THE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO MIGRATION

AND

THE FRENCH NEW GENERATION OF

BILATERAL MIGRATION AGREEMENTS

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Overview

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Ph.D. context

- Recent immigration law and policy reforms:
  - circular skill flows (labour market needs).
  - migration regulation

- New generation of BMAs designed to respond to the criticism voiced against the former agreements (guest-worker and readmission), which had been **one-dimensionally focused** on the interests of receiving countries.

- **Innovative feature**: the French AJMs embody the EU **Global Approach to Migration** (GAM) → new *comprehensive* approach:
  - **regular migration** (mainly labour),
  - fighting against **irregular migration**,
  - **development** issues.

- 2006-2009: France signed **9 AJMs (Agreements on Joint Management of Migration Flows and Solidarity Development)**: Senegal ,Gabon, Congo, Benin, Tunisia, Mauritius, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Cameroon*.

- Assumption: the new agreements operationalise a **paradigm shift** towards a logic of *partnership* defined by **shared advantages and responsibility** between countries of origin & destination in the management of migratory flows.

- Are the new BMAs **real balanced partnerships** or are they the reflection of **unbalanced relations of power**?

Hypothesis

- On the face of it, the new agreements seem to implement the principle of *shared advantages and responsibility*.

- However, **labour mobility** and **development aid compete** with other goals (e.g. **readmission cooperation** or joint **border securitisation**) and do not always figure as a centrepiece.

- ➔ AJMs remain **asymmetrically** tilted in favour of destination countries' interests which apply these as **political tools** to intensify the relationships with former colonies and new partners, with a view to optimally competing in the "**global hunt for talent**" and at the same time, for **readmission** quotas.

Data Collection

- Primary sources:
  - BMAs (old guest-worker, co-development and other migration-related agreements),
  - new AJMs treaty-making process (i.e. inception, development and negotiations),
  - unilateral public policy on migration (laws, rules),
  - official documents,
  - semi-structured interviews with relevant government representatives.

- Secondary sources: academic literature review, media and scientific reports.

Definition of Partnerships

- Partnership → *buzzword* in different contexts
  - at national, regional, and international level
  - by governments, IOs, private sector and civil society

- **Common language** → a rather positive connotation: "*a desirable, voluntary, inherently positive form of cooperation among equals, pursuing common goals based on mutual respect*". (Kunz, 2011).

- Initially used in different fields of international cooperation: peace, development, economics, aid, security.

- Since 2005 entered the field of international migration policy → **paradigm shift**.

Partnerships for Development

- In the field of development, *partnership* increasingly used to describe **new forms of North-South and aid relations** (Kunz 2011).

- Since the mid-70s, **securing support to ex-colonies** in the context of the Cold War rivalry → ACP countries **entrusted with a role in the management** of development (e.g. Lomé Conventions 1975-2000: "culture of partnership and dialogue") (Laakso 2007).

- Since the mid-90s, Post-Washington Consensus → move **from conditionality towards a partnership approach** (e.g. OECD, DfID, the World Bank) // good governance.

The Migration & Development discourse

- In the field of migration, the *partnership* approach coincides with the **M&D dialogue** that was formalised in the **political discourse** since 2004-2005 (IAMM, GCIM, EU Global Approach to Migration, UN-HLD, IOM, GFMD).

- Idea: new challenges ➔ new solutions ➔ call for "a **planned**, **balanced**, and **comprehensive** approach" for migration management (IAMM 2004).

- EU **Global** Approach to Migration (GAM) (2005)* ➔ Comprehensive approach elaborated and propagated at international and regional level. But States are encouraged to adopt **complementary** actions at **bilateral** level ➔ new generation of BMAs.

Partnerships in Managing Migration

- "**Migration management** is an area for **partnerships** between interested **stake-holders** and for consideration of **responsibility sharing** between **States** involved in or affected by particular migratory movements. Continued exploration is required to identify additional ways by which **governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other private sector and civil society organizations** [including migrant themselves and the media] can work together to develop greater **confidence** and effective and joint **management tools**, **technical cooperation**, cost and other **responsibility sharing**". (IAMM 2004, own emphasis)

- "[…] the need for a balanced, global and coherent approach, covering policies to **combat illegal immigration** and, in **cooperation** with third countries, **harnessing the benefits of legal migration** […] The EU will strengthen its **dialogue and cooperation** with [a broad range of third countries] on migration issues, including return management, in a **spirit of partnership** and having regard to the circumstances of each country concerned. […] [The EU's] commitment to support the **development** efforts of countries of origin and transit is part of a long-term process to respond to the opportunities and challenges of migration" (European Council 2005, own emphasis). "The approach taken shows tangible, active **solidarity**, hinged on **responsibility-sharing** between **Member States** and with **third countries**" (COM 2006, own emphasis).

The paradigm shift

- New partnership approach of **migration management** based on:

  - **Comprehensive dialogue and cooperation**
  - **"Shared advantages"**
  - **"Shared responsibility"**

- **Implications** of the partnership approach:

  - "**Technicalisation**" of migration management → *depolitization* (in the sense of politics, not policy!) (Kunz 2011)
  - Migration management → integral component of **good governance**

Partnership indicators

- **Initiator**: France or partner country?

- **Selection of partners**:

  - **historical ties** (e.g. former colonies),

  - **political** & **economic** interests,

  - previous & current **agreements**: security & military, trade, development aid, migration (labour, guest-worker, movement, establishment, readmission)

- Categories of **occupations liberalised** (skills levels)

- Degree of **equality** & **reciprocity**

- **Development priorities** & "**aid conditionality**"

Source: Salcedo P. (Wordle, 2011)   13

Concluding remarks

- "partnership is **expected to be mutually beneficial**, but it is **not necessarily based on equality**. Consequently the notion of partnership can **justify cooperation within unequal relations**" (Laakso: 2007: 11)

- Partnership = " a **more collaborative** approach of the migration-development nexus" but not a complete paradigm shift (Chétail 2009)

Thank you very much for your attention.

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