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# **An Exploratory Study of the Development Assistance System and Its Multiple Challenges in the Global Economy: An Obstacle for Assisted Countries**

**Christophe PROVIDENCE**

Centre de Recherche en Gestion et Economie du Développement (CReGED)-Université Quisqueya  
Laboratoire Management, Economie, Modélisation, Informatique et Aide à la Décision (memiad)-Université des Antilles, Haiti.

**Oris Guillaume**

Professor of Business, Saint Leo University and Georgia Highlands College (GHC)., United States.

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## **Abstract**

This aim of this study is to explore the development assistance system and its multiple challenges in the global economy: an obstacle for assisted countries. Development aid is one of the instruments of international cooperation whose primary objective is to facilitate trade in the context of globalization. It deserves to be approached systemically to understand the different monetary and human flows and to build networks of actors developing reciprocal interdependencies. For example, development aid to poor countries can be broken down into four main variants: “budget assistance,” “technical assistance,” “project assistance” and “emergency assistance.” According to the authors, development aid must be analyzed in relation to the overall socio-economic and political context (on the donor country side) and local (in the assisted country), acting on the networking links developed by the actors involved. It is thus asserted in the asymmetry of the power relations between the players in the framework of international relations. Donation refers, by analogy, to altruism, philanthropy, the notions of “good” and “evil,” and morality. He also suggests the idea of the ethics of reciprocity, the golden rule, in other words: “Do to others what you would like to be done if you were in their situation.” As “The Golden Rule, states: ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’ Rather than doing to

others what they have done to us or giving them what they may deserve, we are to treat them the way we want them to treat us.

**Keywords:** system, development aid, international cooperation, actors, networks, and globalization

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## Introduction

Economic literature distinguishes between ‘the world economy’ and ‘the economy itself.’ To present the dynamics of modern capitalism (Hugon, 2010a; 2010b; Rodrik, 2007; 2008). The world economy refers to the expansion of trade in global space, while the world economy refers to the best performing economies (with multinational firms) in their relations with each other and with other economies.

From this dissimilarity, Bernard Pecqueur (2000) makes the relationship between local and global, assuming that for a ‘world economy,’ specific relationships with the implantation territories may show divergent trajectories. From these differences between the interests of the ‘world economy’ and that of local players, new strategies for adapting to the global economy must be developed. This is a form of competition created by the ‘world economy’ between the different territories (Pecqueur, 2000).

According to Guillaume, Udechukwu, and Williams (2013), international leaders may experience a range of exciting roles throughout their business interactions in foreign countries. Development aid is one of these mechanisms of international cooperation dominated by the liberal principles of economic openness (Severino and Ray, 2012). More broadly, it is a compliance exercise in which aid countries’ dependence is built on donor countries’ conditionalities. Thus, development aid becomes a global system of geopolitical and economic relations involving territories and actors through cooperative networks (Severino and Ray, 2012).

In fact, should we not consider the specifications of this system by analyzing the geopolitical and socio-economic issues for both a donor and an assisted country? More modestly, this paper aims to model the monetary flows and the relationships between the various groups of actors involved in development aid for a better understanding of the system. Without these theoretical and conceptual clarifications, any assessment of development aid in an assisted country, with its various variations, cannot lead to coordination of these multiple networks of actors.

Indeed, the concept of aid coordination is at the heart of the discussions on national and local development policies in the assisted countries. And this systemic model raises a series of questions about the foundations of development aid, especially when applied to the problem of local development strategies (Pecqueur, 2000).

On the one hand, each variant of the aid involves different categories of actors and different intervention techniques. In fact, what are the polarizing effects of development aid, if not a sharing of influence between donor countries according to their geostrategic

interests? What are structural adjustment programs (SAPs), in the light of the development forces of local activities, if not a desire to control the development dynamics of the assisted countries? On the other hand, the multifunctional conditionalities of development aid call for reflection on its relevance and social utility in the assisted countries. Aren't they a controversial nature that lends themselves, even more, to explicit and multidisciplinary critical analysis?

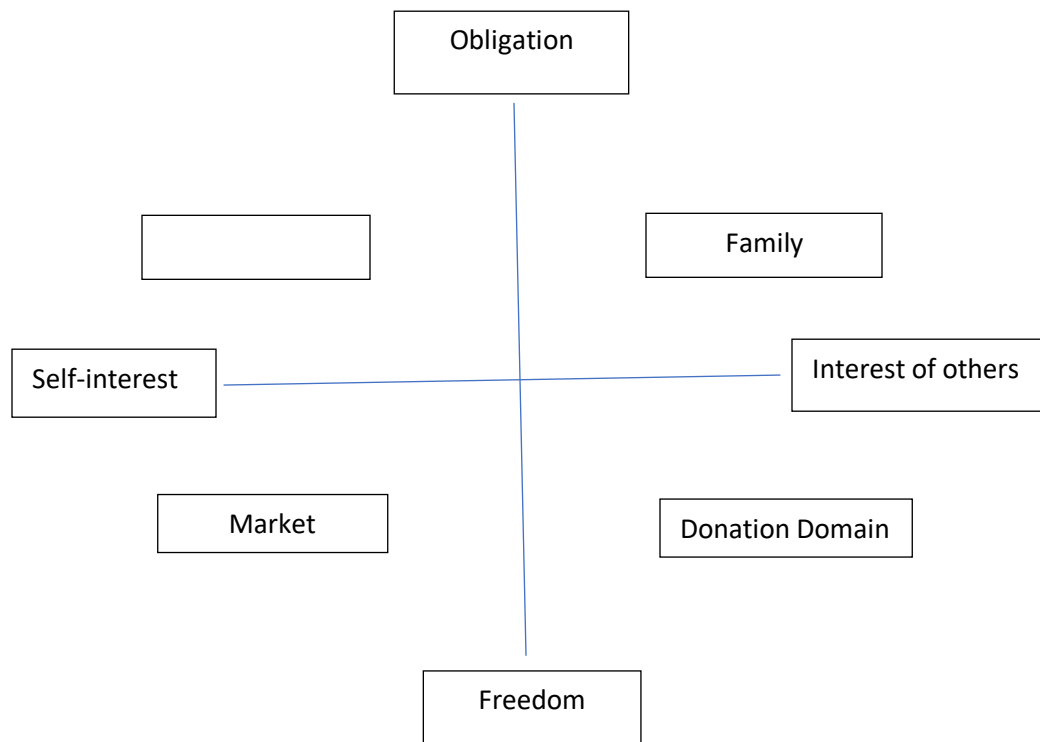
### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the development assistance system and its multiple challenges in the global economy. In this paper, the authors are proposing to investigate development aid as a complex system, focusing on the games of actors constituting strong and weak links through mobilized monetary flows. The aim is to model this development aid system (II), to specify its different variations and implementation strategies (III) and to analyze the challenges for both donor and assisted countries (IV). According to the authors, development aid must be analyzed in relation to the overall socio-economic and political context (on the donor countryside) and local (in the assisted country), acting on the networks developed by the actors involved. This allows us to conclude the new dependence of this system in international relations (V). This paper presents the operation of the development aid system to facilitate any evaluation of any aspect of it.

### **Theoretical Framework for Development Aid**

The theoretical approach of this study is based on a development aid system developed by Providence in 2015 and the Maussian theory developed in 1923. At first, in this approach, Providence (2015) presents three spheres of the territorial factors (assisted and donor countries) and one sphere of governance (supranational organizations) (see annex). Secondly, donation and counter-donation is a social contract. Mauss (1991/1923), in a comparative study on the organization of Melanesian societies, discovered that the gift and counter-donation were a founding contract of social ties; a service which obliges the other donor and recipient, which in fact binds them together by a form of the social contract. The donor displays a form of prestige or honor in knowing how to give, and the recipient must first 'know how to receive' and then 'know how to return' to others 'an equivalent' of what he received. According to Caillé (2000), the theory of Mauss du don fits perfectly with this perspective because it represents a 'third paradigm' (Caillé, 2000), the term 'third party' should be understood in its double meaning. The heuristic virtues of the triple obligation defined by Mauss (1991) 'give receive and give back' are well understood. Within the working groups, a whole series of exchanges are taking place, following these archaic requirements. Mauss (1923), in his famous essay on donations, 'gift' is not free. He bases his thinking mainly on the Amerindian tribes and notably the potlatch. What is potlatch? The idea is to give an object that you own, that is, to give away a material object that is important to the donor, but is this gift given for nothing, in a kind of gratuity requiring nothing in return? No, because for Mauss, there is a triple obligation that revolves around three verbs: give, receive, returns. There is then an obligation for the

donee to receive because any refusal of a ‘gift’ turns out to be an affront that requires reparation. This ‘gift’ law, even if it is a social link, can create debt among the donee and lead to aggressiveness towards each other, donors or donee.



Sources: Donation and Counter-donation theory: give/receive/render of Mauss (1923)

Moreover, development aid needs to be approached systemically to understand the different flows of money, people and the building of networks of actors developing reciprocal interdependencies. It links territories (donor countries/assisted countries) through cash flows and skills transfers (Severino and Ray, 2012). This linkage of territories is based on distance functions (psycho-cultural, technological, organizational, etc.) as well as economic and geopolitical interests.

### Research Questions

This study is based on the following questions. What is the effect of the development aid system? What are the multiple challenges of international aid to the global economy? What is the reason for this selfless, altruistic gesture that aims at the welfare of the recipient populations? Instead, are donors seeking to advance their commercial or geostrategic interests and preferred historical ties? How do they finance international development cooperation measures to promote the production of global public goods and manage risks that require a global response? What are the moral and humanitarian security or economic issues?

## Methodology of the Study

The aim of this qualitative study is to explore the development aid system and its multiple challenges in the global economy. The study focuses on the incentives for rich countries to provide aid to developing countries. Since the 1960s, development aid has been called into question by various lines of thought. The terms of the debate have changed little in the last half-century and, despite criticism, development aid remains a preferred instrument “by default.” Populist critics argue that it is better to allocate taxpayers’ money to national economic and social priorities than to waste it to provide inefficient aid to corrupt leaders in faraway countries. These days, populist parties often take up such arguments, especially when voting on development cooperation budgets.

Development aid comes in four main forms: budget, technical, project and emergency assistance. The first refers to direct financing of public policies in assisted countries through the state budget. The second is mainly to provide technical assistance to governments by developing structural adjustment programs. The third option is increasingly being applied and is helping to overcome the state’s shortcomings in these assisted countries by allocating resources to NGOs carrying out community projects. Finally, the fourth option (emergency assistance) is to provide ad hoc support to populations affected by natural disasters, armed conflicts, etc. These variants are derived from the two types of capital: public or private (Ryfman, 2013). The authors will come back to these four alternatives in the discussion and analysis.

## Discussion and Analysis

The systemic model of development aid, proposed in this paper, brings together the different categories of actors in three main areas: the sphere of supranational bodies (1) that of implementing bodies (2) and the territorial sphere in assisted countries (3). The model also emphasizes the fundamental elements in each of the areas concerned (donor and assisted countries) that may explain the current nature of development assistance and the difficulties in its coordination. For the sake of clarity, we begin with the presentation of these fundamental elements before proceeding with the actors and their networks.

**a) Overall system configuration**— On the one hand, a donor country relies primarily on the favorable socio-economic conditions of its taxpayers (the wealth produced, the macroeconomic stability of the country, the satisfactory standard of living, etc.) and geostrategic interests involving a policy of appropriate cooperation (Perroux, 1969). The good socio-economic conditions allow them to export their predominant collective representation. Indeed, the geopolitical aspirations and interests of donor countries imply managing their image internationally.

Collective representation is based on two other factors that justify the choice of a development aid policy: political-administrative culture (involved in the methodology of support via aid) and cooperation policy (which refers above all to the defense of the interests of the donor country). These four elements interact to provide direction for

international cooperation with its multiple facets (Severino and Ray, 2012); Ryfman, 2013).

On the other hand, an assisted country has four other criteria that can raise awareness and mobilize development assistance. The first is its socio-economic conditions, which, unlike the donor country, are bad (macroeconomic instability, underproduction, poor living conditions of local populations, etc.), but which offer opportunities (opportunities) to the donor country's commercial products (Severino and Ray, 2012). The dismal socio-economic conditions refer to the poor state of global infrastructure (production, channels of communication...) making it difficult in the assisted country to take off economically.

Another important factor is “collective representation” in a helped country. This implies a predisposition of local actors (elected officials, associations, local elites, etc.) to dependence about economic poverty. This image of the assisted country aims to raise public awareness in the donor country to justify aid intervention. This is the last fundamental element that emphasizes local governance practices. As such, the assisted country tries to single out each donor country by introducing its often-incompatible democratic practices. Thus, the assisted country is shaken between the conditionalities of multiple donors.

**b) The different groups of aid actors**— In the development aid system, there are three spheres (sphere of supranational bodies, spheres of implementing bodies, the territorial sphere of assisted countries) in which networks and similar relationships are formed: “strong links and weak links.” On the one hand, the global socio-economic and political context influences both the sphere of supranational bodies, the donor country and the sphere of implementing agencies (Severino and Ray, 2012); Ryfman, 2013). On the other hand, the local socio-economic and political context motivates the choice of actors in the sphere of implementing agencies while predisposing the assisted country and its territorial sphere to dependency. Thus, the former is the strong link in development aid and the latter are the weak link.

The sphere of supranational bodies consists of two groups of actors: regional and global organizations. The actors of the regional bodies (European Union, CARICOM, etc.) play a geostrategic, economic and representation role in their member countries at the international level. They can mobilize considerable financial resources and participate in the selection of countries assisted according to regional criteria.

Global actors (IMF, World Bank...) seek to establish broad principles of international cooperation, serving as channels for trade distribution and regulation. They also play a role in monitoring and guiding (structural adjustments) public policies on development aid. The common point between these two groups of actors is their source of funding, which comes mainly from donor (rich) countries. As a result, their actions fall within the framework of multilateral cooperation, unlike the bilateral relationship between an assisted and a donor country (Singer, 2004).

The sphere of “implementing agencies” brings together four distinct groups of stakeholders: development agencies (USAID, CIDA, ...), specialized foundations (PADF, Clinton Foundation...), international NGOs (OXFAM, ACTED, CRS...) and major international missions (Methodist Mission, Islamic Mission, etc.). (Severino and Ray, 2012; Ryfman, 2013.) A development agency represents its government in the helped country. It mobilizes mainly public funds and participates in the management of the image of the donor country and its geostrategic interests. It, therefore, makes it possible to determine the nature and modalities of the aid to be provided and the eligible countries according to the benefits to be derived.

A specialized foundation can mobilize either public or private funds while specializing. It makes a plea to raise public awareness in a donor country about the problems of the assisted countries that are likely to reach them. Foundations work with international NGOs that spearhead the development aid system, often positioning themselves between the donor and the direct beneficiaries. For their part, major international missions are characterized by the promotion of a philosophy of life (often religious) accompanied by social actions. These missions mobilize private capital for the spread of their faith. These four groups of actors in the sphere of “implementing agencies” share a common awareness of the local socio-economic and political context. Their funding depends on the donor country, which often imposes its intervention methodology and conditionalities (Severino and Ray, 2012; Ryfman, 2013).

All in all, the sphere of “implementing agencies” will have a direct impact on the “territorial” sphere of the country helped by imposing well-orchestrated (cooperative) rules by donor countries and supranational bodies. Thus, these actors in the sphere of “implementing agencies” participate in the selection of territories (in the assisted country), their financing and the monitoring of societal practices in order to defend the hidden interests of donor countries.

The last category of actors in the development aid system is in the “territorial sphere of the assisted country.” These actors are the “weak link” in this system, as they apply the guidelines of the other two spheres through conditionalities of aid (Olivier de Sardan, 2011). Already, the problem of capitalizing on experiences will arise, which increases as the number of donor countries increases. In these circumstances, the territorial sphere is struggling to ensure proper coordination of aid through actors as numerous as they are competitors. However, in speeches about the lack of results of the development aid system, the coordination capacity of the territorial sphere is questioned (Olivier de Sardan, 2011).

The territorial sphere comprises three groups of actors belonging to the national structure, the local structure, and the supervisory structure respectively. In the national structure, there are the government and its administration, the autonomous institutions and the institutions independent of the state. This first group of actors defines the national framework for cooperation and dictates the rules to be followed by other actors in the

territorial sphere. In practice, these actors (from the national structure) simply play a facilitating role for external actors (NGOs, donors, etc.) who enjoy a great deal of freedom of action at the territorial level. By means of public policies, they affect the work of local and supervisory actors whose actions fall within the field of proximity (geographical and organized).

The local structure consists of local elected officials and territorial authorities who can form partnerships for the development of their community. These actors operate within the overall framework established by the central administration in the field of international and local cooperation (Olivier de Sardan, 2011). As such, they are masters of works designed to provide the local population with basic services and facilities to improve their well-being. For this, they often call on the actors of the management structure (local NGOs, study offices...) who become masters. The latter participate in the implementation of local projects by positioning themselves as local elites. These actors often act as community facilitators (Olivier de Sardan, 2011).

The various groups of actors in the development aid system interact through the flow of money and goods in the framework of international cooperation. Thus, even before taking the form of different variants, development aid reveals a trilogy in international development cooperation: bilateral aid (1), multilateral aid (2) and private aid (3).

**(c) Monetary flows in the development assistance system**—Development aid is one of the instruments of international cooperation whose primary objective is to facilitate trade in the context of globalization (Severino and Debrat, 2010). Indeed, the global economy's configuration and geopolitical and strategic challenges foster partnerships among states, find themselves in both regional and global organizations. As a result, the three forms of these strategic development assistance agreements are emerging: bilateral, multilateral and private aid. The latter involves non-state actors. Thus, these three general forms of monetary flows, in the development aid system, form the basis of cooperation relations.

Bilateral assistance connects government or other government agencies in a donor country with those in an assisted country (Severino and Charnoz, 2005). It can be made up either by loans or by donations. When it comes to the relationship between governments, we talk about bilateral cooperation, whereas when it comes to public bodies such as local authorities, we refer to decentralized cooperation. Bilateral assistance can, therefore, be channeled directly through governments or public bodies, but also through the sphere of implementing agencies, mainly development agencies and international NGOs.

Multilateral aid differs from bilateral aid by its transitional body, which is the sphere of supranational bodies. The principle is that each Member State of a supranational body or an international institution can contribute financially to its budget on the basis of its wealth. Thus, rich countries manage to control them in a way that leads them to open markets and thus to protect their strategic interests (Truman, 2009).



Indeed, the monetary flows linked to multilateral aid are starting from its supranational bodies, taking two possible routes, to arrive in the assisted country. The first path directly links these bodies to the territorial sphere, either through the central structure (government and independent institutions), through the local structure (local authorities, local elected officials...) or through the framework (local NGOs, local associations...). The second path taken by the monetary flows of multilateral aid leads to international implementation bodies (Singer, 2004). In the sphere of implementing agencies, multilateral assistance is mainly provided by NGOs which must meet certain eligibility criteria.

These criteria are, in fact, conditionalities for bringing the country's economy under control. In other words, multilateral aid is intended for the territorial sphere of the assisted country, but it goes through the sphere of implementing agencies (mainly international NGOs).

In the literature, official development assistance is often used to characterize both bilateral and multilateral aid (Singer, 2004). However, private organizations are often mobilized to make their contribution to the cause of development, private assistance is referred to (Ryfman, 2013). All of this is part of functional zoning of the assisted country which, because of lack of financial capacity, is obliged to apply donor guidelines. That is why we argue that development aid is an aggregation of public and private capital from a donor country to a helped country.

### **The Main Variants of Development Aid**

Development aid can be broken down into four major variants. The first three variants refer to a process of bringing the assisted country into conformity, and the latter is an ad hoc response to a phenomenon that suddenly affects a given territory. These variants are respectively: "budget assistance," "technical assistance," "project assistance" and "emergency assistance" (Severino and Ray, 2012; Ryfman, 2013; Providence, 2015).

Thus, they differ in their method of intervention, the characteristics of the actors involved, and the type of impacts expected in the host territory. Therefore, the analysis of each of the variants involves specific tools to measure their externalities (positive or negative). It is important to take account of each specificity in order to explain both the interdependence of the networks of actors, the coherence of the monetary flows and the relevance of the logic of intervention in this development aid system in search of social utility.

**(a) The budget assistance**— The first option concerns the aid budget. Initially, it intervenes in Europe after the Second World War to accompany reconstruction. The Marshall Plan, as it was called, was used to finance the budgets of each allied country that already had, it should be noted, enormous development potential and an adequate administrative culture (Perroux, 1981). A few years later, the aid budget is being offered to the poor countries of Africa, Latin America, and Asia to bridge their development gap

(Poirot, 2007). This objective hides a more important relationship: international cooperation for the liberalization of trade with geopolitical and economic issues. This relationship consists of expanding markets (for rich countries finished goods) and exporting Western culture.

Bilateral cooperation is essential to aid budgets. That is, from a government or public agency of a donor country to their counterpart in an assisted country (Poirot, 2007). It can also take the form of multilateral cooperation by devoting the intervention of the actors in the sphere of supranational bodies to support the public policies of the government of an assisted country.

This form of assistance (budget), both bilateral and multilateral, can take two forms: either a loan (at a preferential rate to facilitate public investment) or a donation (a budget transfer) to the assisted country (Poirot, 2007). In both cases, conditionalities arbitrate the relationship by emphasizing reciprocal commitments by both partners, mainly obligations for assisted countries (Perroux, 1969). Aid budgets tend to evolve into program aid, always following the same principles previously outlined.

As the State (in the assisted countries) is, in most cases, plunged into structural crises, the aid-budget or program aid is losing its importance to donor countries. The latter advocate the restructuring of the State from broad structural adjustment programs (Poirot, 2007). This crisis of confidence facilitates the proliferation of NGOs (in the assisted country) and the increase in the volume of the project aid. This takes place through an intermediate stage, closely correlated with the aid budget, namely technical assistance. However, the latter shares the same ideal as the project aid by advocating a transfer of expertise (technical and scientific) to the actors in the territorial sphere of the assisted country.

**(b) Technical assistance**—Technical assistance consists of a willingness on the part of donor countries to assist the country in strengthening its organizational and technical capacities (Platteau, 2003; Singer, 2004). In the broad sense, it concerns the mobilization and transfer of competences from the dominant actors (sphere of implementing bodies and sphere of supranational bodies) to the dominant actors (territorial sphere of assisted countries) (Severino and Ray, 2012).

The first part of technical assistance is “structural adjustment programs.” The latter is more important and more elaborate because they relate to official development assistance (multilateral and bilateral aid) (Singer, 2004). Technical assistance integrates the public policies of assisted countries by implementing administrative reforms, justifying plans for privatization of state-owned enterprises or implementing austerity and budgetary monitoring programs (Severino and Ray, 2012).

These public administration reforms are mandatory steps in the assisted country, whose concern is to please supranational bodies (IMF, World Bank...). This is a belief in the promise of foreign debt reduction and a better positioning of the country helped in

international cooperation. Thus, territorial specificities, both geo functional and sociocultural, are impeded by these adjustment programs, which must ensure this integration.

The second part, technical cooperation, links autonomous and independent institutions around sharing experiences. For the institutions of the assisted country, this has the advantage of developing modernization or equipment programs. In their work, they emphasize management culture and the provision of services for greater cost-effectiveness.

For the institutions of donor countries, this is an opportunity to develop working habits that can create dependence on geopolitical control in the context of international relations (Olivier de Sardan, 2011). These two objectives compete on the development front to allow free trade in the economy, which guarantees opportunities for products and technologies from donor countries. In other words, this component of technical assistance is used to retain the institutions of the assisted country that are shared between sectoral projects developed and supported by institutions of donor countries that compete for influence-sharing (Singer, 2004).

Finally, the third part of technical assistance refers to decentralized cooperation linking local governments in the assisted country with their counterparts in donor countries (Providence, 2019). It is a new strategy for bringing the country into conformity, supported by sociocultural and administrative exchanges at the local level. Decentralized cooperation can take several forms and the foreign territorial community can involve NGOs (from its country) that play the lead role (Providence, 2010).

Technical assistance reveals its cross-cutting nature by placing itself at the heart of the conditionalities of development aid. It serves as a decision-making basis for donors by justifying the intervention of foreign experts and the imposition of their administrative culture on local actors in the assisted country. Thus, in all other variants, it imposes its footprint, as it determines the strategies for implementation in the assisted country. However, its analysis as a specific variant of development aid allows us to understand the challenge of development through aid in the assisted country and the socio-economic and geopolitical interest for the donor countries.

**(c) Project assistance**—Project assistance can be defined as local action to meet a specific need of a vulnerable or disadvantaged population through grant funding. This funding may come from a public or private fund provider (Providence, 2015). All such projects, within a national territory, form the basis of a system of mutual assistance involving a set of distinct actors such as donors (rich countries or international institutions), development agencies, NGOs and actors in the territorial sphere of the assisted country.

The project aid is part of a dynamic to accompany local actors in their quest for well-being. In the medium and long term, it is involved in the provision of public services, the mobilization of local resources and the consolidation of community ties between local

actors. Thus, by its size and spatial distribution in the assisted country, the project aid represents the development aid subsystem whose direct impact on local development is at the center of the concern.

As in any system, the primary concern of the project aid is its structure for better functioning (Providence, 2015). Indeed, three factors may explain its complexity: the high degree of its organization, the uncertainties of its environment and the interplay (complex and non-predictive) between its various constituent elements. The first is evidence of the multiplicity of methods, settlement strategies, and decision centers. The second factor refers to the structure of the system in each host territory. Finally, the last factor introduces the problem of zoning project aid both nationally and internationally. Thus, the project aid allows the localization of NGOs by assuming a certain image of donors and asserting often conflicting interests.

In the development aid system, the “project aid” variant can be analyzed as a subsystem that works on the basis of the multiple problems faced by local populations. The project aid mobilizes development aid system actors by offering them a local implementation strategy based on proximity links (LeLoup, 2005; Pecker, 1996). In this way, the project aid goes beyond the mere variant status of the development aid system to be confused with it. However, it is often confused with emergency assistance in view of the recurring crises that bear witness to the daily life of assisted countries.

**(d) Emergency assistance**—Emergency or humanitarian aid is defined as targeted actions aimed at assisting the most socially, medically or food poor (Singer, 2004). It consists of relief operations in the face of famines, epidemics, natural disasters, etc. By its very nature, emergency aid complements development aid by mobilizing emergency organizations, local authorities, international organizations... To this end, emergency aid does not stand in the way of operations linked to other variants of the development aid system. For example, an emergency, leading to humanitarian response, may involve the same logic, practices, and methods of intervention. Besides, it can create the same misunderstandings on the ground.

With its aim of alleviating the suffering of people affected by disasters (whether human or natural) as quickly as possible, emergency aid is a focus and easily justified. However, the direct beneficiaries of emergency assistance are not always the most deprived populations, as a certain local elite takes control and often manages to divert it. For example, an amazing tour is sometimes set up and emergency aid recipients are rushing to sell it to traders in the local market (Olivier de Sardan, 2011).

Emergency or humanitarian aid is often a major part of the overall mess, despite coordination efforts. It most often goes beyond the national machinery and allows the proliferation of outside NGOs, overshadowing the State and territorial communities of the assisted country (Olivier de Sardan, 2011). The state in an assisted country is not often able to create or impose a dynamic of collaboration, and ultimately NGOs can distribute aid in their own way, with different methods and without consultation.

Emergency assistance, despite its very large volume, does not necessarily integrate the social and economic logic of the disadvantaged populations. It is part of the paradox of relief for the poor, which is central to the strategies of international institutions and development partners. As a result, living conditions are increasingly deteriorating despite humanitarian missions.

In practice, emergency aid only allows various actors and institutions (national and international NGOs, donor countries, local elected officials, etc.) to take credit for the distributions and strengthen their implementation (Olivier de Sardan, 2011). This refers to the challenges of developing countries from the practices of this development aid system.

### **Development Impact Through Aid**

The relationship-based development strategy, between a developed and dominant “heart” and a submissive periphery, has long shaped international economic exchanges (Hugon, 2010 a; 2010 [b]). On the one hand, there are rich and large donors, and on the other hand, there are poor and assisted countries. For example, in the context of development aid, rich countries have granted themselves the right to impose rules of conduct on poor countries to help bridge their “development gap” [Gaffard, 2005]. Thus, the main mission of the major international institutions has been to accompany the economic opening up of developing countries by their competition with rich countries.

All in all, this international liberal policy has led only to an increase in the economic situation of most of these assisted countries [Mappa 1990]. In fact, only countries that had not accepted these guidelines from the major international institutions and development aid were transforming their economies. This was the case for Asian countries such as China, India, the four Dragons ..., which failed to follow the international recommendations on economic liberalism to the letter [Gaffard 2005; Hugon, 2010b]. Today, their spectacular economic growth [especially that of China] changes the global geopolitical configuration without calling into question Western hegemony [LeMoigne, 2007].

The concept of local development is the subject of a contradictory debate between proponents of state intervention facilitating the coordination of local actors [Courlet and Pecqueur, 1992]; Fisherman, 1986, 2006; LeLoup, 2005) and those advocating its replacement by NGOs (Platteau, 2003; Naudet, 2006; Ragaru, 2008). The second option is clearly chosen by international donors who increasingly distrust the central state in these assisted countries, which are often accused of corruption. According to Guillaume, Udechukwu, and Williams (2012), many countries have become increasingly concerned with the subject of corruption, and managers today must deal with changes in ethical norms and laws. New laws and international agreements seek to create a worldwide shift towards the reduction of corruption.

This mistrust reflects the preponderance of the project aid, which consists in supporting local development projects, through the intervention of NGOs. In order to be competitive in the “project financing market,” donors must adapt to the different methods and conditionalities of donors while promising a transfer of skills to local players. This makes this system even more complex, and it makes use of a variety of methods of intervention and financing.

Development aid is exempt from any process of complementarity because the State in the assisted country cannot fully play its coordinating role (Platteau, 2003; LeLoup, 2005). Moreover, the local authorities, suffering from problems of technical and structural inefficiency, are unable to broaden their competence bases by supporting local actors and structuring markets. In other words, local development should be based on the complementarity of local production initiatives, functioning as an insurance mechanism in market mechanisms.

However, “The local dimension of networks and markets does not make the territories concerned islands that can be self-sufficient” (Gaffard, 2005, p. 26). On the contrary, the various territorial levels gain by developing inter- and intra-industrial exchange relations. Local development projects, so-called participatory projects, should be able to contribute to this local structure by mobilizing NGOs and their “local development experts” (Platteau, 2003).

Under these conditions, development aid leads to adjustments in territorial imbalances and to a phenomenon of underdevelopment in the assisted country. The logic of development aid feeds the asymmetric relationship between donors and local actors through the intervention of the actors in the “sphere of implementation.” Thus, structural adjustment programs do not determine local and global growth performance, but represent, fairly, the new patterns of dependence on donor countries (Gaffard, 2005).

As a result, no endogenous economic dynamics are present at the initial conditions, hindering any internal and external structuring of the different local economic relations. In other words, the different territorial levels in an assisted country do not participate in the creation of horizontal complementarity, and thus in the interdependence of public investment. The development aid system cannot address this complementarity, both local and national, which must be the true source of growth (Gaffard, 2005).

In fact, coordination of aid on the ground commences the process of bringing projects into line with the national development strategy. The use of aid at the local level, as a systematic involvement of coordination, must be transformed by the involvement and encouragement of local actors throughout the process. Thus, there is a need to link donor coordination to aid uses or to question the relationship between donor countries and an assisted country.

According to Balogun (2005), this relationship, called “donor-recipient” alignment, is nothing more than the balance of strength between donor country strategies, programs

and policy dialogs in the assisted country's national development strategies. By entrenching the dominance of the donor country's socio-cultural and organizational practices over those of the assisted country, aid is breaking down with local strategic and institutional priorities.

The configuration of the development aid system may be seen as a competition between donor countries and their modes of intervention. The projects appear to be a moment of ideological conflict, with little regard for the sociopolitical environment of the country assisted and the vision of development shared by the local actors themselves. As a result, the desire to harmonize sources of funding, through the coordination of donor countries, appears to be secondary to the preference of donor countries to fund their own projects.

In this way, aid fuels quarrels between the representatives and supporters of each donor country that is more concerned with their visibility than with alleviating the need for people. Thus, donor countries are exercising their practice by preparing reports on the successful implementation of each project. Unfortunately, territorial development cannot proceed by simply aggregating disparate donor projects that do not agree on the complementary nature of the development process itself.

The logic of "pooling of resources" for development is therefore not acceptable to donor countries and their implementation structures (NGOs, Development Agencies...). It represents a loss of profits for those actors who have so far ensured the proper management of the image of donor countries concerned with the plight of the disadvantaged populations.

As a result, the middle ground would be to aggregate the preferences and doctrines of donor countries and local actors in the helped country, two things that are not necessarily reconcilable. For example, the development aid system tends to specialize only in low-value-added sectors and serves to boost the country's economy by precipitating the decline of production structures. Donor countries prefer to have aided channeled through agencies or NGOs that are reviewed throughout the country. Thus, they are willing to blame the absorption capacity of the state, but not the volume and effectiveness of aid.

## **Conclusion**

Official development assistance is based on the asymmetry of power relations between actors in international relations. The system develops on the dialectic "Master/Student" contrary to what is advocated in speeches: a strategic partnership for development. The conditionalities of aid are so complicated that no assisted country can respect them. They serve as a pretext for donor countries to impose their development vision and experts.

The central issue relates to the strategy of rebalancing the balance of power and breaking the dependence that characterizes development aid. Aid is directed towards a total transformation of these societies (globalization) by imposing a culture of development (technology and economy) that goes beyond a simple vital function (Chamillot, 2008). Hence the slogan of capitalism: "You have to consume to live and live to consume."

In this logic, the development aid system embodies the birth of a global world that confronts particular worlds. It is accompanied by myths, values, ideals, and interpretations that feed the aspirations of the poor for well-being in the West. These are (imported) development projects aimed at strengthening the myth of “progress” and “universalism” among non-Western and underdeveloped peoples. Behind these myths lies the fundamental hypocrisy that Western powers desire to help others or facilitate their integration into the global economy. This requires strict standards and structural adjustment programs to succeed in democratizing these late societies.

International development cooperation, under the auspices of Development Assistance, devotes institutional transfers to poor countries. As noted above, the experts involved in this process aim to facilitate the transplantation of Western structures through reform aid programs (Olivier de Sardan, 2011). In fact, these are “import-export” programs that testify to the movement of the Law across borders (transfers of legal institutions). Thus, for donor countries, these arrangements can help solve all the problems of these economies, and this cultural renewal can only benefit vulnerable populations. Local development, in this view of international relations, is inconsistent and therefore cannot guarantee the take-off of these economies.

The pursuit of these two objectives (deep integration into the globalized economy and the application of aid conditionalities) weakens the state by a crisis of authority and legitimacy in the context of this “structural assistance.” The whole question of the sustainability of development and the sustainability of the institutions established from the development aid system must be asked. In order to respond to this, it is necessary to draw on the observations of the networks of actors, while neglecting the alleged transformations in relation to the strategies of donor countries.

There is a need to analyze the socio-economic relationships of the system that shape this culture of dependency and lead these countries to asymmetric relationships with donors (Chamillot, 2008). Recognizing the role of the state as a strategic planner and the fundamental place of territorial actors in a new endogenous dynamic of development in these fragile economies can facilitate the take-off of assisted countries. Development aid should be at the service of the actors in the territorial sphere (of the assisted country) to enable them to realize themselves and not the contrary.

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Development aid scheme by the authors:

Schéma du système aide au développement

