Introduction

Political and Institutional Change in Africa: An Analysis of Innovations in Economic Development Strategy since the Period of Independence

Many different development strategies have been implemented in African states[1] since the independence period (Austin 2000; Ndulu et al. 2008; Heilbrunn 2009; Signé 2011, 2013a). African countries have shifted from a strategy based on the state as the main player in development to one of regional economic integration, represented by the Organization of African Unity's 1980 Lagos Plan of Action. This project for self-reliant socio-economic development arose as states across the continent began gradually withdrawing from the economic and social arenas – a withdrawal orchestrated by international financial institutions (Toye 1994; van de Walle 2001; Sindzingre 2009).

The initial purpose of the state's withdrawal during the 1980s was to lessen macroeconomic and structural imbalances by reorganizing and reducing the role of public institutions – public administrations and state-run enterprises – in the economic and social spheres (World Bank 1987, 1994; Toye 1994; van de Walle 2001; Moss 2007).

At the beginning of the 1990s, development strategies underwent new changes. This phase was marked by the state's continuing disengagement, carried out through administrative, structural, and sectoral reforms, although the reduction of its role in the economic sphere was now accompanied by social protection measures (Cling, Razafindrakoto, and Roubaud 2003).

During the 2000s, many governments developed *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* (PRSPs), which laid out economic and social policies, institutions, and programs with the aim of achieving development through economic growth and poverty reduction (IMF 2005; Burkina Faso 2000; Benin

[1] When I speak of Africa here, I mean sub-Saharan Africa and the forty-eight countries that comprise it – excluding the newborn South Sudan for data-related and historical reasons.

2002; Cameroon 2003; Congo 2007; Ivory Coast 2008; Mali, 2002; Niger 2002; Senegal 2002; Togo 2008). These more recent strategies signal a return to a more significant role for public institutions in promoting economic and, above all, social development.

In 2001, the emergence of *The New Partnership for Africa's Development* also marked a return to continent-wide development strategies (NEPAD 2001). NEPAD's objective is to integrate Africa into processes of globalization "in a beneficial way," as well as to assist in its political and economic development and to eradicate poverty. With this project, states appear to give up, or at least to share with NEPAD, the role of creating and implementing their own development strategies. The African presidents who initiated NEPAD considered it both an endogenous project and an entirely new kind of development strategy (NEPAD 2001).

Such a claim to "innovative" strategies by development actors is not new. African leaders used similar language when they created the Lagos Plan of Action, and this initiative had certain development objectives in common with those found in the 2001 NEPAD document: in particular, Africa's economic integration at the continental and global levels. The World Bank and certain international actors also referred to innovation when the Berg Report was adopted (Berg and Whitaker 1990) and when several African countries adopted structural adjustment programs in the 1980s. The same was true of the PRSPs at the end of the 1990s (Cling, Razafindrakoto, and Roubaud 2003).

Thus, we may observe that both African and international development actors have regularly invoked innovation in describing their development strategies.

At this point, it is important to clarify that although leaders, activists, and various actors have used the term "innovation" to designate a change in the content of development strategies (Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart 1987; Group of Eight 2002; L'Écuyer 2002; Nkoyokm 2002), my analysis proposes an enlarged definition of innovation. Here, innovation in development strategy refers not only to changes in the content of development policy; it relates above all to the manner in which these changes in content emerge and are transformed, regardless of whether they are modest or radical (Thelen 2000, 2003, 2004; Pierson 2000, 2004; Apter 1987; Alston, Eggertsson, and North 1996; Collier and Collier 1991). The understanding of innovation presented here thus fits within the view of institutional innovation advanced by Eric Schickler (2001) in his analysis of the American Congress.[2] Schickler was

[2] Schickler's work (2001) is highly relevant for researchers interested in the question of institutional and political innovation. Beyond questions of content, he focuses his analysis on the process by which these innovations emerge, a perspective I also take.

the first to conceptualize the idea of layering – later taken up by Kathleen Thelen – writing that "congressional development is disjointed in that members incrementally add new institutional mechanisms without dismantling preexisting institutions and without rationalizing the structure as a whole" (Schickler 2001, 17–18).

The present work conceptualizes innovation in this tradition, focusing not only on content but also on processes. In addition, to follow Schickler again, innovations do not necessarily imply an immediate and radical change of earlier institutions. They can also occur through the addition of new institutions and policies that may imply great changes or broader innovations. This is Schickler's concept of layering, to which Thelen (2003) adds the notion of institutional conversion in order to explain innovations within a structured context. I build on these notions and supplement them with new theoretical and conceptual developments that will make it possible to better grasp the empirical reality, within a more clearly defined epistemological and ontological perspective. I call the notions I will be using here "institutional intrusion" and "institutional inclusion," and they account for the relationship between the ideational, strategic, and structural aspects of the innovations observed.[3]

However, we must note that Schickler uses the concept of institutional innovation as a synonym for institutional change. For example, he maintains that "any institutional change that promotes one interest is likely to affect other interests that some members find important" (Schickler 2001, 12). Shortly thereafter, he uses the term "innovation" in the place of "change" when he states that "the 'unintended effects' of an institutional innovation often derive not from the failure of members seeking a single goal to anticipate the consequences of their actions, but rather from the tensions among the multiple interests that produce the change in question" (Schickler 2001, 13). Schickler bases his explanation of institutional innovation or change on four postulates, which express his understanding of innovation:

Claim 1: Multiple collective interests typically shape each important change in congressional institutions (12).
Claim 2: Entrepreneurial members build support for reform by framing proposals that appeal to groups motivated by different interests (14).
Claim 3: Congressional institutions typically develop through an accumulation of innovations inspired by competing motives, which engenders a tense layering of new arrangements on top of preexisting structures (15).

[3] These concepts are discussed in depth in Chapters 2, 4, and 5, as well as in the Conclusion.

Claim 4: Adoption of a series of changes intended to promote one type of interest will typically provoke contradictory changes that promote competing interests (16). (Schickler 2001, 12–16)

The concept of political or institutional innovation used in this book is inspired by Schickler's conception, in particular as it relates to processes of change.

The issue of innovation, especially in terms of content, remained at the heart of political actions taken in the last quarter of the twentieth century, as various strategies were pursued in order to encourage economic growth and development in Africa, always with mixed results.[4] Authors have seen innovation in normative terms, using the concept to discuss the probability that a development strategy would succeed or fail, as well as to draw attention to the need to support or reject proposed solutions. The fact that innovation has almost always been approached normatively raises a few questions: can the various strategies presented above be considered political innovations, not in terms of their content or their success (a normative perspective), but as new forms by which development strategies in Africa emerge (which means taking an interest in processes)? What are the principal factors that allow us to classify, explain, and describe the observed phenomena as innovations? Is it possible to establish a relationship between the modes by which strategies emerge, their content, and their implementation?

Before beginning to suggest ways of answering these questions, I should note the relevance of such inquiries. Indeed, March considers that "most change in organizations results neither from extraordinary organizational processes or forces, nor from uncommon imagination, persistence, or skill, but from relatively stable, routine processes that relate organizations to their environments" (March 1981, 564).

Peter Hall includes the dimension of ideas in change. He identifies three levels of changes: the routine adaptation of already established policy instruments, the replacement of established policy instruments, and paradigm shifts that incorporate a change in how problems and solutions are understood. Paradigm change is the most radical, and it occurs intentionally after a process of learning and power struggle:

[4] Among the measures that have been put into place, we may include structural adjustment programs, the adaptation of these programs through the addition of new policies, poverty reduction strategy papers, and the New Partnership for African Development. Various authors have analyzed the different phases of these measures (Cling et al. 2003; Latouche 1998; Ela 1998; World Bank 2000; Kabou 1991).

> The movement from one paradigm to another that characterizes third order change is likely to involve the accumulation of anomalies, experimentation with new forms of policy, and policy failures that precipitate a shift in the locus of authority over policy and initiate a wider contest between competing paradigms . . . It will end only when the supporters of a new paradigm secure positions of authority over policy-making and are able to rearrange the organization and standard operating procedures of the policy process so as to institutionalize a new paradigm. (Hall 1993, 280–81)

Chapter 1 examines the ways in which Hall's concepts help us to understand innovations in economic development strategy. My goal in underscoring this contribution is to emphasize that this project is not the only one to focus on processes of innovation and political change in the short, medium, and long terms – processes that cannot be reduced to a simple change in content nor be confused with improving the efficiency of the policies that result from change.[5]

In order to answer the questions I raised above, I intend to demonstrate that behind the apparent continuity observed in development strategies at the normative level (since the problems of Africa persist), there have been innovations at the level of processes. I propose explaining this innovation through four variables: ideas, interests, institutions, and time. Depending on the configuration of these independent variables, it is possible both to explain and to distinguish between international, regional, and national innovations. Rather than choosing one variable and seeking a mono-causal explanation, the idea is to take inspiration from the works of Paul Pierson (1993, 1994, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2003, 2004) and situate development strategies in time. According to Pierson (2004, 6), it is a question not only of showing that time matters, but also of explaining when, where, how, and why.[6] The present work addresses these dimensions – when, where, how and, why – not only regarding the importance of time, but also for the roles of ideas, interests, and institutions. Since the variables are not abstract but concrete, they will be studied both in relation to the actors involved (national, regional, and international actors; see Chapter 2) and on the basis of illustrative cases (country case studies). The theses I propose here are intended to apply to sub-Saharan Africa in general, but nine countries have been selected for the purpose of illustration, in order to make these variables concrete. My choice of cases was motivated by a desire to systematically test

5 Hall (1993, 293) also specifies that a change does not necessarily mean an improvement in efficiency.

6 The concepts proposed by Pierson and others are also reviewed in the theoretical and methodological section.

my model on former French colonies in Africa, although I propose a strategy for extending the model to English-speaking, Portuguese-speaking, and formerly Belgian French-speaking countries. The construction and justification of this sample set are detailed in Chapter 1, which is dedicated to the theoretical and methodological aspects of this study.

I should note here that these countries represent the full range of the criteria used in my analysis. The orientation of their economic policies allows us to distinguish between two general trajectories in the immediate post-indepedence period, although with time these have become relatively similar: countries whose economies were socialist-leaning and not market-oriented (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Congo) and countries whose economies were liberal-leaning or mixed and market-friendly (Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Niger, Togo, Senegal). Additional criteria ensure that this sampling is representative of the characteristics of French-speaking African countries: there are low and middle income countries, oil-producing countries and non-oil-producing countries, countries that are landlocked and poor in natural resources and countries that are landlocked and rich in natural resources, countries that are coastal and poor in natural resources and those that are coastal and rich in resources.[7] Finally, these countries were all former colonies of France and are members of the CFA franc zone.[8]

While these illustrative cases are presented beginning in the literature review in Chapter 1, the real demonstrative interest of these cases is found in Chapters 4 and 5, which are dedicated to ideational and strategic variables, and, to a lesser extent, in Chapter 3, which is dedicated to the variable of time. These empirical examples bring substance to the concepts and theories proposed.

Chapter 1 proposes a literature review of development strategies in Africa, with particular focus on the question of change.

[7] The variables connected to coastal and landlocked countries are inspired by the classification of Ndulu et al. (2008).

[8] The CFA franc zone includes French-speaking African countries that benefit from a conversion guarantee between the CFA franc and the French Treasury (now tied to the euro). Since the foreign exchange reserve is centralized at the French Treasury and monetary and economic relations between France and CFA franc zone countries are privileged, France has often sought to influence the nature of certain measures recommended by international financial institutions (IFIs) to African countries, including structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and the devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994 (Azam 1997). However, this book is principally interested in the role of international actors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and less in that of countries such as France.

Chapter 2 develops the theoretical framework and methodology used for my demonstration. It defines the contours of the variables used (ideas, interests, institutions, and time) in explaining change from the point of view of political and institutional innovation, and it clarifies my hypotheses and the concepts used.

Chapter 3 explores the role of time in explaining innovation, while Chapter 4 focuses mainly on the role of ideas in explaining the phenomena observed in Africa.

Chapter 5 discusses questions of interests and institutions, in particular the convergence and divergence of interests and strategies between national, regional, and international actors according to period and to the stakes and goals of economic development strategies.

Chapter 6 proposes a synthesis of the conclusions drawn from this study of innovation in development strategy in Africa. Hence, it identifies ideas, interests, institutions, and temporal contexts and explains each innovation by specifying the role played by national, regional, and international actors. By empirically testing the hypotheses that emerge from my theoretical and methodological model, it is possible to adjust existing theories and concepts and to develop more precise tools for analyzing change and, in particular, political and institutional innovation.

In the book's conclusion, I emphasize the contribution this research makes to advancing our understanding of change, especially of political and institutional innovation – in Africa in particular and in political science in general – through the use of an ecumenical perspective that includes the fields of public administration and policy, comparative politics, and international relations.