrepreneurship and English language learning and teaching, women’s empowerment, media engagement, and cross-cultural dialogue. Every year, the U.S. embassy in Algeria offers Algerians the opportunity to engage in cultural exchange with their American peers through its diverse educational and cultural exchange programs (U.S. Department of State, 2023).

### **3. Goals of U.S. Cultural Exchange Programs in Algeria**

Arieff (2013) acknowledged that it is important for all the parties of the educational exchange programs to assess their programmatic needs and goals, and determine what joint programs and activities are appropriate. The “fit” of the proposed activities with overall institutional mission, strategy, and priorities must be considered, as well as alignment with academic needs and resource availability. According to the American Council on Education (2015), the U.S. higher education arena contains a variety of not-for-profit associations that promote the professional development of people within the field of international higher education and work to expand awareness of issues related to it, including international student recruitment, international student admissions and retention, international student services,

and comprehensive campus internationalization. This implies that the U.S. cultural exchange programs in Algeria aim at developing, strengthening, and sustaining constructive exchange in the fields of education and culture between the peoples of Algeria and the U.S.

According to the Algerian Youth Leadership Program (2022), the U.S. cultural exchange programs in Algeria aim at applying interactive approach in workshops and in a range of public and community settings. Participants are expected to better understand civic participation, the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic community through their engagements in the various activities. That is, cultural and educational exchange programs seek at enabling learners to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and those around them reinforcing their knowledge of foreign cultures and strengthening international relationships.

Despite the previously mentioned direct goals, the U.S. cultural exchange programs seem to have some other hidden goals. Dobriansky, et al. (2021) pointed out that U.S. exchange programs are one of America's most effective soft power tools when integrated into U.S. foreign policy strategy and planning. Exchanges promote the best of American values. They build U.S. influence and help spread democratic ideals around the globe, strengthen economic and trade interests, and provide a unique window into what makes the United States a singularly distinct and exceptional country.

#### **4. Opportunities of U.S. Cultural Exchange Programs in Algeria**

International colleges and universities are grappling with how best to equip their graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the globalized world of the twenty-first century, and ensure their relevance and standing in the global higher education community. According to the American Council on Education (2015), building good relationships with counterparts abroad can achieve broad and ambitious global development objectives. To this end, the universities in the United States connect with

various universities in the world, including Algeria, in many ways with the potential for new types of connections between the Algerian and the American universities. Some colleges and universities may be interested in recruiting more international students and may have funding to contribute, while others may be more interested in establishing faculty exchanges, cultural exchanges, or joint-degree programs.

Although the number of – (Algerian-U.S. alumni exchange programs is increasing every year, a recent study published in an American newspaper showed that most young Americans know little about Algerian people. The world of higher education in U.S. is very complicated and big, as it is a huge decentralized country. It includes many different kinds of universities; each has its unique way of connection with other universities in the world, including Algeria. The necessity of opening the country internationally through partnerships with foreign universities and centers of knowledge leads Algeria to set off towards the internationalization of its higher education system to shift their culture into something that students from all different backgrounds can embrace. Knight and De Wit (1999) acknowledged that internationalization of higher education is one of the ways a country responds to the impact of globalization, and at the same time the individuality of the nation is saved, respected, and defined. That is, internationalization of higher education enables the foreign student in a new country to settle faster, making the education process more seamless and turning learning into a much more enjoyable experience. Moreover, it prepared and equipped them to engage with other people and businesses from other countries, wherever they may be, and this opens them to more opportunities (Jibeen & Khan, 2015). Therefore, the international dimension of higher education provides multiple opportunities and potential benefits for individuals, institutions and society in general.

Lahmer (2021) reported that Algerian universities offer annual training opportunities for excellent students at Master and Doctorate levels to seek research collaboration opportunities abroad. It also offers annual training

chances for all academics to make progress in their doctoral research or improve the teaching quality of their classrooms. Therefore, around 1500 bilateral agreements were made in order to establish high-level scientific networks and develop joint research projects with foreign universities. Additionally, Algerian higher education and scientific research ministry sought to modernize education, strengthen institutions' management and expand offers for qualifications through multilateral cooperation with many countries. Hence, global awareness and interconnectedness through internationalization of higher education has a vital role to play in shaping the next generations of learners. Internationalization in Higher education has the potential to improve academics, ensuring quality international citizenship for students, increasing international student enrollment, spreading the students' native cultures, and facilitating brain gain.

According to Belmihoub (2015), U.S. cultural exchange programs in Algeria are designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the two countries. The programs allow the participants to develop leadership skills, self-confidence, and a greater understanding of American society. Moreover, the students who are engaged in cultural exchange programs have the opportunity to gain knowledge about the U.S. and its language and culture, build new friendships, take responsibility for themselves, respect differences, be effective intercultural communicators and tolerate the beliefs of others. When they return to Algeria, they can apply for small grants from the U.S. embassy to share their experience with their colleagues.

English is becoming of great importance to university students in Algeria. Hence, studying in U.S. can open new horizons to the Algerian students at many levels. For learners, studying in the United States is a wonderful experience, and a lifetime experience. Study abroad advisors and faculty members often love talking to returning students, and seeing the changes in them and their growth. Returning students can seem more sophisticated and more focused on what is important and less on the petty and the trivial (McKeown, 2009). Differently said, studying abroad involves unique

challenges, and boosts happiness and satisfaction as it opens the doors for learners to explore new places and cultures. Therefore, it changes students in ways that may affect their intellectual development.

Most language educators and students still assume that firsthand exposure to the native speech community, along with formal classroom learning, provides the best environment for enhancing learners' intercultural communicative competence (Jackson 2013, p. 2). That is, the U.S. exchange programs allow the Algerian participators to be surrounded by native speakers of the English language in the United States. This provides them with an enriching environment for learning the language along with its culture. The participators of Algerian U.S. exchange programs are exposed to the English language within the context of its culture, which helps them in developing intercultural communication skills, along with acquiring a deeper understanding of diction, word choice, and tone. According to Kinginger (2011), studying abroad provides students with the chance to see things from different perspectives, to develop empathy, and to tolerate the others who are different from them. In the same vein, Chieffo (2010) stated that studying in the country of the target language increases foreign language learners' intercultural awareness, sensitivity, and knowledge of diverse beliefs, living conditions, and traditions.

## **5. Challenges of U.S. Cultural Exchange Programs in Algeria**

As stated on the Embassy website, there are close to 5,000 alumni of the U.S. government exchange programs throughout Algeria (U.S. Department of State, 2023). The U.S. Embassy in Algeria sponsors a variety of international exchange programs each year. Participating in the U.S. cultural programs and studying abroad, in general, can promote peace and mutual understanding and contribute to the development of Algeria and its workforce. Yet, it may also have its own set of challenges. Jenny et al. (2017) acknowledged that international students face some difficulties in host countries, such as being too far away from family, course requirements

of existing curriculum, finances, language, and cultural barriers, along with health and dietary issues. While some of these hurdles are inevitable, it is important for foreign students to learn more about these challenges so they may better prepare for them.

The traditional approach to international migration considers such exchange programs part of the ‘brain drain’ paradigm. It views skilled migrants as a source of economic and intellectual opportunities for the host country (Vidal, 1998). Algerian youth migration has become a subject of research and a major concern for Algeria because of the shortages and the challenges it creates, since most Algerian U.S. exchange programs participants are young, skilled, and brilliant students who studied in Algerian schools. Carbone (2008) stated that brain drain means loss of skills for the source country, loss of ideas and innovation, loss of the nation’s investment in education and loss of tax revenues, but most importantly, the loss of critical services in the health and education sectors. In other words, brain drain is one of the major challenges facing the Algerian government, as it harshly affects the national economy, leaving professional individuals and skilled human resources in short supply. The phenomenon of “brain drain” has become critical for Algeria, since the industrialized countries such as the U.S. are increasingly hunting skilled Algerian graduates through their educational and cultural exchange programs.

Furthermore, U.S. exchange programs are forms of cultural diplomacy, which is a set of activities undertaken directly in collaboration with diplomatic authorities of a state, which are aimed at the promotion of foreign policy interests of this state in the realm of cultural policy for fostering its cultural exchange with other foreign states (Pajtinka, 2014). Cultural diplomacy as a kind of soft power in American foreign policy was not a product of the moment; it was used in different eras, starting with the Cold War. The Americans’ strategies to spread their ideologies against the Soviet Union were mainly based upon the use soft power via media and tools of public diplomacy, education, communication, technology, acceptance of

immigrants and employment. This helped the U.S. to influence other nations and to maximize its potential at international level to be able to achieve its worldwide domination policy without depending on harsh power (Parmar & Cox, 2010).

Dobriensky et al. (2021) were asked by the Congress and the State Department to examine whether federally funded educational and cultural exchange programs advance the foreign policy objectives of the United States. As a result, they conducted over 125 interviews comprised of U.S. ambassadors and staff in embassies in more than 20 countries, as well as with exchange participants and alumni, current and former State Department leadership, and officials from non-governmental organizations. They concluded that exchange programs are among the most potent and cost-effective instruments in the U.S. foreign policy toolkit. ‘Citizen Ambassadors’ emerge from these exchanges and return to their own countries equipped with American democratic principles and the ability to advance U.S. interests.

This implies that the United States turned to work hard on how to have a new vision for employing soft power to compensate for the losses in its military interventions, as well as the failures that afflicted its policies during the second term of Bush. Militarily speaking, the Americans relied on Private Military Companies (PMCs) to undertake major sensitive tasks (Aty & Elaggoune, 2019), but soft power was much needed. Crawford (2005) asserted that the United States emphasized communication and launched a new slogan called global idealism, which aimed at actively engaging others, listening to them and without neglecting the ideal goals of the U.S. foreign policy. According to Griffiths (2021), idealism is the doctrine that seeks to create a more cosmopolitan and harmonious world order that serves the American interests. In other words, the American idealists believe that the spread of the American educational system and the American culture in other countries can empower world public opinions in ways that serve the American interests, and make it a powerful force that the national government cannot resist.

De Wit (2002) pointed out that the U.S. cultural exchange programs are a kind of soft power tool which America can use to affect international students from all over the world. The goal behind that is to obtain preferred outcomes by persuading and attracting the youth from different nationalities to serve its interests. In the same vein, Nye (2004) stated that the Boren National Security Education Act (1991) highlighted and stressed the role of American cultural and educational exchange programs in contributing to the U.S. national security, spreading the American culture and values, defending the American interests, and strengthening the economic well-being of the country. Nye (2004) discussed the link between international education and foreign policy stating that higher education, along with other forms of culture, such as government broadcasting and Hollywood products, are soft tools used to achieve the U.S. government's desire as a superpower for dominance over other countries to defend America and its interests.

## **Conclusion**

Given that high-quality education can make a better world for all of us, universities worldwide have a huge role to play in achieving this goal. Partnerships among international universities provide the learners with many opportunities, which can help them to be successful and effective international citizens. To this end, universities in the U.S. connect with various universities in the world, including Algeria, in many ways, with potential for new types of collaboration between universities in both countries. To foster deep and plentiful partnerships between the Algerian and the American universities, the U.S. embassy in Algiers opens the doors for Algerian youth to study in American universities through the U.S. cultural exchange programs in Algeria. U.S. cultural exchange programs offered by the U.S. government and American non-government institutions for Algerians in the form of scholarships and professional training fully sponsored.

U.S. cultural exchange programs provide great chances for Algerians and Americans to exchange their cultures, create a good atmosphere of



mutual understanding, and foster intercultural tolerance. Proficiency in the English language is required to take part in the programs, in addition to the commitment to share the acquired experience when returning to Algeria. Nonetheless, the road is still somehow bumpy because U.S. cultural exchange programs in Algeria pose some challenges as well. The United States has long been attempting to manipulate other countries and the world order with its own values and political system in the name of promoting democracy and human rights through different tools. The U.S. government uses the cultural exchange programs as mechanisms to influence international opinions that back up their interests under the guise of promoting democracy, freedom, and human rights.

Differently said, participators in the U.S. cultural exchange programs are more likely to develop a kind of long-term impact on the American cultural and political ideologies, along with a sense of belonging and appreciation for America. This would open the doors for the United States to monopolize intellectual property in the name of protection, taking advantage of the weak position of other countries. When the program participators reach high political positions that affect U.S. foreign policy, they are expected to help the Americans to walk away from international treaties and organizations, and to put its domestic law above international law to protect its interests. Therefore, the Algerian students who participate in such programs must be aware enough in order not to be used as proxies, agents, and tools for spreading American ideologies or serving American interests at the expense of their original country's sovereignty.

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# AFRICAN ISSUES


## La Transformation des Politiques Publiques de la Santé au Cameroun

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### Résumé

Clé de légitimation du pouvoir en place, la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun constitue une modalité pratique par laquelle le gouvernement entend veiller à ce que tous les individus puissent avoir accès aux services de santé. Cette recherche ambitionne de faire ressortir les voies empruntées par la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun. Un tel objectif, invite à une problématisation du cheminement politique emprunté dans la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun. Mieux encore, comment rendre compte du cheminement politique emprunté dans la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun ? Cette question se justifie par le fait qu'elle permet d'interroger plus globalement les itinéraires de la santé en tant que programme d'action publique. Afin de donner corps à cette interrogation, l'on pose les jalons d'une approche empirique qui mobilise les données qualitatives que quantitatives. En recourant l'approche pragmatique de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun, l'on démontre que la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé constitue un *policy process* permettant d'expliquer la trajectoire décisionnelle.

**Mots-clés:** *action publique; cameroun; cheminement; santé; transformation des politiques publiques.*

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*«Il convient de lutter en faveur d'une couverture sanitaire toujours plus effective, toujours plus efficace. Les infrastructures dans ce domaine doivent servir les couches les plus défavorisées, les plus faibles économiquement»  
(Agenda de transformation des politiques publiques de la santé, 2018 : 1).*

Fixant le cadre général de l'action de l'État dans le domaine de la santé, ces propos de Paul Biya, Chef de l'État camerounais, visent l'amélioration de l'état de santé des populations grâce à l'accroissement de l'accessibilité aux soins intégrés et de qualité pour l'ensemble de la population. C'est donc dire qu'à la bourse des valeurs des priorités du gouvernement, la santé est affectée au coefficient élevé des préoccupations publiques. Elle domine les programmes d'action gouvernementale et quadrille de ses ramifications l'espace social, à travers l'alerte de l'Organisation de Mondiale de la Santé (OMS) qui régulièrement attire l'attention du gouvernement sur la responsabilité de la santé qui lui encombre envers son peuple ; Et il ne peut y faire face qu'en prenant qu'en métamorphosant le paysage des mesures sanitaires et sociales appropriées. Alors, sous quels auspices nouveaux se présente désormais le paysage de la santé au Cameroun ? Telle est la question de recherche à l'origine de cette réflexion. *A priori*, la question semble légitime et elle paraît engager une série d'interrogations stimulantes autour de l'analyse du procédé, ou encore de la prise en compte de l'analyse de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun. Enjeu incontournable de l'action publique (Ph. Bezes & A Siné, 2011 : 20), la redécouverte du nouveau visage et paysage de la santé au Cameroun ne se marchande pas et constitue le point de départ de sa relecture ; elle conduit inévitablement à une interrogation nouvelle sur le cycle rationnel de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé rendant plus urgent un approfondissement de l'action publique (J. Commaille & B. Jobert, 1998 : 11-32).

Si l'on prête attention à la santé au Cameroun, l'on a l'impression d'une évolution, une sorte de montée en importance. Cependant, cette situation ne semble pas linéaire. Cela doit beaucoup à une certaine évolution de la problématique de la santé dans la société en général, et dans le bien être en particulier. Une juxtaposition de la politique de santé et du bien-être des populations donne sens à l'idée d'une perception particulière de la santé ; mais également de l'État dans son intervention sectorielle dans le cadre des politiques publiques de santé. Parce que tous les secteurs ne se valent pas de la même manière tous les acteurs sociaux (L. Sindjoun, 1996 : 57-67) ne se valent pas. D'ailleurs, la classification jadis rendue célèbre par Jean-François Bayart ne loge-t-elle pas la santé parmi les « cadets sociaux » (F. Bayart, 1989 : 34) ? L'on posera un regard panoramique sur les politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun, dans leur généralité, afin d'analyser de l'intervention de l'État (O. Legros, 2010 : 73-78). Ce faisant, l'on ne fera pas une sociologie aigüe de cette transformation des politiques publiques. En effet, les problèmes de santé du Cameroun, liés en grande partie aux conditions de vie, montrent qu'il est nécessaire que la politique de santé devienne une priorité nationale. Cette évolution se fait progressivement et en fonction des spécificités socioculturelles du pays. Le secteur de la santé s'arrime à la vision stratégique qu'offre la perspective gouvernementale de la santé. Connaître davantage ce champ et mettre en pratique les actions qui le sous-tendent, est un pas significatif pour l'amélioration de l'état de santé des populations camerounaises et de leurs conditions de vie. Au fait, cette évolution se heurte à deux principales incommodités. La première incommodité dont souffre le système de santé au Cameroun est lié aux pratiques hospitalières et institutionnelles dans le système de santé conduisant à un déphasage entre l'offre et la demande dans le traitement des patients (P. Pouhè Nkoma, 2015 : 3). Le plus souvent, cela occasionne le recours aux phénomènes du médicament de la rue (Van der Geest, 1987 : 33) ou encore à la « pharmaceuticalisation » de la santé (S. Van der Geest, 2017 : 4 ; J. Abraham, 2010 : 603–622). En effet, la mauvaise opinion couplée à

un marketing social inexistant, renforce le désenchantement des malades vis-à-vis du corps médical et de l'institution qu'il incarne. Dans un tel environnement, l'autonomisation de l'individu en santé constitue la norme et l'autodiagnostic devient un préalable pour le recours aux soins. Il serait donc nécessaire de repenser les pratiques hospitalières et institutionnelles dans la santé (P. Pouhè Nkom : 31). La seconde incommodité réside dans le financement des soins de santé au Cameroun (Beyeme Ondoua, 2002 : 62). En raison de sérieuses difficultés financières, la santé connaît des dysfonctionnements et des incohérences liés aux faiblesses institutionnelles entraînant ainsi de nombreuses conséquences : une grande partie de la population n'a pas accès au système de soins par manque de moyens (Onguene Onana, 2004 : 38-72 ; S. Nkwenkeu, 2014 : 489) et se tourne vers les guérisseurs traditionnels et les sorciers ; la pénurie des médicaments et des consommables dans les établissements publics ; la corruption (Beyeme Ondoua : 62). En plus de cela, s'ajoutent le mauvais accueil et l'inhumanisation des soins dans les hôpitaux déteints sur l'image de marque de la santé au Cameroun (Habiba Garga & Ongolo-Zogo, 2017 ; C. Foé Ndi, 2019 : 448).

Étant au cœur de l'actualité et occupe une grande place dans les recherches en science politique, elle intéresse les travaux de Jean François Bayart (2001 : 6). À l'aune de sa réflexion, il fait le constat suivant lequel le processus de décentralisation du système de santé au Cameroun pose un problème particulier. En ce sens qu'il ne s'agit pas de faire le bilan d'une réforme déjà réalisée mais d'étudier, à un moment donné, la dynamique d'une réforme en cours de gestation, et qui ne sera peut-être jamais achevée. Vraisemblablement d'ailleurs, l'élaboration législative et réglementaire est en cours et les textes d'application ne sont pas encore rendus tous disponibles. Sur la base de ce constat, loin de faire un bilan d'une réforme, il entend étudier rendre compte de sa dynamique. Partant de là, il met en exergue l'épineuse question du financement de la santé. En développant son analyse, l'auteur parvient à deux résultats. Le premier résultat tient au fait que la réforme est articulée autour de la décentralisation et les ressources

humaines (qui s'appuient sur un ensemble de pratiques esquissées à partir de directives et d'initiatives non coordonnées, sans s'appuyer toujours sur une base juridique précise). Le second résultat obéit à la crise du système de santé au Cameroun. Elle est structurée par la balkanisation des aides internationales qui se partagent le territoire. En effet, les bailleurs de fonds ont déjà lancé, à l'intérieur des régions qu'ils se sont réparties, chacun de leur côté et sans coordination, des projets qui vont dans le sens de la décentralisation. Il en résulte une situation dont il est impossible de faire le point exact. Il n'en reste pas moins que se développe une dynamique de réforme qui fait de la décentralisation son principe directeur, et dont il est intéressant de mettre à jour la logique. Plus tard, on pourra se nourrir des travaux académiques de Jean Paul Beyeme Ondoua ( : 61-62). Il se donne plus précisément pour objectif de présenter un tableau des « *forces politiques au Cameroun réunifié* » c'est-à-dire dans l'État en sa forme fédérale issue de la restauration en 1961 de l'unité des deux entités précédemment sous administration britannique et française respectives. Par ces termes, l'auteur entend toutefois dépasser une analyse purement institutionnelle. Il vise à « *décrire des faits et les relations qui les unissent* ». Eu égard au propos qui sera le nôtre, la réflexion de Beyeme Ondoua (2004 : 39) ne nous intéresse directement qu'en son cadre d'analyse. L'auteur se livre tour à tour à une étude de la turbulence de l'environnement et les mutations successives auquel fait face le système de santé. Pour analyser un système de santé, il faut faire un rapprochement des données sur l'état de santé de la population, du niveau de distribution de certains déterminants socio-économiques (PIB et PIB/habitant, revenu par habitant, taux de scolarisation, proportion de personnes pauvres), comportementaux, liés au système de soins (dépense de santé/PIB et/habitant, densité des médecins). Plutôt que de s'arrêter à la question de la validité du transfert de l'appareil théorique entre le Nord et le Sud, l'enjeu scientifique est, à partir d'études de cas du continent africain, de démontrer l'intérêt pour la sous-discipline de travailler sur des situations inédites : d'une part, il questionne la validité scientifique et

prétendument universelle des résultats accumulés au Nord et, d'autre part, il enrichit l'analyse des politiques publiques à travers des configurations d'action publique dans des situations et trajectoires nouvelles. Que dire des travaux d'Albert Ze (2020 : 300). Il part du postulat que, depuis les années 1990, on observe un engouement sur le continent africain qui se traduit notamment par la multiplication des études empiriques sectorielles et de programmes de recherche spécifiques. Il est sans doute juste et vrai que les cadres d'analyse se sont construits autour d'expériences sectorielles nord-américaines et européennes et, de même, les capacités institutionnelles et sociales sont parfois si faibles sur le continent que la notion d'État y est elle-même discutée. Tout au long de sa réflexion, il tente de déceler les insuffisances du système de santé camerounais et propose des solutions pour sa restructuration. On doit en revanche reconnaître à Albert Ze le mérite de proposer des solutions à travers un système d'humanisation des soins, des ressources humaines qualifiées et motivées et offrir les soins de qualité aux prix accessibles à tous les camerounais. Peut-on s'inspirer de la contribution de F. Eboko (2015 : 1-40) pour prendre une certaine distance par rapport à un tel schème explicatif ? Il met en lumière les récurrences qui structurent une relative standardisation des acteurs de l'action publique en Afrique contemporaine. Pour l'essentiel, il fait ressortir la configuration qui existe entre les acteurs (internationaux, nationaux, publics, privés, associatifs, etc.) et les institutions, présentées sous formes « d'agences ». Il fonde ses analyses sur l'hypothèse que l'édification d'« une matrice de l'action publique en Afrique » dont la dynamique et les résultats attendus ou prescrits sont différents d'un secteur à l'autre. On le voit bien, les objets de recherche ou les questionnements proposés ci-dessus sont largement sécants avec ceux de l'analyse de la construction et du traitement de la santé. D'autant plus que le péché de l'ensemble de ces travaux est de ne pas s'intéressés qu'au système santé globale ou sanitaire.

Lorsqu'on veut parler de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun, il convient d'abord essayer de cerner précisément

ce qu'est la « transformation des politiques publiques » et ce qu'est la « santé ». Le mot « transformation des politiques publiques » est l'un des termes les plus usités du vocabulaire de la science politique. Cette notion forte, par sa dimension transculturelle et parce qu'elle touche au fondement même de la vie des êtres humains en société, a donné matière à de nombreux écrits et réflexions ; il n'en demeure pas moins qu'aucun texte adopté au niveau mondial par des responsables politiques n'était venu jusqu'alors en cerner les contours ou en préciser la portée. Sans doute la notion est gelée en quelque sorte par l'opposition entre transformation des politiques publiques, et changement qui avait cours. La difficulté vient pour l'essentiel de la graphie du terme « transformation des politiques publiques » et des multiples disciplines qui constituent son cadre de développement. La logique suivie consiste premièrement à comprendre le phénomène de « transformation des politiques publiques ». Cette compréhension passe par la définition du terme. Qu'est-ce qu'une « transformation des politiques publiques » ? Selon Hall (1993 : 275-296) le terme « transformation des politiques publiques » est perçue comme des processus (Ph. Bezes & B. Palier, 2018 : 1083-1112) qui ajustent la politique publique sans provoquer des limites globales d'un paradigme donné, le changement de troisième ordre, en revanche, est susceptible de refléter un processus différent, marqué par des changements radicaux dans les termes récurrents du discours de la politique, ce qui est lié à un « décalage de paradigme ». Concept synthétique par excellence, la transformation des politiques publiques fédère trois dimensions consubstantielles : la dimension cognitive ; la dimension normative et la dimension symbolique. Dans la dimension cognitiviste à l'instar de T.M. Hacker (1985 : 63-84) montre en particulier que terme « transformation des politiques publiques » correspond à une phase au cours de laquelle aucun nouveau programme n'est introduit, alors même que le contexte social s'est transformé, traduisant par-là même une inadaptation des politiques publiques au nouveau contexte. De ce fait, elle se réfère à un contexte

dans lequel il est possible d'introduire de nouvelles règles formelles, mais difficile de réformer celles existantes. La dimension normative non plus sous l'angle de l'activité mais de processus. À l'instar de ces auteurs, Hernandez (2001), en définissant la transformation des politiques publiques comme un processus complexe explicite les attributs de l'entrepreneuriat. Dans cette conception symbolique, l'attribut de processus concerne l'importance accordée au temps et au caractère organisé des phénomènes en jeu.

Après avoir levé le voile sur le terme de « transformation des politiques publiques », l'on peut alors tenter de comprendre ce que renferme le concept de « santé » (M. Aquilino, & D. Tabuteau, 2015), en dépit de son caractère complexe, à partir d'un ensemble d'approches développées : l'approche déterministe qui considère le développement comme un phénomène social total (G. Gurvitch, 2007 : 168) ; l'approche ethnométhodologique qui met l'accent sur la prise en compte du contexte social dans l'analyse des faits humains (H. Garfinkel, 2002 : 320) ; Le courant actionniste qui sans nier que l'individu est « noyé » dans le système social (E. Goffman, 1974 : 23) ; le considère comme un acteur capable de tenir compte de ses intentions et de prendre une marge de manœuvre d'où le jeu relationnel entre « l'acteur et le système social » (M. Crozier & E. Friedberg, 2014 : 512). Cette brève excursion dans la jungle buissonnante des lots et de leurs significations augure l'extrême difficulté qu'éprouve à définir la transformation des politiques publiques politique de la santé. En associant les vocables « *transformation des politiques publiques* » et « *santé* », on parvient à la définition suivante : la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé désigne un programme d'action publique (P. Lascoumes & P. Legales, 2004 : 10 ; P. Hassenteufel, 2008 : 24) qui permet de faire concorder à l'état actuel des relations internationales en tant que logiciel d'avec l'État avec l'environnement mondial dans le but de parvenir à une meilleure compréhension et surveillance de l'évolution du système-monde.

Cette contribution vise donc à faire ressortir les voies empruntées par la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun. Il examine la pratique politique (Cl. Abé, 2006 : 29-56) observée dans la trajectoire de en cette transformation des politiques publiques lisant le politique à partir des politiques publiques. Mettre en perspective cette réflexion, invite à une problématisation du cheminement de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun. On peut la traduire comme la manière interrogative comme suit : comment retracer le processus de transformation des politiques publiques de la santé publique au Cameroun ? Cette question se justifie par le fait qu'il permet d'interroger plus globalement les itinéraires de la santé. Deux questions surgissent dès lors qu'on s'attarde sur cette question centrale, à savoir : comment s'effectue l'énonciation de l'idée de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé dans le paysage de la modification des données des relations internationales ? Et comment se concrétise-t-elle l'idée de la transformation des politiques publiques de santé ?

Le cadre méthodologique s'ordonne autour des approches qualitative et quantitative. Tout d'abord, la technique quantitative privilégie l'analyse documentaire, qui permet de collecter des informations (J. Ibert, Ph. Baumard, C. Donada & J.-M. Xuereb, 2003 : 224-256) utiles à la compréhension des dispositifs de pratiques. On s'est concentré sur des données provenant de la revue documentaire et des données secondaires. S'agissant de la revue documentaire, elle est essentiellement constituée des comptes rendus de réunion, des stratégies sectorielles de santé, des plans et programmes de santé y compris des circulaires ministérielles. Cette documentation provient pour l'essentiel de la Direction de l'Organisation des Soins et de la Technologie Sanitaire, de la Direction de la Lutte contre la Maladie, les Epidémies et les Pandémies, de la Direction de la Pharmacie, du Médicament et des Laboratoires et de la Direction de la Promotion de la Santé. En mobilisant ces données documentaires, il est question de découvrir les mécanismes de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé. La

présente étude combine aussi une analyse quantitative avec des entretiens semi-structurés réalisée auprès de l'administration centrale du Ministère de la Santé. L'on a réalisé un entretien avec le directeur de la Direction de la Promotion de la Santé. Il était question d'être renseigné sur la pratique politique de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé. Avec le Directeur, on attend être éclairer sur le schéma de la prise de décision au sujet de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé. Par la suite, on a associé les services déconcentrés en y incluant une sélection d'hôpitaux afin d'illustrer la manière dont la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé st opérationnalisée, et de remédier à la tendance problématique des études existantes sur la politique de santé dévolue. Entre mai 2021 et juillet 2022, on a mené des entretiens semi-structurés auprès de quelques hôpitaux urbains (obstétriques, centraux et généraux de Douala, Yaoundé et Bafoussam) et ruraux (les Centres Médicaux d'Arrondissement de Mbanga, Dibombari, Pouma, de Babadjou, de Tyo Baleng et de Rabingha). Il était de s'imprégner de l'univers de la santé avec ses errements. L'on a interviewé deux catégories d'acteurs. La première catégorie d'acteurs est constituée de nombreux employés (soit 46 préposés aux bénéficiaires et à l'entretien ménager). La seconde catégorie est constituée par les professionnels (35 médecins, 100 infirmières et 55 ergothérapeutes). Tous ces données collectées sont analysées à partir d'une analyse descriptive du cycle renseignant sur les différentes étapes du cycle de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé (S.Jacob & Ch. Rothmayr : 71-88).

Le schéma de démonstration repose sur l'approche pragmatique (Ph. Zittoun, 2019 : 74-81). Cette approche repose sur la possibilité de procéder, via un fort de connaissance, à une objectivation du processus de fabrique de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé. Elle se propose de l'expliquer en mettant en place relève une démarche d'enquête. En d'autres, termes, elle tend à rendre compte de l'explicitation des étapes suivis ou des processus politiques de la transformation des politiques publiques politique de la santé observés auxquels se greffent des apprentissages permettant

de démystifier l'intervention politique à partir des « arts de faire » (M. Certeau, 1990 : 10) et de « manières de faire » nécessairement empirique (J. Baudouin, 2017 : 124). S'appuyant sur une telle perspective théorique, l'on démontre que la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé publique au Cameroun en tant que viatique se veut être un traceur (P. Knoepfel & al., 2016 : 124-128) de l'action publique enfermée dans des processus politiques.

Pour vérifier cette hypothèse et mener à bien ce type d'analyse, orientée vers l'étude de situations concrètes, il apparaît logique d'évoquer dans un premier temps, l'émergence de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé à travers la fabrique de son idée et de sa mise en agenda. Et dans un second temps, l'on parle de la mise en œuvre, tout en s'intéressant à la fois à sa coordination et à sa mise en cohérence.

## **1. De l'émergence de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé**

D'entrée de jeu, on ne saurait nier que l'émergence de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé constitue une « entrée » privilégiée pour analyser le cheminement de son élaboration. En leur accordant en effet une grande attention dans le cheminement de son élaboration, elle constitue une activité politique nécessaire qui enchante le monde en repérant les problèmes de santé que le pouvoir en place peut ou pas décider (Th. Dye, 1972 : 23).

Pour mener à bien l'analyse, l'on sera attentif à la fabrique de l'idée de transformation des politiques publiques de la santé qui est perceptible au travers de la coordination co-construite par un schéma d'acteurs et la médiatisation. Après quoi, il sera question de se livrer à l'analyse de la mise en agenda de l'idée de transformation des politiques publiques à partir des débats et des cadres de concertation et la formulation des débats.

## **1.1. La fabrique de l'idée de transformation des politiques publiques de la santé**

Lorsque l'on veut comprendre les processus qui conduisent à l'émergence et à la prise en compte de l'idée de santé au Cameroun, il est essentiel d'avoir en l'esprit qu'une politique n'est pas un processus de décision abstrait dont on pourrait saisir le sens en se limitant à identifier les déterminants structurels ou les contraintes (économiques ou historiques) qui pèsent sur elle.

Pour percer le mystère de la fabrique de l'idée de transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun, l'on sera d'abord être attentif à la coordination co-construite (M. Rival & Ig. Sémo, 2014 : 56) par un schéma d'acteurs. On s'attachera, ensuite, à analyser la mise en débat de la médiatisation (F. Balle, 2000 : 26).

### **1.1.1. La coordination co-construite par un schéma d'acteurs**

Dans *La fabrique politique des politiques publiques*, Ph. Zittoun (2013 : 323) propose d'orienter le travail du chercheur dans le champ des politiques publiques « vers la reconstitution des scènes concrètes à travers l'action co-construite par des acteurs qui s'y investissent. Elle est déterminante. Quelle que soit la légitimité qui leur est reconnue, elle apparaît comme le déclencheur (L. Boltanski & L. Thévenot, 1991 : 16) permettant de susciter une reconnaissance en tant que problèmes publics. S'intéresser à la coordination co-construite par un schéma d'acteurs fabricants (V. Lemieux, 1995 : 7) de l'idée de transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun, c'est davantage construire le cadre interaction et les mobilisations stratégiques et pragmatiques (Ph. Zittoun, 2013 : 34) de ces derniers sur la base de leurs préférences. La démarche communautaire articulée autour de la coordination co-construite par un schéma d'acteurs sociaux (L. Sindjoun : 57), a permis d'identifier des acteurs impliqués (V. Massardier, 2003 : 45) dans la fabrique de l'idée de transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun. Ces acteurs aux intérêts

divergents (G. Massardier : 46), cherchent à faire prévaloir leurs intérêts et à consacrer leur domination. Ils entretiennent un rapport pouvant influencer cette dernière. De ce point de vue, la question fondamentale consiste à savoir qui sont-ils, et en quoi ils influencent l'idée de transformation des politiques publiques de la santé ? La réflexion sur les interactions entre les acteurs et leur mobilisation s'ordonnent autour d'une « adhésion active » (F. Eboko & al., 2009 : 12) c'est-à-dire une construction par le bas. Ils sont donc représentés en deux groupes d'acteurs identifiés en lien avec leur position (R. Zerbo, B. Koine, R. Drabo, Abdramone, A. Ouedraogo, J-B. Macq, J. Dujardin, B. Mugisho & E. Huygens, 2009 : 72-80) que sont : les acteurs essentiels et les acteurs résiduels.

Le premier groupe d'acteurs est constitué des acteurs concernés par les aspects biomédicaux de la maladie, à savoir : les « citoyens » publique (Bérard, 2013 : 23) et les professionnels de la santé. D'abord, les acteurs concernés par les aspects biomédicaux de la maladie sont constitués de deux groupes : les malades (usagers) et les professionnels de santé et du secteur médico-social (J. P. Beyeme Ondoua : 63). Les malades sont rencontrés dans les services de soins ou à leur domicile selon les cas. Ils ont été amenés à partager leurs expériences relatives avec l'accès aux soins publics de santé dans les hôpitaux publics. Le vécu de ces malades participe à la compréhension de la complexité des itinéraires thérapeutiques et à l'analyse critique du mécanisme d'offre de soins. Ils sont également des sources intéressantes pour documenter les épreuves endurées dans le cadre de la prise en charge publique de santé. Les notions telles que « la marginalisation sociale », « l'estime de soi », « l'observance », sont directement appréhendées à travers leurs expériences de la maladie. Ce rôle est fonction de leur capacité à porter sur la scène publique une question qui n'aurait pas reçu la même attention autrement (P. Hassenteufel, 2010 : 34; J. Kingdon, 1984 : 56). Par la suite, les prestataires de soins sont surtout concernés par les aspects biomédicaux de la maladie *a priori*, ou dans le vécu interactionnel du processus de traitement. Ils s'occupent du diagnos-

tic, du suivi d'observance, et de la réadaptation du traitement en cas de besoin. Non seulement, on s'interroge sur leurs pratiques, mais aussi leurs représentations des malades recourant à leurs services. Ils sont responsables de la prise en charge biomédicale et de la rigueur dans l'absorption des molécules nécessaires à la restauration de la santé du tuberculeux. Ils sont donc détenteurs d'enjeux en termes de qualité de soins et de recouvrement de la santé. Les agents de santé concernés ici sont les infirmiers Chef de Poste (ICP) au niveau des CSPS et l'infirmier responsable du centre de diagnostic et de traitement au niveau du district sanitaire. Ils entretiennent avec les malades une relation basée sur l'offre et la demande d'un service, où les interactions présentent des déficits de compréhension mutuelle autour de l'observance du traitement. On comprend d'autant plus pourquoi ils utilisent souvent des notions péjoratives telles « malades indisciplinés », « difficiles », ou « perdus de vue » pour décrire le comportement de certains malades et portent ainsi un jugement de valeur. Leurs expériences dans le suivi des malades sous traitement sont illustratives des difficultés et des efforts dans les succès thérapeutiques, et permettent d'appréhender la nature des interactions avec les malades, notamment les aspects d'échanges sur la maladie et les traitements de communication.

Le second groupe d'acteurs est constitué les acteurs concernés par l'intégration sociale de la « société civile » (E.-M. Owona Nguini, 1999 : 143-180) et les acteurs qui agissent sur les aspects organisationnels (N. Monteillet, 2005 : 262). La société civile met en valeur l'action des acteurs concernés par l'intégration sociale du malade. Le plus souvent, elle est constituée par des membres d'associations, des accompagnants des malades, des responsables coutumiers et des leaders d'opinion. Les membres d'associations communautaires sont engagés dans des œuvres de charité pour soutenir les personnes en difficulté. Au regard de la complexité de la gestion des pathologies de longue durée telles que la tuberculose et le Sida, les associations communautaires se présentent comme des alliées et confidentes des malades. Elles ont l'expérience empirique du tact qui satisfait mieux les

malades et soulage leurs soucis. Elles sont douées pour des approches de proximité qui favorisent un échange de confidences, la réduction de la stigmatisation et de l'exclusion sociale liées à la tuberculose. Ils sont rencontrés aux sièges des associations et souvent recommandés par les prestataires de soins qui leur réfèrent souvent des malades indigents ou en détresse. Les accompagnants des malades quant à eux sont des acteurs qui capitalisent les expériences d'aide à l'observance thérapeutique chez les malades chroniques. Par la suite, l'attention accordée aux tradithérapeutes participe de ce qu'ils souhaitent être reconnu comme associé ou collaborateur à la santé. D'autant plus que les patients y ont souvent recours pour répondre aux aspects surnaturels des causes attribuées à tort ou à raison (J.P. Beyeme Ondoua, p.63). Ils donnent une explication aux absences au traitement et aux refus de fréquenter les services de soins modernes par certains malades. Soulignons que leur contribution dans un processus de dynamisation du réseau d'acteurs répond au souci de prendre en compte le substrat culturel, et l'environnement social et l'impact psychologique de la maladie, ainsi que l'identification des modes de construction étiologiques et nosographiques des toux chroniques. Ils participent à la mise en évidence de connaissances ethnologiques et anthropologiques de la tuberculose. En réalité, les tradithérapeutes collaborent souvent avec les services de santé dans le cadre des programmes communautaires d'information et d'éducation dans le but de faciliter les références des tousseurs chroniques vers les services de soins (E. Mpondo Mpondo, 2012 : 4036-4045).

### **1.1.2. Le relais de l'idée de transformation des politiques publiques de la santé : la médiatisation**

Aborder ce point de réflexion, c'est s'intéresser aux rôles des médias dans le façonnement des normes de la santé. Envisagé comme un ensemble d'habitudes apprises en réaction aux stimuli de l'environnement, elle autorise et favorise une mise en rapport autrement pensé à partir d'une sorte de ré-accomodation de la pratique sociale.

La prestation des soins et services est l'axe d'action le plus perceptible et le plus critiqué de notre système de santé. Elle est tributaire de l'institutionnalisation de la qualité, de la réforme hospitalière (Ministère de la santé du Cameroun, 12 mai 2016), de la carte sanitaire et de la lutte contre les pratiques illicites dans le secteur de la santé. La prestation de services de santé de qualité est essentielle pour instaurer la couverture santé universelle (CSU). La mesure et l'amélioration de l'accès ne sont pas suffisantes à elles seules pour garantir des soins de qualité aux populations et suivre les progrès vers la CSU. Bien qu'il s'agisse d'un chantier en cours, elle ne peut plus être conçue de façon isolée au vue de sa nécessaire intégration dans un processus global de transformation des politiques publiques du système de santé. La fenêtre d'opportunité politique actuelle oriente au-dessus de tout, vers une révision de la loi-cadre n°96/03 du 04 janvier 1996 dans le domaine de la santé. Avec le concours de tous les acteurs étatiques et non-étatiques, les organisations publiques et privées, cette révision courageuse ambitionne de révolutionner l'offre publique et privée de notre système de santé. Il convient de se demander comment les citoyens se sont-ils approprié les réseaux sociaux numériques pendant les scandales Tchatchou et Koumateke ? Et pourquoi sont-ils entrés dans la surface du jeu politique par les réseaux sociaux numériques ? Dans l'épreuve publique qu'ont constituée les scandales Tchatchou et Koumateke, les citoyens ont essentiellement réagi en protestant (F. Afom, 2019 : 222). La protestation renvoyait à un mécontentement contre l'incurie, l'absence d'empathie, le manque de transparence, la culture du secret, la rétention d'informations des dirigeants (F. Afom : 223). Cette litanie de griefs était fulminée contre ceux (le président Biya et les ministres de la Communication Issa Tchiroma Bakary et des Affaires sociales Catherine Bakang Mbock) qui devaient rapidement s'exprimer pour soutenir de « petites » gens comme Vanessa Tchatchou et Monique Koumateke (Frank Afom : 224). C'est donc la gouvernance hospitalière et l'absence discursive des autorités gouvernementales qui sont

principalement dénoncées. Mais aussi la communication gouvernementale relative à ces scandales considérée comme non conforme à la vérité des drames qu'auraient vécus Vanessa Tchatchou et Monique Koumateke. La protestation était d'autant plus légitimée que « [I]es gouvernants étant [souvent perçus comme des] gens du secret », « les [citoyens] sav[ai]ent [dès lors] que “des choses leurs [étaient] cachées” » (G. Balandier, 1985). C'est ce qui, dans le scandale Tchatchou, a donné corps à une théorie du complot accusant Catherine Bakang Mbock d'en être complice par son silence et ses positions ambiguës (F. Afom : 234).

Mais si l'expression de l'indignation dans les scandales Tchatchou et Koumateke s'est jouée sur plusieurs scènes, il faut, pourquoi la visibilité de la désapprobation publique s'est en partie construite à travers l'espace numérique, tenir compte de l'*ancrage situationnel* des collectifs d'indignation par rapport à l'espace public camerounais. Cela pour mettre en évidence à la fois la structure ) post-autoritaire (E. Pommerolle, 2008 : 23) (de l'État et la conjoncture) celle de l'émergence des réseaux sociaux numériques qui, depuis la promulgation de la loi n° 2010/013 du 21 décembre 2010 régissant les communications électroniques, offre aux citoyens la possibilité de discuter à *leur manière* des affaires d'intérêt public et à l'occasion, de prendre ouvertement position contre les autorités publiques. L'exigence de concertation, non seulement entre producteurs et destinataires de politiques publiques, mais plus largement entre les divers acteurs sociaux impliqués dans la décision politique relève de ce que R. Mayntz (1997a : 272) qualifie avec une formule heureuse de «management de l'interdépendance».

## **1.2. La mise en agenda de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé**

Avant d'entrer dans le vif du sujet, il convient d'explicitier le terme mise en agenda. Terme consacré en science politique notamment en politiques publiques, la mise à l'agenda (agenda setting) désigne le processus de prise en compte de problèmes publics. Elle est aussi appelée « inscription

sur l'agenda politique » (Ph. Garraud, 1990 : 32-38). Dans les écrits théoriques consultés, ce processus désigne une séquence au cours de laquelle un problème est jugé par les autorités publiques, et/ou par des individus extérieurs au gouvernement mais y étant associés (M. Howlett and M. Ramesh, 1993 : 3-24), comme relevant de l'attention des autorités publiques, soit de la responsabilité politique. Préalablement, l'apparition de transformation des politiques publiques politique de la santé à l'« agenda » politique est un moment crucial, car il s'agit d'une étape clé dans le processus de décision politique (J. Kingdon, p.174). Pour étudier la question de la mise en agenda de l'idée de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé, une question nécessite d'être convoquer : Comment une question devient-elle un sujet de préoccupation politique ou un problème public ? Par un processus de mise en visibilité, plus ou moins publicisé ou discret, auquel une certaine diversité d'acteurs est susceptible de contribuer. Analyser cela permet de compléter du processus de publicisation de la transformation des politiques publiques.

Pour rendre compte de cela, le démarche du raisonnement oblige que l'on puisse mentionner, d'abord, *la sélection des problèmes* (P. Hassenteufel, 2010 : 50-58) duquel sera suivie la formalisation du débat.

### **1.2.1. Les référentiels de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé : la sélection des problèmes**

Aborder l'étude de la hiérarchie des priorités dans la santé au Cameroun suppose que, l'on parte du constat suivant : l'existence de nombreuses préoccupations pour en dégager une sélection ou un choix en fonction de la situation d'urgence qui prévaut dans cette contrée. Il est tout à fait logique que l'on interroge la sélection des problèmes publics qui retiennent l'attention du Gouvernement en l'état actuel. Comme le soulignent S. Hilgartner et Ch. Bosk (1988), les autorités publiques ne sauraient mettre sur agenda l'ensemble des problèmes car « l'attention publique est une ressource rare, dont l'allocation dépend de la compétition au sein d'un système d'arènes

publiques » (Ch. Bosk : 55). De ce fait, les « problèmes doivent lutter pour occuper un espace dans les arènes publiques. Cette compétition est permanente pour entrer et pour rester sur l'agenda public » (Charles Bosk : 70). Dès lors, quels sont les problèmes à résoudre dans la santé ?

On sait par ailleurs que depuis sa mise en œuvre en février 2020, les objectifs poursuivis par ce document phare porte des fruits qui participent à donner au système de santé camerounais un nouveau visage, celui que le Président de la République appelle de tous ses vœux : un système de santé publique capable d'assurer aux populations un accès aux soins et services de qualité et à moindre coût. Ceci passe inéluctablement par les six piliers qui sous-tendent l'Agenda de transformation des politiques publiques du système de santé à savoir, améliorer la qualité de l'accueil et des soins dans les formations sanitaires ; rendre pertinente la production et améliorer la gestion des ressources humaines pour la santé ; renforcer le système d'information sanitaire ; rendre disponible les produits médicaux ; mobiliser les financements additionnels pour la santé et améliorer le leadership et la gouvernance. L'amélioration de l'accès à l'offre publique et privée des services et de soins de santé d'une part et la stimulation de la demande des soins de santé d'autre part. Pour cela, l'approche de district de santé viable a été adoptée. Par cette approche, le district de santé doit être capable d'identifier ses problèmes de santé, de les résoudre de manière satisfaisante, avec l'appui des structures d'orientation-recours du système national de santé. Pour favoriser l'offre de soins de santé, la carte sanitaire a été rationalisée de manière à recentrer la création des Districts de Santé, à maîtriser les constructions/réhabilitations des infrastructures, l'acquisition des équipements biomédicaux et assurer la mise en œuvre du plan de développement des ressources humaines ; l'accès aux médicaments, réactifs et dispositifs médicaux essentiels de qualité facilité; le système d'assurance qualité sur les médicaments, réactifs et dispositifs médicaux essentiels développé. La promulgation d'une loi fixant le cadre général de la couverture de la population en matière de

mutualisation du risque maladie ; l'existence d'au moins une mutuelle de santé dans chaque District de Santé; la couverture d'au moins 40% de la population générale par un système de partage du risque maladie ont été adoptés pour stimuler la demande des soins médicaux. Dans ces conditions, la réflexion devrait davantage être menée sur la réduction des inégalités sociales en santé (Rapport n° RM2011-061P, Mai 2011). Un système de suivi-évaluation intégré des performances du secteur a été développé et rendu fonctionnel. Il a permis de s'assurer de l'évolution du processus de viabilisation des districts de santé, avec la production conséquente des résultats de prestation des soins et services de santé de qualité à même de contribuer à l'atteinte des OMD ciblés (Agenda de transformation des politiques publiques du système de sante camerounais : le temps d'agir, 14). On doit, à ce stade, préciser que les droits et les obligations des malades ainsi que ceux de l'analyse établissements de santé devront être formalisés à travers une Charte du malade, pour créer une même interface juridique entre ces deux (02) groupes d'acteurs afin de normaliser de façon pérenne leur interaction. Le décloisonnement de l'offre publique et privée va nécessiter une atténuation de certaines dispositions rigides qui encadrent l'exercice des professions médicales et médico-sanitaires. En l'état actuel de cette législation, l'on ne saurait en aucun cas envisager une intégration efficace de l'offre et notamment une mobilité des compétences et des personnels de santé hautement qualifiés, ni même leur complémentarité souhaitée, entre les sous-secteurs publics et privés.

Poser la question de la modernisation de l'organisation et du management des formations sanitaires publiques, c'est étudier comment le personnel devrait désormais traiter le patient qui est au centre des préoccupations. Il va sans dire, que le personnel de santé retiendra toute mon attention, en ce qui concerne les conditions de travail et la reconnaissance administrative et socioéconomique. Il en va ainsi de l'inclusion de l'offre privée dans le service public hospitalier se fait, conformément à une catégorisation

générale des formations sanitaires qui tiendra compte des niveaux de référence. Dans cette optique, il convient de questionner les mécanismes de création et d'ouverture des formations sanitaires privées pour lever toutes les équivoques en actualisant les rôles des ordres professionnels et ceux de la tutelle. Pour la charge morbide, les actions ont été menées sur la lutte contre le VIH/SIDA (GTC/CNLS, Rapport annuel 2010 des activités du Programme national de lutte contre le Sida, MINSANTE et ONUSIDA, 2011 : 38) ; la lutte contre le paludisme et la tuberculose ; la lutte contre les maladies non transmissibles ; la lutte contre les maladies tropicales négligées ; la surveillance intégrée des maladies et réponse ; la gestion des catastrophes et autres événements de santé y compris ceux à portée internationale ; la santé de la personne âgée ainsi que la santé mentale et les comportements humains. La lutte contre le VIH/SIDA est basée sur une approche multisectorielle (GTC/CNLS, L'impact du VIH et du Sida au Cameroun à l'horizon 2020, GTC/CNLS, septembre 2020 : 42) avec des points focaux dans tous les secteurs d'activités tandis que la lutte contre le paludisme s'est faite par une large distribution de moustiquaires imprégnées de longue durée, la gratuité des médicaments pour les enfants de moins de cinq ans et les femmes enceintes (GTC/CNLS, Rapport 2015. Estimations et projections sur le VIH et le Sida au Cameroun. Période : 2010-2020, MINSANTE et ONUSIDA, juillet 2015 : 59). La promotion de la santé est faite à travers la communication intégrée en faveur des programmes de santé ; et de la prévention primaire de la malnutrition et des maladies non transmissibles. On peut alors soutenir que les interventions relatives à la classe santé, nutrition et environnement sont orientées pour optimiser la lutte contre la maladie, notamment en ce qui concerne l'hygiène du milieu et corporelle, la sécurité sanitaire des aliments (GTC/CNLS, Rapport annuel 2012 des activités de lutte contre le VIH/Sida et les IST au Cameroun, MINSANTE, Mars 2013). Cela abouti, par exemple, à l'iodation des sels dans le cadre de la lutte contre le goitre dans les régions endémiques.

### 1.2.2. La formalisation du débat : la prise de décision

S'intéresser à la décision, c'est vouloir percer le mystère de l'activité politique, dévoiler au grand jour les mécanismes de l'action de l'État. Charlotte Halpern, 2010 : 201-210). La recherche gouvernementale du bien-être des populations est déterminée par les délibérations des pouvoirs publics sur la base de la prise de décision (Perreau & Cefai, 2012 : 466). Étudier la formalisation du débat, c'est percer le mystère de l'activité politique. Il est précieux de garder à l'esprit que la formalisation du débat, c'est-à-dire à lui donner une existence concrète, soit sous forme de loi ou de décret ou de circulaire, soit sous forme de contrat, quand la réforme peut se mettre en œuvre entre des partenaires sociaux, hors du champ de l'État, au nom du paritarisme, et à condition que le dit État veuille bien rester à sa place.

Après avoir évoqué l'émergence de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé, il convient dans ce qui suit de sculpter sa mise en œuvre. Car comme l'écrit Jean François Sirinelli sur la base d'une stratégie peu linéaire : « *Les idées restent toujours, d'une certaine façon, du domaine de l'incantation plus que de l'action* » (J ; F. Sirinelli, 2011 : 391).

## 2. Vers la mise en œuvre de la transformation des politiques publiques de santé

La mise en œuvre d'une politique publique s'analyse comme une succession de séquences d'action sociale survenant après qu'une politique aura légalement été définie (Charbonneau & Padioleau, 1980 : 49-75). Une telle approche ne laisse pas indifférente Luc Bernier lorsqu'elle écrit : « *Les politiques publiques commencent par de grands discours et moins grands que l'on doit ensuite mettre en œuvre* » (S. Paquin, L. Bernier & G. Lachapelle, 2010 : 255). D'après cet auteur, après la parole, ce sont les actes (P. Sabatier, 1986 : 21-46). Une fois que la décision est prise en situation d'urgence, elle n'est rien tant que n'est pas intervenue son exécution rapide. Cette rapidité d'exécution est fonction, de l'urgence et de son degré.

Pour rendre raison à cet ordre de considération, il paraît opportun, dans un premier palier, de rendre compte la mise en œuvre d'une coordination de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé. Après quoi, dans un second palier, il sera question de mettre un accent sur la cohérence de la mise en œuvre de cette dernière.

### **2.1. La mise en œuvre d'une coordination de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé**

Si elle est séduisante d'un point de vue rationnel, il faut reconnaître qu'elle n'est pas facile à mettre en œuvre (J.-M. Schléret, 2004 : 1-4). Dans la mesure où elle est la résultante d'un long processus d'apprentissage progressif du travailler ensemble avec au départ des objectifs (Schléret : 3) c'est-à-dire la matérialisation de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé. Cette démarche ascendante s'oppose à une autre qui vise à décréter la coordination, l'imposer directement ou indirectement.

Une opinion doctrinale dominante incline à considérer qu'il existerait différents outils de coordination. On rendra, compte des d'outils stratégiques de coordination desquels seront suivis les outils opérationnels.

#### **2.1.1. Les outils stratégiques de coordination**

Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun, les outils stratégiques accompagnent et participent généralement de la pratique voire des « arts de faire » publics. Ils sont pour la plupart caractérisés par des programmes et plans. Le Projet d'Appui à l'Investissement dans le Secteur de la Santé (PAISS) au Cameroun met en œuvre l'approche du financement basé sur les résultats (FBR) pour accroître le recours des populations aux services de santé et améliorer la qualité de ces derniers, avec un accent particulier sur la santé maternelle et infantile et les maladies transmissibles (La Banque mondiale, 2019). Le projet a été restructuré après deux ans d'existence avec les

modifications suivantes : l'ajustement des arrangements institutionnels pour la mise en œuvre du FBR, y compris la gestion financière et les arrangements pour le paiement des performances aux centres de santé ; et la révision des indicateurs de suivi du projet et des résultats attendus (Dossier d'investissement pour l'amélioration de la santé de la reproduction, sante de la mère, du nouveau-né, de l'enfant et de l'adolescent/jeune au Cameroun 2017-2020). Sous cet angle, son objectif reste inchangé et vise à accroître l'accès aux services de santé dans les formations sanitaires publiques et privées de 26 districts couvrant une population totale d'environ 2.8 million (Dossier d'investissement pour l'amélioration de la santé de la reproduction, sante de la mère, du nouveau-né, de l'enfant et de l'adolescent/jeune au Cameroun 2017-2020). Il s'agit d'améliorer l'utilisation et la qualité des services de santé maternelle et infantile à travers l'élaboration d'un nouveau concept, le Financement Basé sur le Résultats (FBR) aux différents niveaux du système de santé. Le FBR est une stratégie de financement matérialisée par une relation contractuelle entre les différents acteurs, et à travers laquelle les prestataires et les structures de santé sont rétribués financièrement ou matériellement suivant l'atteinte des objectifs (Dossier d'investissement pour l'amélioration de la santé de la reproduction, sante de la mère, du nouveau-né, de l'enfant et de l'adolescent/jeune au Cameroun 2017-2020). Dans le même ordre d'idée, on peut rappeler que le plan stratégique national de santé numérique 2020-2024 s'intéresse à la couverture Santé Universelle. Elle consiste à veiller à ce que l'ensemble de la population ait accès aux services préventifs, curatifs, palliatifs, de réadaptation et de promotion de la santé dont elle a besoin et à ce que ces services soient de qualité suffisante pour être efficaces, sans que leur coût n'entraîne des difficultés financières pour les usagers (Dossier d'investissement pour l'amélioration de la santé de la reproduction, sante de la mère, du nouveau-né, de l'enfant et de l'adolescent/jeune au Cameroun 2017-2020). La résolution de l'Assemblée mondiale de la santé sur la santé numérique, approuvée à l'unanimité par les États membres en mai 2018, met en exergue la valeur des technologies



numériques, afin de contribuer à la progression de la couverture santé universelle. À cet effet, cette résolution suscite chez le Ministère de la santé une sorte d'évaluation de leur utilisation des technologies numériques pour la santé, y compris dans les systèmes d'information sanitaire aux niveaux national et infranational.

À ce stade de réflexion, un paradoxe demeure : le Cameroun ne dispose-t-il pas d'un plan stratégique national de financement de la santé ? Cette perplexante question appelle à une réponse qui tient compte des différentes fonctions du financement (collecte des ressources, mécanismes de partage des risques, et achat des services de santé) qui ne répondent donc pas parfois à un cadre logique national (Stratégie sectorielle de sante 2016-2027). S'il est vrai que de nombreux programmes et projets sont élaborés sur la base des stratégies de financement, il est pourtant vrai qu'ils révèlent une intention tout autant que celui de suggérer ou de convaincre par exemple. C'est précisément le cas du PPAC (Plan Pluri-annuel Complet) (Guide OMS-UNICEF sur l'élaboration d'un plan pluriannuel complet de vaccination – PPAC, 2013), du PEV et de la stratégie de financement du VIH/SIDA. Son financement de la santé est présenté à travers ses trois fonctions citées plus haut. Comme on le voit, les ressources financières publiques allouées à la santé sont insuffisantes. Ce qui favorise une dépendance aux financements extérieurs (Stratégie sectorielle de sante 2016-2027). Cependant, les FINEX sont empreints d'un manque de visibilité dans leur prévision à moyen terme (3-5 ans). En effet, les principaux partenaires multilatéraux conditionnent désormais leurs appuis dans la perspective d'un retrait progressif. C'est ainsi que l'échéance d'inéligibilité du Cameroun aux financements de l'Alliance GAVI est projetée à 2020. Selon les estimations, cette échéance correspond à l'année où le pays aura atteint un niveau de revenu par habitant de 1580 USD. De plus, certains partenaires à l'instar du Fonds Mondial développent des conditions de co-financement qui exigent une contrepartie progressivement croissante de l'État (Stratégie sectorielle de sante 2016-2027). Or, il semble que la multiplicité des procédures et des

instances de coordination, la fragmentation du financement de la santé et la faible mise en commun des FINEX entraînent une perte d'efficacité et d'efficience lors de leur utilisation. En conséquence, ils contribuent peu au renforcement du système de santé et à la satisfaction des besoins cruciaux de la population (équité horizontale). Un exemple illustre avec éloquence cette affirmation. Plus précisément, en 2014, 63% des FINEX couvraient essentiellement la lutte contre les maladies transmissibles (Paludisme 51%, VIH/SIDA 12% et Tuberculose 0,3%), 27% étaient alloués à la santé de la mère et de l'enfant, et seulement 5% étaient affectés au renforcement du système (Stratégie sectorielle de sante 2016-2027). On voit par là qu'en marge du budget de l'État, de nombreux acteurs nationaux s'investissent, à titre caritatif et humanitaire, pour soutenir des actions de santé. Dans tous les cas, ces actions se traduisent notamment par des campagnes de santé, s'inscrivant ou non dans le cadre des instruments de la stratégie partenariale. En l'absence d'un mécanisme intégré de suivi, l'incidence financière de ces interventions ne peut être évaluée.

### *2.1.2. Les outils opérationnels de coordination*

Pour saisir ces outils opérations de coordination, il faut donc s'intéresser à la façon dont des acteurs produisent des dispositifs de connaissance et des étiquettes discursives. Il ne s'agit plus seulement d'étiqueter un problème comme dans l'étape précédente mais, dans ce cas, d'étiqueter un groupe social pour qui l'anormalité de la situation forme justement le problème.

Il faut dire qu'elle est présidée par le Dr Manaouda Malachie le 23 février 2022, en présence des Partenaires techniques et financiers du secteur de la santé. Cette rencontre a pour but d'exercer plus efficacement son leadership dans la conduite des actions visant l'atteinte des objectifs définis dans l'Agenda de transformation des politiques publiques du système de santé camerounais. Les différents Partenaires techniques et financiers ont saisi l'occasion pour réitérer leur engagement à œuvrer aux côtés du Gouvernement camerounais et principalement du Ministère

de la Santé, pour le renforcement du système de santé et par ricochet le bien-être des populations. Les représentants des différentes agences du système des Nations Unies et autres partenaires (OMS, UNICEF, USAID, FAO, GIZ, UNFPA, Ambassade de France, CDC) présents à cette concertation se sont accordés sur le manque de coordination verticale et horizontale dans la mise en œuvre des activités et actions relatives à la promotion de la santé. Il est donc impératif de mutualiser les énergies pour une plus grande efficacité (Eureka News, 24 février 2022). Pour ce faire, 16 recommandations ont été formulées par les différentes parties prenantes au terme des discussions et échanges, parmi lesquelles : la redynamisation du comité de pilotage de la stratégie sectorielle de santé en vue du renforcement de la coordination des PTF ; la mise en place d'un groupe de travail chargé de mener une réflexion sur l'opérationnalisation de la décentralisation dans le secteur de la santé ; l'actualisation de la cartographie des interventions des PTF la mise en place d'un cadre de concertation thématique et périodique avec les Partenaires ; la conception des outils de la coordination ; le parachèvement du PNDS ; l'élaboration d'une fiche de collecte des informations sur les PTF et des scores carte dans les 10 régions; l'alignement des actions et interventions dans le système de santé aux Objectifs de développement durable.

Tout cela atteste de ce qu'elles permettent de comprendre les contradictions qui peuvent apparaître dans les politiques publiques, les confrontations de référentiels ou de paradigmes concurrents, les conflits d'intérêts, la coexistence et les évolutions des narratives, les changements permanents à l'œuvre. Un état ainsi reconstruit ne peut que se traduire par des intérêts divergents, des hésitations, des confrontations de référentiels, une forte pluralité normative, tout cela expliquant la complexité des jeux publics et permettant notamment dans les ESF de ne pas se focaliser uniquement sur des explications globales de mauvaise organisation ou de patrimonialisation. Dans ce sens, cette perception permet ainsi de se doter d'une vision beaucoup plus intégrée des relations état / société dans

l'analyse des politiques publiques et de se persuader de leur intrication intime, secteur par secteur, espace par espace. Par ailleurs, la recomposition politique de l'état et sa compréhension comme une entité sociale complexe, obligent à s'intéresser à l'ensemble des acteurs qui agissent à la fois comme partenaires et comme actionnaires de l'état. L'État négocie avec ces autres acteurs non étatiques qui sont aussi pour certains ses agents, qui ne cessent de voir leurs activités s'accroître en bénéficiant par décharge ou par délégation (Hibou) d'une partie des fonctions acquittées jusqu'alors par l'état ou menée de manière unilatérale. On peut penser à cet égard que la technicisation et la professionnalisation accrue des s acteurs privés se sont appropriées des procédures et instruments publics conduisent à une l'implication croissante des pouvoirs publics dans la délibération publique soit par délégation, soit par participation ne cessent de discuter la capacité d'un État démythifié à revendiquer le rôle dominant et central dans la production des politiques publiques et la conduite du *policy*.

## **2.2. La mise en œuvre de la cohérence de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé**

Mettre en œuvre la cohérence de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé, c'est dépasser les couples de contradiction mis en évidence par l'analytique de la frontière, en établissant les principes et les conditions d'une complémentarité entre politiques publiques et projets de coopération. Cela passe par un remaniement des représentations (instruments cognitifs), la reconfiguration des dispositifs d'action et des systèmes d'acteurs (instruments stratégiques), des adaptations du cadre juridique (instruments contractuels).

Dans ce qui va suivre, l'on évoquera, d'abord, l'évaluation à mi-parcours de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé Par la suite, on parlera de l'inexistence d'un code de santé.

### **2.2.1. Une évaluation à mi-parcours de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé**

On peut remarquer à titre préliminaire que l'insuffisante remontée d'informations est probablement l'une des raisons les plus courantes de l'échec (H. Wolman, 1985 : 51-95) d'un Plan d'urgence. On le voit, il est certain qu'aussi parfaitement que puisse être conçu et structuré un Plan d'urgence avant la phase de sa mise en œuvre, il est impossible de prévoir correctement tous les aspects et détails concernant son exécution. En réalité, l'on s'aperçoit que sa mise en œuvre effective exige des ajustements continuels. Il est clair que les conditions changent avec le temps et que, par conséquent, l'exécution d'un Plan d'urgence suppose une capacité de changement en réponse à ces modifications. De surcroît, ces dernières peuvent non seulement concerner les causes et les caractéristiques du problème mais également (dans de nombreux cas, parallèlement à l'évolution des valeurs sociales), la définition même de la nature du problème et des objectifs assignés au Plan d'urgence.

Si l'on jette un regard synoptique sur l'évaluation à mi-parcours, il apparaît que la collecte d'informations relatives à son impact et à son évaluation est finalement vitale. Elle permet de savoir si le Plan d'urgence fonctionne et de quelle façon ? Dans quelle mesure les objectifs qui lui étaient assignés sont-ils atteints (question classique de la recherche en évaluation) ; Quels sont les coûts et avantages du Plan d'urgence (question classique des analyses coût-avantage ou coût-efficacité) ? Quelles sont les conséquences non-recherchées, non-prévues ? Voilà autant de questions qui auraient pu être mobilisées dans le cadre d'une évaluation rapide du Plan d'urgence en situations complexes. Maintenant, il reste à analyser l'absence d'une évaluation détaillée qui devrait être contenue dans un rapport annuel. Or c'est bien le fonctionnement des organisations publiques qui, par le passé était calqué sous un modèle purement bureaucratique (M. Weber, 1995 : 67) différent du management et ayant montré ses limites. On sait par ailleurs que les problèmes rencontrés sont de nature complexe : la recherche d'une

gestion plus cohérente pour répondre à une inefficacité du secteur public, la volonté de s'inscrire dans une idéologie néolibérale, de surmonter l'existence des crises financières, économiques et politiques et le besoin de changement ont conduit à un basculement de paradigme de la bureaucratie administrative à la diffusion du modèle de « new public management » (NPM) (D. Osborne & T. Gaebler, 1992 : 302-304). Le NPM consiste donc en une série de processus et d'outils visant à obtenir une performance optimale au sein des organisations dédiées au service public et à légitimer l'action publique de L'État (R. Laufer & A. Burlaud, 1980). Dans un tel cadre, « les usagers doivent aujourd'hui disposer d'un service public performant, adapté à leurs nouveaux modes de vie et de communication... c'est pourquoi, les programmes publics ne doivent plus être administrés, mais gérés. » (Bonnenfant, 2012). Cette conception de la gestion de l'administration publique atteste pourquoi le management public doit être modernisé en s'inspirant des pratiques de gestion du privé, pour améliorer la performance et le rapport service/coût (A. Amar et L. Berthier, 2008 ; L. Zampoccoli, 2011). Cette piste laisse davantage la place au manager public qui n'est plus un simple relais d'instructions supérieures mais un acteur à part entière de l'action publique qui doit se préoccuper simultanément des attentes des parties prenantes (hiérarchie, tutelle politique, usagers) et de leurs agents, tout en pilotant leur activité pour atteindre les résultats de performance formellement fixés (C. Grenier & V. Martin, 2013 : 129-145). Cette analyse des administrations des pays africains fragiles et de l'appui dont elles bénéficient ne prête guère à l'optimisme quant à une amélioration substantielle de l'acceptabilité tant par les fonctionnaires que par les « administrés » de leurs principes de fonctionnement, sans même parler de leur efficacité, de leur efficience, leur cohérence et leur pertinence. Pourtant, des mutations profondes sont en cours. L'expansion démographique, l'urbanisation rapide et la densité sociale qu'elle génère, les mutations de la stratification sociale dont l'émergence de nouvelles catégories sociales dites classes moyennes de la petite propriété et le nombre

accru de jeunes mieux formés modifient les conditions de l'activité sociale. Il faut espérer à cet égard que les référents de l'activité se reconstruisent d'autant plus rapidement que l'intensité de leurs pratiques quotidiennes dans un milieu urbain à forte densité sociale multiplie les arrangements convergents et génère ainsi des routines communes qui stabilisent l'action et la rende plus prévisible.

### **2.2.2. L'inexistence d'un code de santé**

De manière symétrique, la carte sanitaire constitue la boussole de notre planification stratégique. Pour ce faire nous devons en partager la compréhension comme étant un territoire, des processus et des ressources. La place du District de santé comme niveau opérationnel de la pyramide sanitaire doit être plus valorisée, car nous sommes persuadés que la performance du système de santé au plan national est tributaire de l'efficacité de système de santé de district. Les Districts de santé peuvent ne pas être en mesure de s'acquitter de leurs responsabilités en raison de capacités variables en matière de leadership, de planification, de budgétisation et de gestion. Malgré les efforts déployés pour recruter de nouveaux travailleurs dans le domaine de la santé, la grave pénurie de personnel tarde à se résorber. Au Cameroun, le nombre d'infirmières, de sages-femmes, de médecins, de chirurgiens et de lits d'hôpital est inférieur aux moyennes régionales. À cela, il faut ajouter la pénurie de main-d'œuvre en santé est critique, surtout dans les régions éloignées. Malgré les mesures incitatives mises en place par les autorités pour attirer des professionnels de la santé dans les régions éloignées, ceux-ci demeurent fortement concentrés dans les zones urbaines. Dans cette perspective, il n'est pas surprenant de se rendre compte qu'il a presque trois fois plus d'effectifs (de médecins et infirmiers pris ensemble), par rapport à la population, dans le Centre que dans le Nord. Cette inégalité est particulièrement frappante en ce qui concerne la répartition des médecins, dont presque les deux tiers (64%) se retrouvent dans les deux régions du Centre et du Littoral, essentiellement dans les villes de Yaoundé et Douala.

Au vu des difficultés à réduire de façon perceptible les disparités régionales des ressources humaines spécialisées, il est envisagé le mentorat et des capacitations de courte durée des personnels de santé pour offrir les soins attendus dans les zones reculées. Cependant la sollicitation des institutions de formation devra être permanente pour accroître la production des compétences pointues au regard des besoins. Un dialogue sera initié avec les institutions de formation pour une actualisation du programme d'études des ressources humaines pour la santé qualifiée de sorte que leur formation corresponde aux besoins en matière de service courants et en situation d'urgence

## Conclusion

L'essentiel de la problématique de la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé au Cameroun se résume dans le sentiment d'un éternel recommencement que le Doyen Francisco MELEDJE DJEDJRO a bien mis en exergue dans son brillant article : « Faire, défaire et refaire » puis défaire et refaire à nouveau. Ce mouvement de va et vient incessant rappelle le mythe de Sisyphe condamné à rouler éternellement jusqu'au sommet d'une montagne un rocher qui en retombait aussitôt. Ce rappel analogique au mythe grec est moins forcé qu'il ne paraît. Elle met en lumière l'importance première des processus politiques. Analyser la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé en termes de cheminement ouvre la possibilité de poser différemment la question de la légitimation d'une action. Cette légitimation ne correspondrait pas à une forme d'« acceptologie », mais à un processus de sédimentation qui provoque la transformation des politiques publiques. Ainsi, c'est grâce à une stabilisation progressive que l'action et ses outils acquièrent une solidité. Les méthodes et les conventions scientifiques sous-jacentes aux nudges ne sont pas neutres et demeurent des constructions sociales. En oubliant leur dimension performative, on court le risque d'une conformation générale des comportements, qui seraient

ensuite envisagés comme des données naturelles. C'est d'ailleurs ce que présageait Hannah Arendt (1961 : 400-401) dans un passage de *Condition de l'homme moderne*. Son propos constitue au fond une invitation à prendre de la distance par rapport à cette « science de la rationalité et des biais » : « Ce qu'il y a de fâcheux dans les théories modernes du comportement, ce n'est pas qu'elles sont fausses, c'est qu'elles peuvent devenir vraies, c'est qu'elles sont, en fait, la meilleure mise en concepts possibles de certaines tendances évidentes de la société moderne.

Sur la base de ces considérations, il apparaît que la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé a fait ressortir qu'elle peut se faire par le biais de modifications graduelles et partielles des idées devant être matérialisées. Il faut finalement insister sur les processus de sédimentation cognitive, ce qui apporte, à la fin, un changement dans le paradigme originel (V. Schmidt, 2003 : 127-146). La présente réflexion a aussi démontré que les changements à l'échelle institutionnelle normalement faits en réponse à un changement sur le plan cognitif des idées liées au paradigme (S. Siegel, 2005). Autrement dit, on peut conclure que la transformation des politiques publiques de la santé entraîne la nécessité de faire des changements à l'échelle institutionnelle pour qu'elle s'ajuste pertinemment au contexte nouveau (D. Swank & Sven Steinmo, 2002 : 642-655). On pense que ces propositions pourront rendre les analyses des changements des politiques publiques plus précises. En outre, la combinaison des théories cognitives et institutionnelles entraîne de nouveaux défis aux études de cas empiriques des changements de politiques publiques qui pourront, à leur tour, apporter de nouvelles pistes et de nouveaux critères associés à ces théories.

En clair, une meilleure compréhension de la maquette du modèle-type de développement économique de l'Afrique se trouve en tête de l'agenda de recherche des spécialistes en comportement politique.

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**Dialogue ou Diversion des Membres de L'Elite Leader  
en Afrique Francophone**   
Bahdon Abdillahi Mohamed

**Résumé**

Dans le jeu politique d'un régime démocratique, le dialogue politique est un élément. Mais quand un consensus entre les différences forces politiques et sociales n'existe pas, il y a un dysfonctionnement institutionnel. Et on parle d'une crise politique. L'instauration d'un régime politique pluraliste sur le plan formel dans certains pays d'Afrique francophone n'a pas conduit forcément un régime où les règles du jeu politique et les droits et libertés fondamentales ne sont pas respectés par des pouvoirs encore autoritaires et personnels. La longue durée d'un régime, qui s'est construit autour d'une personne et d'une équipe, conduit forcément à l'exclusion de toute force politique, qui conteste sa politique et le fonctionnement institutionnel qu'elle induit. A la différence des premiers régimes politiques, les nouveaux régimes autoritaires de ces pays développent une stratégie afin de surmonter la crise non pas sur le plan répressif, mais en recourant à une autre voie. Et c'est ainsi qu'ils organisent ce qu'on a appelé communément un dialogue avec quelques représentants de l'opposition. Il devient un moyen politique pour le pouvoir et l'opposition, politique et sociale. Mais selon le fonctionnement du régime en question, la convocation d'un dialogue peut être une simple diversion, plus destinée à ce qu'on appelle pompeusement les partenaires, c'est-à-dire aux pays occidentaux, qui les soutiennent.

**Mots clés :** changement constitutionnel, crise, dialogue, diversion, institution, médiation extérieure.

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## Introduction

À la fin des années 1990, l'Afrique noire était entrée dans une période de changement constitutionnel, pas tant politique. Certains africanistes ont rapidement évoqué le changement démocratique. Trente ans plus tard, en dehors du Bénin<sup>1</sup> et des îles du Cap Vert et du Ghana, les résultats ne sont pas positifs dans la sphère politique et dans le fonctionnement institutionnel. On assiste à la mise en place de régimes hybrides dans de nombreux pays alors que ce n'est pas la continuité de régimes autoritaires. Dès les troisièmes élections présidentielles pluralistes, la personnalisation du pouvoir présidentiel est reprise par la suppression de la disposition constitutionnelle qui limite le mandat présidentiel à deux.

De telles réformes constitutionnelles personnelles, permettant à un président de se présenter aux élections présidentielles plus de deux fois comme cela s'est produit au Cameroun, au Tchad, en Côte d'Ivoire, en Guinée Conakry, en République de Djibouti, des crises politiques surgissent. L'opposition politique, la diaspora et la société civile manifestent contre ces réformes qui, au lieu d'apaiser les tensions dans des sociétés aussi complexes, soumises à la pression d'entreprises occidentales et asiatiques telles que le FMI, la Banque mondiale et l'Organisation mondiale du commerce, ai été fouetté. Il ne s'agissait pas de réformes visant à renforcer les processus de changement, par exemple en donnant plus de participation aux citoyens, en respectant les processus électoraux. Les gouvernements ont opté pour la répression. La répression est redevenue une manière de gouverner le pays et la société. A la tête de ces gouvernements, il y a des présidents au

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<sup>1</sup> C'est le premier pays qui a connu une méthode aussi douteuse, la conférence nationale, qui a réuni tous les acteurs actifs de la nation pour sortir d'une crise socio-économique et politique. Il est présenté comme un modèle de transition pour les autres pays subsahariens. Le Mali a suivi cette forme de changement. Il a réussi à installer un régime libéral de 1991 jusqu'au coup d'État de 2012.

pouvoir depuis plus de 15, 20 ou 30 ans comme le Président du Cameroun, Paul Biya (élu en 1982). Mais pourraient-ils continuer à régner avec violence ? Non, car la violence use une élite dirigeante.

Face au dilemme, ouvrir le régime ou le poursuivre dans la violence, l'élite dirigeante a opté pour le dialogue. Et du coup comme un effet de mode, dans plusieurs pays d'expression francophone il y a l'organisation de dialogues. Il n'y a pas de dialogue dans tous les pays africains. Il semble que ce soit une exclusivité de la partie francophone. Il n'y a pas une organisation de dialogue par les pouvoirs dans les pays anglophones et lusophones.

Mais est-ce un dialogue ou une action de communication?

### **Dialogue ou une action de communication**

Si le dialogue est un moyen noble de relations sociales apaisées, son recours en période de crise socio-politique par un régime autoritaire soulève de nombreuses questions. En effet, les présidents prennent l'initiative en convoquant un dialogue à un moment de crise grave, qui affecte le fonctionnement des institutions (cas du Bénin), l'intégrité territoriale (cas du Cameroun) ou les difficultés à faire face à la dégradation de la situation socio-économique et l'instabilité politique (cas du Mali) avec ses impacts sur l'économie nationale.

Convoqués par les présidents, les dialogues constituent un acte de leur pouvoir en tant que chef de l'État, chef des armées et, dans de nombreux cas, chef du gouvernement. Les demandes de l'opposition de réfléchir à une sortie de crise dans le pays et dans la société sont rejetées par le gouvernement et le parti ou la coalition présidentielle. Accepter une telle proposition, c'est « perdre » sa légitimité et son contrôle sur la vie socio-politique du pays.

Un dialogue s'organise ou ce qu'on pourrait appeler qui se déroule dans la plupart des cas dans des pays dirigés par des présidents autoritaires,

qui sont au pouvoir depuis plus de 20 ans. Rarement dans les pays dirigés par des présidents récemment arrivés au pouvoir comme Mehmete Idriss Déby, fils du défunt président du Tchad, Idriss Déby Itno.

Pour obtenir une analyse, il convient d'étudier la situation de 3 pays : le Cameroun, le Tchad et la Guinée Conakry. Ce sont trois contextes différents, mais ils ont en commun la nature de leurs régimes. Ils sont autoritaires, dont la gouvernance est basée sur la violence et la répression contre l'opposition et la population. Les présidents n'ont pas été élus dans le cadre d'un processus électoral libre et transparent.

Au Cameroun, l'une des causes du dialogue est la grave crise économique, la rébellion et l'intention de séparer les zones anglophones du pays en Sud-Ouest et Nord-Ouest, représentant environ 20 % de la population nationale. Après le rejet par le gouvernement de toute négociation avec les séparatistes, ils ont «créé» la République d'Ambozonie, en s'appuyant sur une rébellion armée, ils ont affronté l'Armée nationale. Plus de 3 000 personnes sont mortes, grièvement blessées, des milliers de personnes, de familles déplacées, de filles ou de celles qui n'ont pas pu continuer leurs études. Paul Biya gouverne le pays depuis novembre 1982. Il a été le seul candidat aux élections présidentielles de 1984 et 1988. Comme d'autres dirigeants d'Afrique francophone, il a accepté l'organisation d'élections présidentielles pluralistes, mais sans penser à les perdre. Il a été élu en 1992, 1997, 2004, 2011, 2018. Il est au pouvoir depuis 39 ans et n'a pas l'intention de le quitter<sup>2</sup>. Il a 88 ans. Opposé à toute réponse aux résultats électoraux. Utilisant les forces militaires et la répression, les auteurs de la réponse finissent en prison comme le dernier opposant, Maurice Kamto, professeur de droit public, était leur ministre délégué à la Justice avant de

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Biya a été élu, avec le soutien du gouvernement français, président en 1982 pour remplacer le premier président du Cameroun indépendant. Il est le deuxième président le plus ancien du continent africain après le président équato-guinéen. Avec la violence et les fraudes électorales, institutionnalisées, il reste au pouvoir.

passer dans l'opposition et de créer son parti politique, le Mouvement de la Renaissance camerounaise. Ce fut une grande surprise pour la population qu'un régime autoritaire décide d'ouvrir un dialogue. Mais elle n'attend pas non plus grand-chose d'une mise en scène.

La Guinée Conakry, où il y a eu un coup d'État le 5 septembre 2021, est un pays où les interventions des militaires ont marqué la vie politique et sociale depuis 1984. Le deuxième président civil, élu, est le président récemment évincé, Alpha Condé. Il était un opposant<sup>3</sup> de tous les présidents depuis les années 1960. Il a vécu en exil en France. Il a été élu lors d'une présidentielle serrée en 2010 avec 52,5% des voix au second tour face à Cellou Dalein Diallo, ancien Premier ministre. C'était son premier mandat. Dans le premier discours du candidat élu, il a affirmé qu'il était «le président du changement pour le bien de tous, de la réconciliation nationale et du progrès pour tous». En 2015, selon la Cour constitutionnelle, il a remporté les élections au premier tour avec 57,84 % des voix contre 31,45 % pour son adversaire Cellou Dalein Diallo. Comme d'autres dirigeants d'Afrique subsaharienne, Alpha Condé a succombé à la tentation de modifier la constitution pour briguer un troisième mandat. Tout commence par le contrôle de la date d'organisation des élections législatives, qui devraient avoir lieu en septembre 2019; sa date a été repoussée à plusieurs reprises. La stratégie politique était d'obtenir un parlement contrôlé par son parti. Pour la modification de la constitution, il a choisi l'option référentielle au lieu de passer par la voie parlementaire. Comme d'autres oppositions et sociétés civiles, celles de Guinée Conakry ont rejeté cette modification. L'opposition et la société civile ont créé le Mouvement du Front national pour la défense de la Constitution (MFNDC). En octobre 2020, après avoir

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<sup>3</sup> Il était un opposant à tous les régimes de son pays. Il s'est exilé en France depuis les années 1960. Sa victoire aux élections présidentielles de 2010 a marqué le pays comme étant la première victoire électorale. Il est le deuxième civil à diriger le pays après le premier président.

adopté, il se présente pour la troisième fois aux élections présidentielles. Sans surprise il a gagné, mais le même adversaire lors des deux dernières élections a été proclamé vainqueur sans attendre l'annonce des résultats par les instances habilitées. Des milliers de personnes sont descendues dans la rue pour soutenir le discours de l'opposition. Celui-ci a été arrêté à son domicile. Dans ce pays, après l'annonce des résultats, il y a toujours des affrontements entre les forces de sécurité et les manifestants et leaders de l'opposition.

Trois élections marquées par des tensions politiques, l'arrestation et la mort de manifestants, des leaders de l'opposition arrêtés en prison, des journalistes de la presse indépendante ont également subi cette répression. Le président surprend l'opinion publique et en partie l'opposition en adoptant un décret instaurant un dialogue institutionnel, politique et social. Plus qu'un dialogue, c'est une plateforme d'échanges pour organiser des plénières thématiques.

Au Tchad, nous nous trouvons dans la situation sociopolitique du Cameroun (une longue dictature) et de la Guinée Conakry (les coups d'état). La vie politique est marquée par plusieurs interventions de l'armée en 1975, 1982 et 1990 et plusieurs tentatives de coup d'État. Idriss Déby Itno<sup>4</sup> est le président qui a régné pendant plus de 30 ans après le coup d'État qui l'a porté au pouvoir avec la complicité des services secrets français. Ces services et l'armée française stationnée dans le pays l'ont soutenu face aux rébellions armées. «Votre pays a été une pièce maîtresse dans la lutte contre ce qu'on a appelé la guerre contre le terrorisme au Sahel et au Sahara par les pays occidentaux et notamment la France, un ancien potentiel colonial». Le dialogue aura lieu en novembre et décembre 2021.

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<sup>4</sup> Idriss Déby Itno est arrivé au pouvoir lors d'un coup d'État en 1990, soutenu par la France, une ancienne puissance coloniale. Il l'a soutenu militairement contre les rebelles. Il a dirigé son pays d'une main de fer, réprimant l'opposition. Le front contre une rébellion est mort en avril 2021.

Concernant les deux autres pays, le débat tourne autour de la composition et de la direction du comité d'organisation. C'est un contexte différent, au gouvernement présidé par un jeune général de 37 ans, qui dirige le pays depuis avril 2021. Sa composition est à majorité militaire. Un Premier ministre civil a été nommé. Pressions extérieures ou relations publiques, le général Mahamat Idriss Déby, a confié au gouvernement l'organisation d'un dialogue national ouvert à tous, y compris aux mouvements politico-militaires.

La différence entre un dialogue et un spectacle réside dans le sérieux des dirigeants du pays. La gestion d'un pays doit prévenir les situations. Un dialogue est possible lorsqu'il y a respect du cadre constitutionnel, par exemple en évitant de manipuler la loi suprême et en respectant les droits civils, humains et politiques des citoyens sans oublier les droits de l'opposition politique, dont l'un est la participation sans pression sur la vie politique et sociale du pays.

Cependant, un spectacle pourrait être la performance surprise, l'absence de consensus entre le pouvoir, l'opposition et les acteurs de la société civile. Le spectacle est destiné à l'extérieur, car un acte de relations publiques. Le spectacle donne ce que l'on peut dire un dialogue sous pression extérieure.

### **Une rencontré organisée sous la pression extérieure**

Comme dans les années 90, il faut souligner la pression de l'étranger, et en particulier de la France. Loada, Augustin; Wheatley, Jonathan (1997 : 17) affirment que «les acteurs de ces processus (de changement de régime) ne sont pas seulement internes. Ils sont aussi externes». Les dialogues se déroulent dans les anciennes colonies de ce pays, qui a encore une forte influence sur les économies et l'élite politique de ces pays. Ce n'est le cas ni dans les pays anglophones ni dans les pays lusophones. Les dialogues, qui ont lieu dans certains pays francophones, ne sont-ils pas une autre farce aux citoyens par une élite gouvernante, qui se recompose comme dans

les années 1990 où la fameuse expression «transition à la démocratie», chère à beaucoup d'africanistes (Francis Akindès, 1996; Loada, Augustin; Wheatley, Jonathan, 1997 ; Jean-Pascal Daloz, Patrick Quantin, 1997), lui a servi d'alibi. Le gouvernement français, qu'il soit de droite ou de gauche, réagit aux coups, réclamant la volonté de dialogue, réitérant sa condamnation du recours à toute forme de violence. Quel beau langage diplomatique ! L'homme de la rue parle d'une hypocrisie de la diplomatie française. Ce pays est à la fois un pyromane, soutenant les dictateurs, sans critiquer la violation flagrante des droits de l'homme, et un pompier, qui les incite à organiser des dialogues pour détourner les vrais problèmes socio-économiques de ces pays.

Selon divers analystes de la vie politique du Cameroun, c'est sur la pression de la France, ancienne puissance coloniale, que le président Biya organise ce qu'il a appelé un «grand dialogue national» le 10 septembre 2019, dont les objectifs, selon lui, seraient: «d'examiner les voies et moyens de répondre aux aspirations profondes des populations du Nord-Ouest et du Sud-Ouest, mais aussi des autres composantes de notre Nation». Le dialogue a été présidé par le Premier ministre comme en Guinée Conakry. Mais en Guinée Conakry, le secrétariat permanent de la plateforme comprend deux représentants de l'opposition, deux personnalités de la majorité, et des représentants de la société civile et du gouvernement. Au Tchad, il s'agit d'un dialogue inclusif, plus que dans les deux autres pays, des organisations de la société comme celle-ci y participent. Il y avait des doutes sur l'efficacité de cette plateforme, car le secrétariat n'était pas indépendant. Au Cameroun, les dirigeants des régions anglo-saxonnes n'ont pas pu participer, certains étaient dans les prisons du pays, d'autres en exil. Si pour les partis au pouvoir et d'opposition, en attente d'accéder au pouvoir suprême, ils ont exprimé leur soutien, pour Herman Bah, un leader ambazonien en exil était «ce monologue a été un acte de relations publiques». L'opposant Maurice Kamto a été libéré sous la pression du gouvernement français. Dans le cas guinéen, l'illustration de

l'intervention française était une lettre envoyée au président guinéen. Le président français Emmanuel Macron a appelé à la réconciliation comme l'une des tâches du troisième mandat du leader réélu, Alpha Condé.

Au Tchad, la pression du gouvernement français a poussé le jeune président du Conseil militaire de transition à s'organiser un dialogue. Le gouvernement français n'a pas condamné la prise du pouvoir par le fils du défunt président. La prise de pouvoir par un fils de l'ex président a entraîné des manifestations, de protestations dans les rues de la capitale. Face au rejet de l'opposition et des organisations de la société civile, le gouvernement militaire a réprimé les manifestants violemment. Les forces de sécurité et de l'armée tchadiennes ont utilisé la violence contre des citoyens demandant le respect de la constitution. La France a conseillé au nouveau gouvernement d'ouvrir un dialogue. L'illustration de l'intervention française pourrait être le discours du président du Conseil militaire de transition, qui a dit d'un soutien massif des alliés à une stabilisation économique durement touchée par un contexte sécuritaire au profit des intérêts français.

Mais ce dialogue ou cette diversion de l'élite dirigeante n'est pas le seul fait des pays dirigés par des régimes dictatoriaux et/ou de monarchies dirigeantes. C'est aussi un fait qu'on trouve, certes rarement dans des pays où l'alternance au sommet de l'Etat se passe sans grandes difficultés comme au Sénégal ; même si dans ces deux dernières décennies, l'alternance soulève les acteurs de la société civile. On note aussi le retour à une pratique politique, celle de la domination du Parti Socialiste ou d'un homme politique. L'éternel opposant, dirigeant du principal parti de l'opposition, le Parti Démocratique Sénégalais d'Abdoulaye Wade a participé des gouvernements d'unité nationale.

Après sa victoire en 2019 pour un second mandat, l'actuel président Macky Sall a organisé un dialogue national dans un contexte de fortes tensions politiques. En effet, l'ancien maire de Dakar, Khalifa Sall, a été

jugé dans une affaire de corruption et emprisonné; ce qui ne lui a pas permis de se présenter aux élections présidentielles. Un ancien ministre, fils du président Abdoulaye Wade, Karim Wade, il a été poursuivi pour détournement de fonds publics. Après sa peine de prison, il s'est exilé dans un pays, devenant ainsi un exilé politique. L'opposition a en outre rejeté la légitimité de la victoire du président sortant. Mais c'est le troisième homme de cette élection, Ousman Sonko, qui a manifesté son opposition au dialogue, considérant une «mise en scène».

L'autre pays où on assiste à un déclin de l'image positive qu'il a donné au continent noir dans les années 1990 est le Bénin. Avec l'élection d'un entrepreneur, le consensus politique est rompu. Mu sans doute pour un développement socioéconomique, le quatrième président, Patrice Talon, a introduit une forme d'autoritarisme sur l'action et dans le jeu politique. Des hommes politiques se sont exilés comme l'ancien président Yayi Boni, qui l'a précédé à la tête du pays. Dans un pays divisé, la dernière élection présidentielle, dont les candidats ayant du poids politique n'ont pu se présenter, la voie pour un deuxième mandat était «libre», ce qui a rendu cette élection comme une mascarade; une élection très contestée par l'opposition politique et la société civile. Elu dès le premier tour, comme on dit en Afrique de l'Ouest, «coup ko » avec 85% des suffrages exprimés, c'est dans un contexte sociopolitique tendu que le président lance ce qu'il a appelé un «dialogue politique» pour «résoudre des problèmes spécifiques et purement politiques. Ce dialogue ne postule pas qu'on débattenne de ces questions devant la nation et que tout le monde s'y invite. La politique et les réajustements politiques ne sont pas l'affaire de la société civile ni du clergé» selon, Alain Orounla, l'ex ministre de la Communication.

S'il n'est pas sous pression pourquoi le pouvoir n'organise-t-il pas de véritables dialogues inclusifs? Et quand il n'est pas organisé sous la pression d'un pays du Nord, l'objectif poursuivi est, selon Moussa

Diop, de «museler l'opposition avec la promesse d'un gouvernement d'union nationale qui cachait des pièges politiques». En réalité, ce type de dialogue-spectacle n'était pas nécessaire si les membres de l'élite dirigeante respectaient la loi fondamentale et une alternance au pouvoir par un système électoral libre et avec une certaine transparence. Pouvoir et opposition jouent les rôles qui leur correspondent: diriger le pays et critiquer, informer les citoyens et proposer un autre programme à l'électorat. Moussa Diop affirme assez juste que «s'il est correctement géré, le dialogue pourrait entraîner d'importantes réformes textuelles et institutionnelles, notamment en ce qui concerne le code électoral, les exigences de la candidature à la présidence de la République, le renforcement du statut de l'opposition et de son chef, le rôle et la place des partis politiques dans le processus électoral, le fonctionnement des institutions de l'État, la place et le statut du ministre de l'Intérieur qui est le responsable de l'organisation des élections».

Pour sa part, Maurille Sètondji Quenum (2016) affirme avec raison que «dans la plupart des pays, l'appel au dialogue politique n'intervient souvent que comme la solution ultime à une «apocalypse sociopolitique» imminente ou avérée». La principale raison de l'organisation de dialogue dans les pays, cités dans l'article, est en effet suite à une tension sociopolitique ; qui pourrait être évitée.

La forme qu'adoptent les régimes africains pour organiser le système politique, les règles du jeu politique pose leur nature qui, selon Marie-Louis Eteki Otabela (19), est autoritaire. Peuvent-ils réussir un dialogue franc ? Comme observe Maurille Sètondji Quenum «dans les conditions actuelles, il est peu probable que les dialogues politiques aient un sens réel et aboutissent à une résolution pérenne des crises qui se multiplient sur le continent».

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# Editorial Norms

## Editorial Norms

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