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# Global flows of government practices

Development technologies and their effects

*Kelly Silva*

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## Abstract

This article discusses certain technologies with which government practices are diffused on a global scale and some of the effects of this process. Using Foucault as a main source of inspiration, the circulation of know-how and capital are seen as the principal means by which government practices are irradiated. By analyzing social techniques such as projects, programs, conditionalities, documents, international laws and others, I argue that these are fundamental conduits for devising and reproducing the global order. In a second moment, I approach some of the outcomes of developmental practices in processes of state building and other political dynamics among recipients and donor countries. I stress some of the political, economic and social impacts of local appropriations of development actions. Of these, I emphasize those related to capacity building and what I call the *misrecognition effect*. The final remarks propose an articulated perspective on government practices that are shaped by diverse strategies.

**Keywords:** development, government technologies, globalization, state building, capacity building, misrecognition effect.

## Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo discutir certas tecnologias pelas quais práticas de governo são difundidas em escala global e alguns de seus efeitos. Tomando Foucault como principal fonte de inspiração, sugere-se que fluxos de capital e *know-how* são os principais meios pelos quais práticas de governo são irradiadas. Ao analisar técnicas sociais como programas, projetos, conditionalidades, documentos, leis internacionais, entre outros, sugiro que as mesmas são conduítes pelos quais a ordem global é construída e reproduzida. Em um segundo momento, alguns dos impactos das práticas de desenvolvimento em processos de formação de Estado e outras dinâmicas políticas são abordados,

tanto entre os países doadores como recipiendários da AID. Destaco alguns dos impactos políticos, econômicos e sociais derivados das apropriações locais das práticas de desenvolvimento. Entre eles, enfatizo aqueles relacionados à construção de capacidades e o que de denomino *efeito de desconsideração*. Na seção final proponho uma perspectiva articulada a respeito das práticas de governo, que se configuram por meio de diversas estratégias.

**Palavras-chave:** desenvolvimento, tecnologias de governo, globalização, formação do Estado, construção de capacidades, efeito de desconsideração.

# Global flows of government practices: development technologies and their effects<sup>1</sup>

*Kelly Silva*

## Introduction & analytical inspirations

This article discusses certain technologies used to promote government practices on a global scale and some of their effects. I address this phenomenon by analyzing some of the techniques employed in the transnational flows of government practices after World War II. They are evident in the relations between international development cooperation agencies and the state apparatuses of recently independent countries that receive funding from these agencies.<sup>2</sup> I regard these techniques as important tools for global governance (Rosenau 2000). Global governance wields influence via diffuse (Mousse 2005) and polynuclear dynamics (Barros 2011) through the actions of small, medium or large, public and private, local, national and international government and non-government agencies.

I use the notion of government as Foucault (2008) defined it, namely, a particular form of power to manage the diversity that constitutes complex social formations, such as cities, nations, and empires. Government is thus regarded as a form of state power, the main object of which is human populations. It aims to preserve security understood as a certain order of things that can be predicted and controlled toward given ends. For Foucault, legal systems, disciplinary mechanisms, and security devices are fundamental

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1 This article is an outcome of the research project *Models and their Effects on Development Paths: An ethnographic and comparative approach to knowledge transmission and livelihoods strategies*, funded by the European Union under grant agreement number 225670. I am grateful to Gustavo Lins Ribeiro, Flávia Lessa de Barros, Daniel Simião, Gonzalo Díaz Crovetto, Taís Sandrim Julião, and Sandro Almeida for their comments to previous drafts of this article. This article also results from the research line under my direction entitled *Processes of Invention, Transposition and Subversion of Modernities in Timor-Leste*, supported by the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) under grants 401609/2010-3, 201269/2011-2 and 308500/2009-1.

2 We must bear in mind that the dynamics of state formation in the twentieth century do not respond to the same conditions as those of European state configurations, such as wars and international strife (Herbst 1990). The non-intervention principle, connected to international and local interests, permits the reproduction of fragile state structures that are not swallowed by strong states, often put at the service of the donors' interests.

sources of power. They manifest themselves in power apparatuses (institutions, laws, public policies), systems of knowledge (which have their own forms of data production and diffusion), and morality (values) that make up new kinds of subjectivity (Foucault 2008). I look at state and other social control institutions from a defunctionalized and deinstitutionalized perspective (Foucault 2008: 157) to grasp the underground flows and intertwining knots that both constrain and contribute to shaping the state. I am also interested in identifying the predicted and unpredicted effects of such flows and their multiple dimensions.

I understand the flows of government practices to be products of medium- and long-term historical processes (Elias 1972) related to the expansion of the capitalist system, which required the control of human populations and territories (Foucault 2008). Until the end of World War II, colonially promoted flows were crucial for the constitution and circulation of modes of government. After the war, this role was transferred to international cooperation for development on a global scale. The international cooperation post-war institutionalization resulted from institutions, knowledge, and values created by European colonization (Escobar 1988; Mitchell 2002).<sup>3</sup> Promoting development was the argument that justified drawing up and introducing government forms and strategies in different contexts. For this reason, the term *development* will be used here as a political mover, which has been appropriated by a number of agents in many contested fields to legitimize a variety of practices.

The analysis that follows focuses primarily on the official practices of technical assistance/cooperation for international development (AID) applied by bilateral or multilateral government agencies to recently independent countries that rely on international funding. My assumption is that these practices have been highly significant for state building in these countries. I choose official technical cooperation for development as my object of analysis because it is the articulating political force of the contemporary world system, of globalization (Mosse 2005; Ong & Collier 2010), which imposes upon developing countries a specific association with hegemonic power centers (Escobar 1988; Montúfar 2001).

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3 Experiments advanced by these practices were central to negotiating and training in several government techniques, and then applied to a variety of spaces. Among these, I point out the relevance of the bonds between private capitalist exploitation and colonial states, knowledge production, and colonial identity policies.

Montúfar (2001) suggests we should examine how AID articulates three elements: 1) the donors' interests; 2) the organizational structures that circulate resources; and 3) development ideas and models. The discussions that follow focus on the second dimension. They emphasize the importance of social management techniques, such as international development programs and projects, in building the global order. Excluded from the present analysis are forms of political-military and regional economic integration alliances, such as the European Union and Mercosul, although I am aware they operate jointly with AID.

The state is yet another category that deserves a preliminary comment. I follow Barkey and Parikh (1991: 524) who qualify it as “an administrative apparatus where administration means the extraction of resources, control and coercion and maintenance of the political, legal and normative order in society.” Unlike substantive notions about the state, I regard it as an articulated set of administrative governance techniques, once again inspired by Foucault.

Specific connections between administrative techniques may result in government models associated with one or another state, or with an international political coalition, recognized as such by certain features. There are, however, political costs for diffusing government practices via models. The process requires a close alignment between the receiving countries and populations with certain packages of social technologies, as happened during the Cold War, which over-politicized the practices of international technical cooperation.<sup>4</sup> It thus seems to me that the international dissemination of modes of government, especially after 1989, most often follows the circulation of state administration techniques in a relatively fragmentary way. The emphasis on the administrative and technical components contributes to the depoliticization effect, so common in the realm of international cooperation for development (Ribeiro1991; Ferguson 1994; Olivier de Sardan 2005).

The present analysis is an outcome of my dialogue with a literature inspired in history and ethnography, and from my research on state-building in East Timor. I have organized the article into two parts. In the first, I address general aspects of the contemporary developmentalist configuration

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4 Government technologies used in economic management have been favorite diacritics in the social sciences for drawing up typologies of the state, such as liberal, neoliberal, socialist, welfare, etc. This, however, is just one possible criterion for discussing state profiles, since the economy is a dimension of social action produced by the activities of other government devices, such as law.

(Olivier de Sardan 2005) and the typical ways used to disseminate government practices through the circulation of know-how, technologies and capital. By analyzing social techniques such as projects, programs, conditionalities, documents, international law, and others, I argue that these are fundamental conduits for establishing a global order. In the second part, I discuss some of the effects of development practices on state-building processes, and of other political dynamics on both donor and receiving countries. I stress some of the political, economic and social impacts derived from their actual appropriations by local actors. Among the implications of the circulation of these development practices, I emphasize those related to capacity building and what I call the *misrecognition effect*. The final remarks propose a comprehensive perspective on government practices that come about through diverse strategies.

## 1 The complex developmentalist configuration

At least since the seventeenth century, the word development has been part of the vocabulary of Western political philosophy and used to refer to the birth of capitalism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and then to its increasing complexity and elective affinities with the growth of urban spaces and migrations (Edelman & Haugerud 2008: 6). But it was only in the mid-twentieth century that this category became an object of knowledge, originating a discursive field. As such, it has been an important political mover. This knowledge-power field (Foucault 1979) produces its own objects of intervention, namely, the underdeveloped (or developing) countries and populations (Escobar 1995). Although the word development evokes social practices for the public good, their materialization in projects and programs, usually attends the interests of private capital, a rendition of the well-known bonds between capitalist exploitation and state formation processes.

As a political mover, *development* has generated a complex institutional tangle, making it difficult to identify its various elements. This institutional complex, with its technologies, is instrumental to global governance, in which legal and moral sensibilities negotiated by transnational elites are diffused among states and their respective populations. According to Ribeiro (2007), this institutional tangle is a power field made up of disputes between development models, in my terms, government practices over populations and territories. This field comprises the cosmopolitan universe of experts,

technicians, field agents and project heads, encompassing national and international institutions, and the projects' target populations that may or may not resist them. In other words, we can consider that the development field is comprised of political and epistemic webs (Haas, 1992; Mosse 2005: 7) through which government practices are disseminated.

To better understand this field, I follow Barros' useful classification (2009: 4) of the various institutions involved in international cooperation for development. She classifies them into four large categories: 1) multilateral cooperation agencies (MA); 2) financing agencies for multilateral cooperation (FAM); 3) bilateral cooperation agencies (BA); and 4) non-governmental cooperation agencies.

Multilateral cooperation agencies include those charged with negotiating moral principles and setting consensual global or regional goals regarding the construction and continuance of the hegemonic global order and promotion of development. Examples of this category are the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS). Financing agencies for cooperation are responsible for supplying funds and establishing conditions for loans and transferences on an international scale to maintain the hegemonic economic order worldwide. These entities are charged with financing development policies led by their member states, as well as drawing up political guidelines for financing development practices on a global or regional scale. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank fit into this category. Bilateral cooperation agencies are the arms of sovereign states to implement development programs and projects in extra-national territories catered to their foreign policy interests. Lastly, international non-governmental cooperation agencies are private entities operating for public purposes that manage funds, programs, and projects.

### **1.1 Modalities of international technical cooperation and assistance**

There is no consensus in the literature about what, strictly speaking, characterizes international technical cooperation (Soares 1994: 168). Indeed, technique is a word denoting the most varied procedures. Above all, it is a means to produce different things and, as such, can be applied to a wide variety of fields and objects. We may regard practices as distinct as financial loans, nuclear technology transfer and capacity building as different faces of international technical cooperation. Following Soares' typology (1994), international



technical cooperation operates by means of: 1) transmission of know-how and technologies (of social and public management and private production); and 2) capital transfer. The kinds of resources transferred by means of international technical cooperation have increased, as the very notion of development has become more complex and new moral and legal regimes erected to anchor practices of global governance.

I discuss below certain typical forms for the transference of expertise, technologies, and capital via international technical cooperation. They should be seen as important conduits of contemporary flows of government modes on a global scale. While making them explicit, I also pinpoint some of their general institutional configurations.

### **Knowledge and technology flows**

Scholarship grants in donor countries, medium- and short-term courses on public management at the local level, training in legal techniques, donation of administrative equipment (such as computers, cars, and furniture), language courses, transference and/or development of public policies and legal projects, and funding foreign experts to act as advisors to national political authorities, are some of the means donor states and other agencies, whether multilateral or bilateral, have used to promote, interfere, and control the processes of institutional building in recently independent countries. As of the 1970s, this set of practices has also been called “capacity building.”

Legislative techniques and other government tools – among which are education, planning, and punishing practices – have been crucial in the *repertoire* of resources that are transferred via international cooperation. These transferences depend on various funding sources.

International patent regimes, as well as industrial property rights and trademark rights are essential for the expansion of capitalism and practices of global governance and have direct implications for the democratization of access and diffusion of a variety of technologies necessary to promote development on its many fronts. Soares (1994: 186) identifies a trend on the part of the industrialized countries to replace the profits obtained from indirect circulation of technology in the international market (when incorporated in trade goods) by the trade of the technologies as commodities in themselves. The author calls attention to the semantic polyvalence of the term “transfer”,

which may mean trade, title transfer, or possession transfer.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, he emphasizes the difficulties in the transference of productive technology on an international scale due to the fact that these practices are regulated by contracts signed according to private law, which must be matched to the requirements of public international law that must be compatible with development (Soares 1994: 187).

### Capital Flows

Capital transference for promoting development can also be regarded as a form of technical cooperation via multipurpose financial aid. It may range from increased productive investments to the pursuit of stability in a country's balance of payments. For this purpose, states or private agents may resort to global and regional multilateral agencies (some countries have national institutions for this) specialized in transferring resources for each of the goals, or they may look for support in the private sector, such as banks.

Within the United Nations System, there is a social division of labor between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WB) regarding capital flows. The former is charged with keeping the international financial system stable. The latter is responsible for making capital available, via loans, for investing in production and development growth, including provisions for the infrastructure needed for economic expansion. The constraints imposed by both the WB and the IMF when making loans available are powerful government tools.

It is also important to underline the role of interstate regional organizations with regard to financial cooperation. Soares (1994) classifies these organizations as follows: a) organizations of economic integration for the constitution of common markets, such as the European Economic Community (EEC) and Mercosur; and b) regional financial institutions formed with capital from states of a given region in the world to provide emergency monetary assistance or development promotion, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the European Development Bank (whose role was central in the institutional transition and reconstruction of East European countries, according to Ruggie [1992]).

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5 For an analysis of the various modalities of contract for the transference of productive technologies, see Soares 1994:187-195.

We must also consider support from bilateral agencies for development as providers of financial resources to countries in crisis, or of ordinary investments in development. Private commercial banks are a source of important additional funding for international technical cooperation. They can offer resources to either public or private agents, but under market conditions, regulated by contracts not subjected to state conditions.

## 1.2 Flow conduits

International cooperation has conveyed the transference of know-how, technologies, moralities, and capital through a number of conduits related to each other in a hierarchical arrangement and with different implications. I will discuss some of these conduits, by focusing on projects, programs and conditionalities.

Legal instruments used in international public law, such as treaties, conventions, pacts, declarations and regimes have objectives and provisions that serve as references for a variety of activities in the field of technical cooperation. To adhere to these procedures means to accept their domestic internalization among the signatory parties, which implies, among other things, the reformulation of discourses, laws, and national public policies to comply with the moral and technical precepts inscribed in them (Cortell and Davis 2000). Hence, some programs and projects are drawn up in an attempt to achieve, among other things, domestic internalization of international treaties.

Resources circulating through technical cooperation are regulated by administrative devices known as protocols. Broadly speaking, they outline the objects and purposes of cooperation between the parties involved, which are guided by the donors' strategies for cooperation. Later such purposes and strategies are translated into practical activities within cooperation programs and projects. Programs encompass several projects and are thus more inclusive.

Projects are the elementary units of international technical cooperation. Based on the assumption that social dynamics are coherent, systemic, and possible to grasp and control, projects materialize as a set of actions that are planned and then put into practice, oriented to a specific goal, and which are expected to bring about certain desired effects. They are focused and may or may not be part of more encompassing programs. A project is structured

according to a relatively ideal outlook of the world that does not correspond to reality. Briefly put, Olivier de Sardan (2005) suggests that projects are subjected to several mediations: 1) internal coherence of the technical model that inspires them; 2) compatibility between the project and the national political economy; 3) conformity to the donors' norms; and 4) the project's own internal dynamics.

Broadly speaking, programs are a set of articulated actions put into practice on various fronts, with a synergy toward a specific effect. Certain programs, like the ones target for structural adjustment of national economies imposed by the IMF in the 1990's as condition for the provision of resources, can be considered *global forms*, according to Ong and Collier's (2010:11) definition:

(...) they have a distinctive capacity for decontextualization and recontextualization, abstractability and movements, across diverse social and cultural situations and spheres of life. Global forms are able to assimilate themselves to new environments, to code heterogeneous contexts and objects in terms that are amenable to control and valuation. At the same time, the conditions of possibility of this movement are complex. Global forms are limited or delimited by specific technical infrastructures, administrative apparatuses or value regimes, not by the vagaries of a social or cultural field.

Conceived as techno-scientific established procedures, global forms can be transported and reterritorialized. In international technical cooperation, they can target various realms of social action, from projects for strategic planning techniques – such as ZOO (Zielorientierte Projektplanung, or objectives oriented project planning), which was disseminated worldwide in the 1990s and 2000s by German cooperation agencies – to expertise on electoral management (as currently undertaken by the U.N.). In other cases, the intention is to reorganize relations between the parties that comprise the very idea of society, such as programs for structural adjustment involving the state and civil society. Thus, legal and tributary reforms in labor legislation, cuts in public administration apparatuses and personnel and the flexibilization of conditionalities for capital circulation should help society adjust to the market.

Conditionalities are a set of practices established by donors as requirements for the receivers to engage in international cooperation programs

and projects. They represent one of the most effective tools for the circulation and imposition of government practices worldwide, in so far as the responses to them usually lead to the reconfiguration of local public administrations along the lines of what the donors consider to be good governance. However, there is no consensus as to what good governance really is. Based on the analyses by Nanda (2006) and Dunning (2004), we may conclude that *good governance* is yet another political tool used to justify a wide range of political moves.<sup>6</sup>

As Mosse (2005: 3) and, to some extent, Li (2009) point out, another government technique increasingly used in development cooperation is the selectivity principle. It structures resource provision to states and populations by taking into account the results demonstrated in previously carried out policies. In the course of time, it anticipates the results donors expect from those who receive cooperation resources. Mosse (*idem*) also indicates the consolidation of a new idiom in the field of development based on notions of appropriation and co-responsibility. It is true that these values are at the base of the idea of cooperation. However, we know that many practices carried out in the name of cooperation are in fact knowledge and capital transfers or impositions (which does not exclude subversion). Mosse (2005) suggests that partnership and appropriation ideas are government tools used to commit target populations and states for development purposes conceived by the donors. Moreover, they give donors greater control over their recipients' practices.

The alleged lack of qualified human resources needed to carry out legal

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6 Nanda's analysis of the meanings attributed to good governance among some multilateral institutions shows how they have changed over the time. In the 1980s, for the World Bank Group, it meant the capacity to conduct reforms that fought corruption, nepotism, excessive bureaucracy, and mismanagement. It did not contemplate political issues related to government regimes. As of the 1990s, good governance has become more encompassing, referring to the way in which power and authority are enacted vis-à-vis development, with regard to a country's social and economic resources. Since 2005, the World Bank established new criteria for measuring good governance: accountability, political stability, government efficiency, regulatory quality, rule of law, and corruption control. Under the Washington consensus, good governance for the IMF mainly referred to policies that support austerity, liberalization, privatization and markets, savings, and private investment. Dunning (2004) discusses the role of conditionalities in the dynamics of state configuration in Africa between 1975 and 1997. He suggests that their impact was different in the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. During the former, when the most important consideration was the strategic interests of donors connected to OECD to enlarge their zones of influence, conditions related to the democratization of political regimes were glossed over. When the USSR was dissolved, democratization was emphasized. In the case of Soviet cooperation, Arefieva and Bragina (1991) state that it applied conditionalities only over countries with a clear socialist orientation.

and administrative reforms implemented to meet conditionalities of programs financed by international cooperation have stimulated practices to build skills needed to operate basic technologies involved with international cooperation. Although skill development programs were first organized in the 1970s, it was only in the 1990s that they were reinforced in the institutional culture of technical cooperation agencies (Campos 2002). They are now included in projects for capacity-building activities intended to put competent human resources at the service of the legitimate and sustained reproduction of certain institutional practices. In this context, the very formation of a state bureaucracy is in itself the object of a capacity-building process often carried out by foreign agents. I regard capacity-building practices as very important mechanisms for the diffusion of contemporary government practices, which are thus activated by epistemic communities whose praxis affects the dynamics of state configuration.<sup>7</sup>

We must also emphasize techniques for the production and diffusion of information, such as conferences, seminars, workshops, popular polls, research, reports, project papers, etc. as government practices carried out in the field of development. Considerable portions of resources for development promotion are used in these techniques, which elicits questioning of their results. They have been regarded as important instruments to diffuse systems of classification and production of consensus among transnational elites (Mosse 2005). By means of these techniques, development objects are created and political choices are legitimated (Escobar 1995; Fegurson 1994; Michell 2002; Simião 2007). Considering the hegemony of writing and texts in the field of development, Mosse (2005) underlines the urge to grasp their social life by analyzing them both as epiphenomena of other processes, and as catalysts of new agencies.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the programs, projects, and

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7 Haas (1992) emphasizes the growing influence of international technical cooperation in the decision-making processes of receiving countries. At the basis of his argument is the assumption that any national policy is conceived as being in dialogue with knowledge produced on a global scale. He suggests that international technical cooperation has created an epistemic community that is often called upon to make statements about the most diverse events. This epistemic community results from: 1) a set of normative principles that underlie its rationality and actions; 2) the belief in shared causes as the outcome of previous analyses, serving as the basis for clarifying the possible multiple ties between political actions and desired results; 3) shared notions of validation; 4) a common political agenda. For this author, epistemic communities are channels for the circulation of new ideas from societies to governments, between governments, and between countries.

conditionalities originate other mediations and mediators through which technical cooperation is implemented in different places. Non-governmental organizations and local leadership, among other agents, try to induce specific social scenarios (Holmes & Marcus 2010) that are related to global order building frequently.

## **2 Development practices and state building dynamics**

In this section I discuss the effects of the local and national appropriation of resources deployed by international cooperation for development. Cooperation practices affect receivers differently. Methodologically speaking, we can classify these effects in political, economic, or identity terms. However, due to the feedback that exists between them, they often occur either simultaneously or in close succession, in a domino effect.

Most of the critical literature about developmental practices agrees that the impact of technical cooperation must be evaluated, in the first place, by its side effects, which are rarely made explicit in the list of goals in cooperation projects. Thus, the most important consequences of development policies result from their actual social appropriations. I do not intend to point at direct and generalized causal relations between practices of technical cooperation and processes of state formation. Correlations between them are complex because they depend on historical configurations and specific mediations. One must always be epistemologically on guard to avoid meta-narratives that obstruct understanding that resources circulated by international cooperation have a social life beyond the goals formally ascribed to them. Furthermore, given that the notion of development is continually disputed, cooperation objects and their effects are always shifting.

I have organized the discussion of the role of technical cooperation in the dynamics of state configuration in three parts. The first addresses some of its political, economic, and identity consequences most immediately felt in the structures of receiving states, among which are certain impacts of capacity-building practices. The second focuses on what I call moral exclusion effects while the third residually points out some of the consequences of technical cooperation on donor countries, or on multilateral forums for political negotiation. This division is simply a methodological strategy, for in real life there is a feedback between the material and moral consequences of AID.

## 2.1 Appropriations and consequences of technical cooperation among receiving countries

Analyses resulting from different intellectual traditions about AID have pointed out that the principal beneficiaries of official technical cooperation in recently decolonized countries are local elites and the public administration that encompasses them (Ferguson 1994; Mitchell 2002; Olivier de Sardan 2005; Uvin, 1999; Silva 2012, among others.). In many African and Asian countries, the state is the main source of financial resources and acts as an important mediator to organize the worldwide flow of goods, capital, expertise, and morality. As an example, Mitchell (2002: 241) demonstrates that half the economic aid provided by USAID to Egypt to support the private sector and pluralism between 1985 and 1990 was, in fact, channeled to the national Army. It strengthened the largest state institution, while contributing to the flow of U.S. arms production, since USAID forced Egypt to purchase military equipment from the United States.

Given that international technical cooperation is a field where knowledge yields power, part of its instruments for production and reproduction are its own diagnoses and prognoses. At the base of this field of knowledge is a congratulatory classification system that reflects and projects models of what societies should be like instead of what they really are. As local elites adopt these discourses to legitimize themselves as power holders, they produce one of the fundamental consequences of technical cooperation for development. In fact, discourses generated in this field are often instrumental for creating national narratives that are then used to justify different policies.

Ferguson (1994) shows that international technical cooperation played an important role in the invention of Lesotho as an autonomous polity with an alleged national economy of its own. This was possible thanks to systematic silences. One of the most important of these silences was the omission of Lesotho's dependent relations with South Africa. In international cooperation documents, Lesotho appeared as a traditional, rural country, despite the fact that most of its economy was fed by the flow of resources from the wages of migrants in South African mines. A mere six percent of its Gross National Product came from agriculture. In the same vein, Mitchell (2002) states that to describe Egypt as a country with a disparity between high population growth and a small agricultural area is an important part of the rhetoric used to justify technical cooperation programs. In both cases, transnational



relations are silenced, as are disputes among internal population segments, thus producing facts that become the object of development policies. Among the collateral effects of such rhetoric is the false impression that national economies are discrete social facts.

### **The invention of national economies**

An important consequence of international technical cooperation has been its role in the design of national economies. Since for a long time economic growth was understood to be synonymous with development, a significant part of the resources made available by cooperation were channeled to the so-called “national economy.” The various ways to domesticate and manage it were the basis for the distinction between socialist and capitalist government models.

However, we have long known that what is now called the economy – the sum of the financial exchanges in a certain space – is a social product that involves exclusionary strategies and a wide variety of norms. Mitchell (2002) reminds us that laws, property rights, administrative law, international conventions, and government policies are all conditions for the existence of an economy as a relatively autonomous field. Hence, economic structuring requires practices that are not limited to trade regulations, but to several other government techniques. This being so, I propose we ponder the emergence of national economies by discussing certain extra economic facts (known in present-day economic thinking as externalities) that have had strong influence over the constitution of these economies, particularly relating to the configuration of national states and their connections to international cooperation.

Many post-colonial states founded after 1945 faced the administrative challenge of nationalizing their economies. In fact, this challenge accompanied every process of national formation. We should first recognize that post-colonial government structures were not built in a void. They resulted from a dialogue with the colonial government practices and institutions that came before them, and with the networks that interlinked imperial economies. For instance, Robinson (2009) suggests that one of Sukarno’s major goals for post-independence Indonesia was to create a relatively autonomous national economy. It was thus necessary to dismantle the colonial economic structure and stimulate the growth of new socio-economic forces. This meant replacing the former export-based model with an industrialized and self-sufficient

economy rooted in the domestic market. He nationalized banks, made basic infrastructure services available, invested in essential industrial plants, and dissolved Dutch control over the import-export trade system (Sandrim 2010: 33).

Mamdani (1998) categorizes the positions of certain post-colonial states regarding colonial heritage as conservative or radical. Conservative positions adjusted the new order to the colonial legacy through reforms and the adaptation of existing precepts. In turn, radical responses opted for a break with the colonial order. Given that the various administrative models in colonial states were mainly geared toward capitalist expansion and exploitation, all the new states that adhered to a socialist regime adopted a radical position. At any rate, official international technical cooperation played a fundamental role in this process, regardless of the positions taken by the elites responsible for the institutional building of new states and their national economies.

As I pointed out above, international cooperation controls its so-called beneficiaries by means of conditionalities, programs, and projects supported by diagnoses and prognoses. These diagnoses and prognoses are made in response to internal and external political demands that are based on treaties, protocols, regimes, and even international loan agreements (in the case of capital flows). Since the official acts of modern states must be legally grounded, one of the first steps for internalizing government practices that have been internationally negotiated (or imposed) is to advance legal reforms. The hiring of experts is a common practice when this is the objective and it is not unusual to ask these experts to perform capacity building activities. Since these phenomena are fundamental in AID dynamics today I will now look at certain features of capacity building policies and their implications. The discussion that follows is based on my research in East Timor. In this country's state-building, international technical cooperation operates as a total social fact (Mauss 1974).

### **Capacity-building policies**

Several strategies are used to enact capacity-building policies: courses, training programs, workshops, on-the-job training, etc. The on-the-job training method for knowledge transference involves the use of advisors who instruct their local counterparts while both parties carry out the same task. By performing joint activities, the local agent is trained to act alone in the future.

Courses and other training programs may take place either in the receiving country or abroad; they can be funded by one or more donors or by the receiving state itself. They may last from one week to several years, in which case trainees must enroll in universities or high technology institutes. The subject matter varies a great deal, from managing techniques for measuring costs, public policy planning, language learning and legal techniques, to operating heavy machinery in military and civil construction. With regard to academic training, capacity agendas are even broader and usually involve some sort of identification of the student with the national profile of the source of the training.

Although capacity-building practices are geared toward the transfer of strictly technical know-how, they are oriented by a moralizing agenda that tries to imprint on their “target” trainees certain behavior patterns regarded as ideal for what is seen as the good operation of public administration. Thus, they are tools for building and fostering particular subjectivities and dispositions (Bourdieu, 2002). Programs of this kind in recently independent countries encourage discipline at work and condemn corruption. Moreover, capacity-building practices are important tools for creating hegemonic control by donors over client states, an outcome of the way capacity policies are carried out.

Decisions about the profile of capacity-building programs to be implemented in a given state result from various levels of political negotiation. Some are imposed by donors as a condition for releasing funds via international cooperation. Others occur after requests from the receiving state, based on diagnoses crafted, for instance, by national development programs. The role local elite preferences play in the definition of the capacity profiles and strategies to be adopted varies greatly and is linked to at least two conditions: 1) the degree of confidence domestic governments enjoy among members of the international community and; 2) informal connections between local and foreign political authorities. Since many capacity-building programs are applied in institutionally weak countries, they play an important role in building public administration. In such cases, building capacity also means building state institutions.

Capacity-building programs often involve the hiring of teams of foreign experts. These international advisors tend to reproduce locally the founding principles and public management apparatus existing in their own countries

or in cosmopolitan contexts where they acquired most of their expertise, or even those used in the institutions that hired them.<sup>8</sup> We shall see some examples of this in East Timor.

Until 2004, East Timor's government budget system was very similar to that in Australia, including the beginning and end of the fiscal year. This is because the technical advisors in East Timor had been trained in and had experience with the Australian state, and taught their local counterparts in management techniques typical of their own country. The same causal chain explains the similarities between the Timorese Organic Public Defense Law, proposed by the Executive Branch in 2003, and the equivalent in Brazil. It had been drafted by a Brazilian advisor. We can also understand why the Timorese Constitution so closely resembles the Portuguese Constitution; it was based on a proposal from a Portuguese jurist at the request of Timor authorities in collaboration with a large Portuguese bilateral cooperation mission. These instances increase with new communication technologies, such as the Internet, which provide quick and easy access to legal devices in the advisors' countries of origin. Many legal mechanisms in recently independent countries are copies or superficial adaptations from legislation operating in other countries.

These implications may influence bilaterally or multilaterally funded projects and may even condition the success of political and identity options made by national elites, such as those related to the country's official and national languages. Thus, the working language chosen by international advisors to communicate with their local counterparts has an impact on the strengthening or weakening of the national language in everyday work. Public servants that are exposed to relatively constant training with Anglophone advisors will increase their skills in the English language. If English happens to be the national language, so much the better. Otherwise, this may cause embarrassment and political suspicion, since language is often an important component in the invention of national identity (Silva, 2012). These issues are all the more evident when cooperation practices involve moving to another country and language proficiency in another idiom will improve. All this occurs because national elites are the preferred objects

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8 In many cases, the capacities to be developed are related to particular models of State-society relations. Reforms intended to facilitate the conditions for capital flow and others for labor contracts, carried out in a multitude of countries during the 90's are an exemple of this trend.

of capacity-building policies in national contexts where they are considered - or present themselves - as models of sociability.

Since many beneficiary states have no centralized instruments to supervise and coordinate capacity-building practices, capacity projects are often incoherent and even contradictory. Once again East Timor is a case in point. Experts who have worked in capacity building there come from a variety of countries. As a consequence, a variety of methods are proposed for organizing state activities that at times are incoherent. In 2003, Anglophone advisors, for instance, drafted legal provisions inspired in British common law, whereas advisors of Latin origin elected a civil justice model. It is thus important to emphasize that the bureaucratic culture of multilateral cooperation agencies, such as the U.N. and others located in the U.S.A., have a strong Anglo-Saxon influence, which tends to be reproduced in different contexts where the U.N. operates (about the World Bank, see Ribeiro 2002). Furthermore, we must remember that, since capacity-building practices become foreign policy tools for donors, these donors may or may not want to match their practices to national interests. To the contrary, cooperation practices become ammunition in disputes between different civilization projects (Elias 1993).

In approaching the form and influence of American government models in the New Order proposed by Suharto for Indonesia, Cribb and Kahin (2004) highlighted the importance of the performance of U.S. economists on the National Development Planning Board. The so-called “Berkeley Mafia” was highly influential in national decisions at that time, especially decisions to liberalize and “financialize” the Indonesian economy. Nevertheless, with the oil crisis in the 1970s, relations between these economists and the New Order ideologues became tense:

new order ideologues use this notion to argue that *any* state economic policy is formed in the national interest and is based on objective and universal “economic” criteria, therefore casting critics as subversive in their actions and sectional in their interests. In contrast, Western liberal economists implicitly assign the labels “objective” and “economic” only to specific policies: those which are guided by free-market, private-enterprise, open-door economic principles as argued by IBRD and the IMF (Robinson 2009: 108-109 quoted in Sandrim 2010: 52).

The hegemony effects that capacity-building practices have on interstate relations, even when multilaterally funded, are almost self-evident. When a receiving state internalizes government technologies, it transforms the donor into its major source of expertise in that area. At the same time, when a donor country provides certain public policies to a receiving country, it becomes a major expert on its partner's government forms, thus reinforcing the donor's power over the receiver.

Many capacity-building projects come with conditionalities that deepen the receiving country's dependence on the donor's offerings. Among the strategies employed by U.S. AID to increase agricultural production in Egypt between 1979 and 1987, for example, was its mechanization. In his analysis of the impact of such projects, Mitchell (2002: 223) states that the funds allocated to capacity building were primarily used to purchase U.S. tractors and for the American training of Egyptians to use those machines. Tractor industries in the U.S. and import firms in Egypt were the project's greatest beneficiaries. A similar situation occurred in East Timor in development programs carried out by Japan for capacity building in infrastructure and construction. As Japan took up the reconstruction of roads, bridges, etc., it trained local workers to use tractors and heavy machinery made in Japan. Hence, the local labor force depended on the availability of that kind of equipment, thus opening up a new market for Japanese production. Mitchell realizes that a significant part of U.S. cooperation for development in Egypt was used to buy American industrial goods, if not to pay the Egyptian debt to the United States. He goes on to qualify U.S. AID as "... a form of state support to the American corporate sector, while working in Egypt to dismantle state support" (Mitchell 2002: 240).

Therefore, it is important to notice how other factors, beyond the interests of AID donors and receivers, circumscribe the flows and impacts of international cooperation practices. Among these I underscore: a) political and identity bonds inherited from the colonial past b) elite diaspora trajectories, and c) the international circulation of elites that hold powerful positions in recently formed states. The colonial past is an important component in the formation process of recently independent countries. Much supporting legislation operating in these countries is a colonial legacy. When faced with capacity-building practices, elite groups in key positions of public administration use as references government models and practices from the colonial period, especially in the first decades after independence (Silva 2012).

However, as memory of the colonial past fades away, international circulation of elites takes precedence in the choices to open up or criticize developmental policies related to distinct national profiles.

Naturally, these choices are associated with political interests. It is, therefore, worth noting that resources provided by international cooperation are often subverted by different groups of local elites fighting to strengthen their projects for control of power and the state with a varying degree of complicity, whether explicit or not, from donor states and agencies.

## 2.2 Effects of moral exclusion

In his discussion of the role international technical cooperation performed in Rwanda's 1994 ethnic conflicts, Uvin (1998) states that development turned into a nation-building ideology then portrayed as an ethnic clash between Hutus and Tutsis. Hutu elites controlling the state qualified the public policies they promoted as a revolution whose goal was to do justice regarding the discrimination Hutus had suffered during the Belgian colonization of their territory. Consequently, these Hutu elites subjected people of Tutsi origin to a massive exclusion from access to state and public programs. In his analysis of the *modus operandi* of locally based technical cooperation, Uvin (1998: 6) suggests that the way in which development is defined and promoted interacts with the processes of elite reproduction, social differentiation, political exclusion, and cultural change. AID was thus responsible for creating a new state class that reproduced through the appropriation of cooperation resources. Mitchell has similar views in his analyses of the effects of decentralizing administrative policies upon Egypt's rural areas. Instead of enlarging the base for state resource appropriation, decentralization increased its concentration in the hands of large rural producers. As the author affirmed,

when they transferred resources to an existing system of inequality, decentralization and privatization were liable to reinforce that inequality. The profits went to large farmers and local state officials, and the poor received at best only certain opportunities of wage labor (Mitchell 2002: 228).

Although the vast critical literature in the field of cooperation hints at the way cooperation can deepen social inequalities, especially after the Washington consensus crisis, little attention has been paid to what I propose

to call the *misrecognition effect*, which I deem central to understanding the role of cooperation in state-building dynamics. The *Misrecognition effect* refers to sentiments of moral exclusion that emerge among populations targeted for development projects, as a result of the systematic assertion that one or several elements of their ways of life are inadequate when compared to narratives of good living conveyed by development agents and agencies. This effect is crucial for the diffusion and imposition of models on a global scale. Taken to its limit, the *misrecognition effect* threatens the nation as a specific political community comprised of people who think of themselves as bearers of the same rights.

In constructing this idea I have been particularly inspired by L. Cardoso de Oliveira's analyses (2007, 2007a) on misrecognition and by Uvin's discussion of the role of international cooperation in the 1994 Rwanda genocide. I also rely on the classical discussion of internal colonialism introduced to anthropology by Stavenhagen (1969).

Focusing on legal conflicts and political demands in the United States, Canada, and Brazil, Cardoso de Oliveira affirms that some important dimensions of disputes in contemporary societies result from the perception of misrecognitionthe opposite of recognition (Taylor 2004)by social agents as a kind of moral insult. Although he maintains that moral insult is differently perceived in each ethnographic case, Cardoso de Oliveira suggests that it is normally built up with feelings that bring about an attitude of distance or lack of deference toward the identity of one's interlocutor, hence, affecting his or her access to certain rights.

When Uvin (1998) described the participation of Rwandan public servants in development projects, he identified an attitude of contempt and misrecognition for some lifestyle features of people targeted for development policies. He pointed out that it was common for *evolué* (state servants) to approach rural populations in a humiliating manner, and to present their own (urban) way of life as the only legitimate model of sociability. They proceeded to associate development with the urban lifestyle (celebrated with the possibility of access to goods and services), which reinforced low self-esteem among the people for whom development practices were intended, hence intensifying their fragility. This fact generated a self-perception of moral exclusion, or misrecognition, which, when politically manipulated, greatly contributed to acts of violence that escalated into what has been deemed as genocide.



The structural violence (perception of systematic exclusion resulting from unequal life expectancy, injustice, discrimination, and hunger) that afflicted those people, and close contact with national elites and foreign advisors in the development industry greatly contributed to exacerbating the violence. On the other hand, genocide reshaped the dynamics of state building and the reproduction of national elites.

The consequences of misrecognition also seem to be on the basis of the *modus operandi* by which The Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) mobilized resistance to the socialist regime established by The Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) in the 1970s (Florêncio 2005). An important element of the Frelimo government activities was to detribalize Mozambique and to invent and cultivate what was then called the New Man. This New Man was conceived as an African unencumbered by his “uses and customs,” his representations, and specific cultural practices, since the elites in power regarded them as signs of backwardness and ignorance. Therefore, among other things, the state opened several re-education camps with compulsory work regimes that prohibited religious practices associated with magic, witchcraft, ancestral cults, etc. Customary land tenure practices were also banned, mostly in formal terms.

A number of rural sociability features were qualified as inadequate for the elite in power and should thus be replaced with new, modern behavior patterns. The Frelimo state singled out, among the country’s social segments, the local authorities who often accumulated political and religious offices due to the roles they played in the Portuguese colonial state (Florêncio 2005).<sup>9</sup> Stripped of their functions after independence, many of them joined Renamo whose political agenda was strongly marked by the devolution of power and prestige to local authorities and by respect for “local culture.” Power disputes between Renamo and Frelimo led to a civil war that lasted until 1992. After the peace treaty, mediated by the United States, Germany, and Portugal, Mozambique began its state reconfiguration. It was no longer a one-party polity, and the entire political system that supported it was changed.

To a certain extent, I see a contemporary revival of concepts of culture

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9 Actually, the Frelimo project of banning local authorities from local political structures was never accomplished. Mozambique’s post-colonial state lacked the capacity to extend its tentacles into the hinterland. According to Almeida (2010: 48), local power was exercised through the “balance between lineage politics and good relations with the centralized power.”

and tradition (Henley and Davidson 2007) among different agents and agencies as a strategic response to *misrecognition effects* produced by development. Therefore, misrecognition seems useful for considering different contexts of dispute, or political transitions where there is a diffusion and imposition of development and government models.

### 2.3 Effects of technical cooperation between donor states and agencies

I have suggested above that technical cooperation generates economic, political, and identity effects on receiving countries. These effects maintain dialectical relations with each other. Economic effects appear when national economies emerge and accelerate concurrently with public policies. Political effects occur in state-building processes with their respective institutions, norms and power disputes among diverse elite groups. Identity effects come into view in the context of potential misrecognition of local cosmologies and ways of life, as well as in resistance movements, which often promote the revitalization or reinvention of local cultures.

This classification is also useful for understanding the implications of cooperation for the donors. From a political and identity standpoint, technical cooperation practices allow donor agencies and states to reproduce their position in the international system as hegemonic diffusion centers of government models. As a result, they also reproduce the image and position of “target” countries and peoples as underdeveloped and backward. Thus, cooperation practices facilitate the reproduction of a hegemonic classificatory system at the service of powerful interests.

Studies of various shades (Hancock 1989; Neves and Hamutuk 2007; Silva 2008) point out that a significant part of funds nominally provided by donors under the rubric of technical cooperation return to the donor countries, including non-refundable resources. As I mentioned above, bilateral cooperation agreements are often structured according to conditions that involve the purchase of equipment and hiring of technical personnel from the donor country. Hence, technical cooperation becomes a vehicle for the outflow of the donors’ industrial production. New consumer and labor markets are opened up, thus heating up the donors’ national economy. To a certain extent, this pattern is repeated in multilateral practices, albeit in a weaker, more complex and mediated manner. This is due to the fact that many official multilateral initiatives are funded by specific donors whose preferences

prevail over the management of programs and projects they themselves sponsor. These economic effects weigh substantially in the donors' cooperation options and strategies.

Above, I emphasized the hegemonic effects of AID on the dynamics of state configuration in recently independent countries. It is important to stress that resources released by AID are far from being merely technical. Their politicization either by donors or receiver countries is constant, and it is through it that they nurture their respective identities. The link between donors and the goods they made available is a constant in AID programs, being publicly highlighted both in ritual and in everyday events. There is, therefore, a sort of personalization of the donor's relation to that which is donated, in such a way that the offered good itself becomes part of the donor's personality (Silva 2008). In this context, resources of various kinds, such as persons, technical equipment, and even money become gifts (Mauss 1974) acting as tools in the construction and mediation of identities (of persons and things) and of social relationships.

If the bond between the thing donated and the donor's identity is clearer in projects that involve personnel, we can also observe it, in a subtler way, when we analyze the cooperation priorities of different agents. Several kinds of policies carried out by various AID donors display a manifest interest in distinct civilizatory projects. Each country favors specific types of projects, specializing in diverse areas of cooperation related to the self-image it wants to project into the world. Somehow, this specialization is connected to national ideologies and closely attached to narratives of national formation. Specialization is a product of different cooperation priorities, which, in turn, are defined in dialogue, on the one hand, with the interests of the congresses and governments that supervise each donor's state, and, on the other, with the national narration projects they nurture (Silva 2008: 164). Once more, there is a feedback between the political and the identity effects of cooperation.

Furthermore, bilateral or multilateral cooperation techniques entangle dependent countries in a web of obligations that become evident in global spaces of political negotiation. In such contexts, it is very difficult for these countries to hold different positions from those of their largest donors without suffering some sort of AID related sanctions. Hence, international assistance strengthens the donors' capacity to influence how recipients conduct their domestic affairs. In situations of crisis or of great political challenges, donors

are often summoned to dialogue with local governments. Donations are also sources of prestige and power for their agents in regional and global contexts. For this reason, they dispute ranking positions with other large donors in cases of natural catastrophes, such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and the 2004 tsunamis that devastated entire regions in Southeast Asia.

## **Final remarks**

The growing interdependence of world political and economic systems has turned international technical cooperation into a total social fact (Mauss 1974) with regard to the dynamics of state building in various countries, whether they are AID donors or receivers. To give just a few examples, it is through international technical cooperation that government practices are negotiated in terms of the formation and development of national economies, narratives of identity and national formation, and of provisions regulating the legal-rational form of attaining modern political legitimacy. Cooperation regimes, treaties, programs, and projects are means to simultaneously promote compatibility among legislation, production techniques and new forms of conflict through which the world system reproduces itself.

Depending on the specific contexts, these effects take shape from the ways in which technical cooperation joins other modes of global flows and international cooperation. As an example, I have mentioned the recent case of Egypt. The economic crisis that troubled that country in 1990-91 was assuaged by the partial cancelation of its foreign debt to the U.S. and other NATO members – which allowed for a significant increase in its monetary reserves – in exchange for Egypt's support of the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Mitchell 2002: 276).

In his analysis of the flow of development models, which is crucial for strengthening global governance, Ribeiro (2011) suggests that these models emerge from the dissemination of discourses either in diffuse or concentrated ways, and are distinctly capable of framing the social world. According to this author, the diffuse mode of circulation gives these discourses an ontological capacity that is difficult to perceive due to its penetration and naturalizing power. Diffusely circulated discourses are commonly associated to ideologies and utopias as truly civilizing tools. Moreover, they are multi-temporal, multi-local, and multi-scale. In that context, discourse is nothing less than the classificatory system by which people perceive the world and is

thus a government matrix informing everything. The diffuse propagation of discourses is a condition for consolidating the concentrated dissemination of government practices (which may or may not generate models). Both concentrated and diffuse modes of global flows of government practices are essential to the processes of hegemony construction that have led to the present interlocking of the world political system.

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