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## Foundations of community territorial planning policy of WAEMU

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### Abstract

After the independences, some West African countries opted to unite within the framework of regional integration to face the multiple problems of their development. It is in this perspective that the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) has been created in 1994. However, despite the creation of this Union, the Member States of the Union meet some difficulties in the implementation of their regional integration policy, the objective of which is to promote their development. Then they opted for the adoption of a Community territorial Planning Policy (PATC) in 2004. Thus, this theoretical research aims to study the foundations of the WAEMU community territorial planning policy. The study reveals that this Community policy is essentially based on factors linked to the evolution of the organization of the regional space, the missions of the Union, the weaknesses of national territorial planning policies and the need community solidarity.

**Keywords:** territorial planning, regional integration, WAEMU

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### Introduction

Since the end of the Second World War, the attempts at multilateral cooperation on a regional basis have multiplied throughout the world. From that time, the craze for regional integration then spread to other continents (V. Zoma, 2019) <sup>[1]</sup>. To be competitive, several countries have tried to strengthen their integration by building new regional groupings or by giving new impetus to existing groupings. This regional integration movement has taken shape in almost all the continents of the planet (I. Yonlihinza Abdou, 2005) <sup>[4]</sup>.

Africa has not remained on the sidelines of this craze for regional integration which concerns almost all continents in the context of globalization. The importance of regional integration, which aims to accelerate and strengthen economic and social development, has long been recognized by African decision-makers (P. Diagne, 1972; C.N.U.C.E.D, 2009). According to M. Somda (2018, p.71), “*in this globalized world, the African continent, despite its natural wealth and its economic potential, is in a precarious situation and is struggling to find its bearings*”. A. Diouf (2006) specifies that unlike other regions of the South, Africa remains poorly equipped to both face its constraints and take advantage of its opportunities. Its fragility reside above all in its extreme fragmentation resulting from what is called its “balkanization” coming from the Berlin Congress of 1885 when this continent was divided between the colonial powers.

Moreover, in West Africa, faced with development problems, particularly in the areas of transport infrastructure, education, energy, food, etc., the States of this region, being aware that they cannot objectively face each of these endemic problems alone, have been led to pool efforts through the establishment of supranational structures of a sectorial nature such as the Inter-State Committee for the Fight Against Drought in the Sahel (CILSS) and of a general nature such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) within the framework of regional integration.

Concerning WAEMU particularly, the member countries of this region have opted for the path of regional integration in view of their lackluster economic realities. Indeed, in order to consolidate the West African Monetary Union (WAMU), created on May 12, 1962 by the founding States of the Central Bank of West African States (CBWAS), a Treaty was signed creating WAEMU on January 10, 1994 in Dakar.

Notwithstanding the creation of WAEMU, the Member States of the Union encounter difficulties in the implementation of their regional integration policy, the objective of which is to promote their development. It is in this context that the Community Territorial Planning Policy (PATC) <sup>[1]</sup> was adopted by the WAEMU Commission in 2004 with a view to strengthen regional integration and thus to promote the development of the Member States of this regional space. This present article, which is a theoretical research, aims to study the foundations of the WAEMU community territorial planning policy.

This study, based mainly on documentary research of WAEMU, reveals that the Union's community territorial planning policy has essentially four foundations. These are factors related to the evolution of the organization of the regional space, the missions of WAEMU, the weaknesses of national policies for territorial planning and the need for community solidarity.

### 1. The evolution of the organization of the regional space

The organization of space is a long-term process. In general, a space is organized more or less continuously over a period of several centuries (V. Zoma, 2019) <sup>[1]</sup>. Indeed, man has always planed space to satisfy his needs. In the traditional societies of the States that are today members of WAEMU, the occupation of space before the colonial period was guided by the satisfaction of security needs, the availability of cultivable land, the presence of game, the need for mobility, organizational considerations, etc. Regionally, before the colonial period, the great empires (Ghana, Mali, etc.) were linked by trade way that allowed these traditional societies in the region

to exploit the differences and complementarities of ecological spaces between the forests areas and those of the savannas (WAEMU, 2003).

The colonial period saw the creation of a network of towns, trade and traffic markets (waterways, roads, railways) according to the interests of the settlers (WAEMU, 2003, *op.cit.*), even if, J. Debrie (2001) <sup>[5]</sup> considers that, as regards the motives for European penetration, it is difficult to identify the real reasons for this penetration and its exploitation. In a general way, this new framework linked to European penetration was at the origin of territorial divisions whose main objective was the administrative control of men and space as well as the military domination of the States (WAEMU, 2003, *op.cit.*).

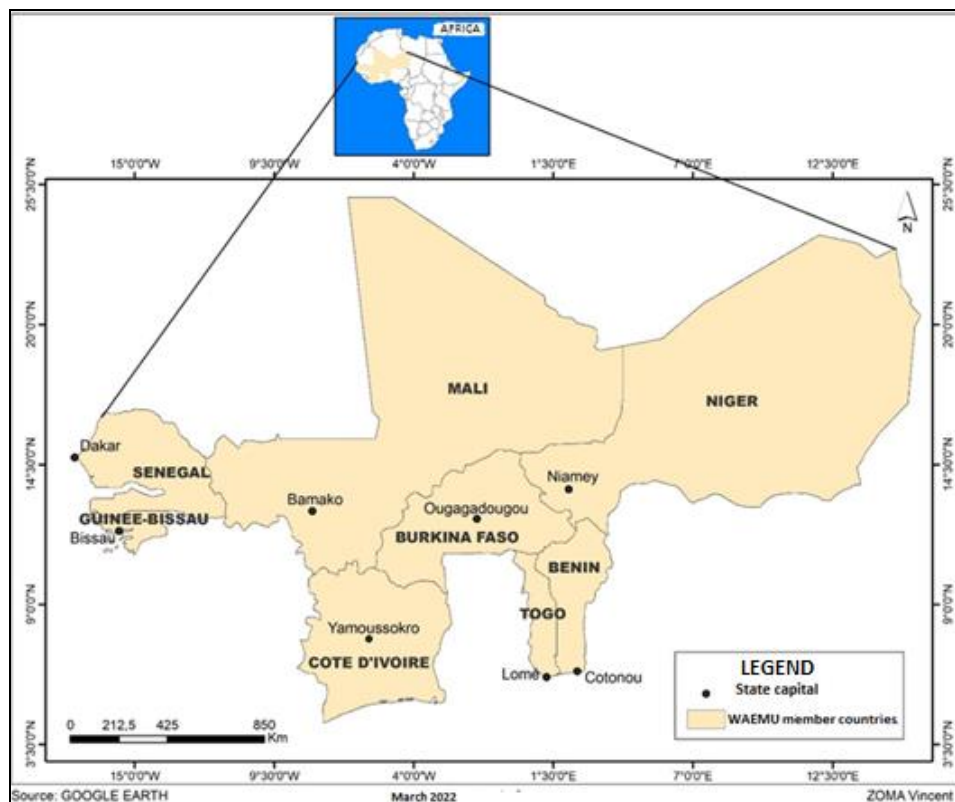
After the independences, the nascent States retained within their respective borders the achievements of colonization, by embarking on administrative, institutional and structural reforms aimed at territorial planning (PDM, 2000). A. Gandhi (2009, p.14) specifies that “*Each state had chosen to go it alone by copying the model of its former colonizer to build a nation and build its own future*”. According to Municipal Development Partnership (PDM, 2000, *op.cit.*), the plans developed at the time would mark the organization of territories both at national and regional level under the leadership of the States. However, this orientation was gradually abandoned with the fight against rural exodus and the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) from the 1980s. Indeed, when the economic crisis hit in the 1980s, the SAPs give priority to the restoration of major macro-economic balances over spatial development preoccupations.

Following two decades of Structural Adjustment Policies dominated by macroeconomic considerations, there was an appeal to politicians by intellectuals and experts from the region who met in October 2000 in Cotonou <sup>[2]</sup> to examine the conclusions of the study on “long-term prospects in West Africa”. This study raised the alarm on the fact that if nothing is done to slow down or even stem the trends, half of the West African population could concentrate on the coastal strip between Lagos and Abidjan, by 2020-2030. It was therefore necessary to consider appropriate measures to avoid this, since such a situation would contribute to aggravating the imbalances and problems already experienced by the region (WAEMU, 2011).

The Cotonou call was followed by the interpellation of the Commission by the Member States of the Union to restart the medium and long-term planning and programming processes. The use of community territorial planning is therefore justified by the historical evolution of the organization of the regional space but also by the missions of WAEMU in this area.

## 2. The missions of WAEMU

WAEMU was created on January 10, 1994. It brings together eight West African states that share the CFA Franc. Map 1 identifies the member states of the current WAEMU.



**Map 1: WAEMU Member States**

This map 1 shows the WAEMU member states. The Union is in fact made up of 8 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Guinea Bissau) which covers an area of 3,506,126 km<sup>2</sup> and had 120.2 million inhabitants in 2017 (WAEMU, 2018). The Union is part of a vast spatial framework which is based in the West and South on the Atlantic Ocean, then on the Saharan regions in the North.

WAEMU constitutes the emergence of a new level of territorial management in West Africa. This region is experiencing average population growth rates of 3% per year in 2007, and 6.5% in 2013 with a predominantly young population. This dynamism and the young character of the population are assets that could be used in development efforts. However, they are likely to lead to changes capable of dangerously affecting community harmony by worsening regional disparities. It is therefore urgent to properly target these disparities in order to better correct them within the framework of the cohesion and regional integration policy (WAEMU, 2011, *op.ci.t*).

The correction or reduction of regional disparities in WAEMU is taken into account in the Community territorial planning policy and is based on the following facts at the institutional level:

1. It is an instruction of the Treaty of the Union which prescribes in its additional protocol No. II the establishment of a policy of development of the Community <sup>[3]</sup> territory with a view to the balance of the different components of its territory;
2. The need to support the States in their desire to relaunch at the national level, the implementation of territorial planning policy after the Structural Adjustment Programs which have shown their limits;
3. the progress made by the Union in the development and implementation of sectorial policies requires a framework of orientation and harmonization so that it is no longer a matter of sight in the actions to be undertaken;
4. The urgency of detecting, preventing and anticipating major sectorial and territorial developments in order to adapt to global developments and requirements;
5. The need to take into account and better direct migratory movements, to reduce the dysfunctions observed in the community space, to better position the region in the continental context and to link it to the rest of the world.

The elaboration of the Community territorial planning policy is then justified by the missions of the WAEMU, but also by the elements revealed by the diagnosis of the unenviable national territorial planning policies.

### **3. Weaknesses of national territorial planning policies**

The study has made it possible to highlight four main weaknesses or difficulties of the Member States of the Union in the implementation of national territorial planning policies.

Firstly, there is the disparate level of the state of definition of territorial planning policies and the domination of the “project approach”. Indeed, most of the member countries of the Union did not have a truly well-defined national policy in terms of territorial planning before 2004. In other words:

Territorial planning actions were part of environment, equipment, sanitation, hydraulics or rural development projects. In some cases, these policies were included in regional planning and programming documents (WAEMU, 2003, p.17).

The absence of a real national territorial planning policy was accompanied by the domination of the “project approach”. This approach was encouraged by donors and resulted in a lack of coherence and coordination. Also, this gap was accompanied by the weaknesses of the communication systems in terms of territorial planning.

Concerning the weaknesses of the information and data exchange systems on territorial planning, the services in charge of territorial planning, in most of the member countries of the Union, did not have a collection system and data management. This weakness made it difficult to make an overall assessment of territorial planning in most of the member territories of the Union. Only Benin and Burkina Faso had carried out new thematic studies in the context of territorial planning before the adoption of the community territorial planning policy (WAEMU, 2003, *op.cit.*).

In addition to the weaknesses of the information and data exchange systems, there is the lack of technical and financial means in the States of the Union in terms of territorial planning. The framework document of the community territorial planning policy shows that the financial contribution of the countries of the Union has remained relatively low within the structures in charge of territorial planning. Territorial planning was financed in most of the States of the Union by development partners before the adoption of a community policy. The countries that have taken initiatives to finance their policy have been left alone with their implementation. The absence of a real regional development policy is also due to “*the fragmented knowledge of the advantages and constraints of their territory*”. The monographic studies were largely outdated and no longer gave a real image of the countries (land use, location of human settlements, nature reserves, communication ways, waterways, etc. (WAEMU, 2003, p. 23-24).

In addition to the shortcomings of technical and financial means, there are institutional and human resource weaknesses within the Member States of the Union in the field of territorial planning. A. Diop and M. Diallo (2013) show that the establishment of community institutions of a technical nature (OMVS, OMVG, etc.), through the signing of treaties and agreements whose objective is to strengthen the economic, monetary and political partnership between member states of the region. These various institutions have made significant progress, particularly at the political and institutional level. However, in the member countries of the Union, before the adoption of the community territorial planning policy, the structures and officials who led the territorial planning were very unstable. Indeed, “*they often changed supervision and ownership during government reshuffles. Also, these structures had very few competent design frameworks to carry out a real territorial planning policy*” (WAEMU, 2003, p.19).

This gap has led to perpetual repetition of the reflections and/or actions undertaken, resulting in a sort of dullness. Solidarity at the community level should then be considered to face the challenges and issues of the region.

#### **4. Need for community solidarity**

The diagnosis of territorial planning policies in the States of the Union shows the need for community solidarity in the face of the common challenges to be met on the one hand and on the other hand in the face of the issues of great importance to be defended and safeguarded.

Concerning the community challenges to be met, the demographic and urban problems, the persistence of poverty as well as the disparity in the levels of economic development are concerns of paramount importance for the WAEMU Member States.

Faced with demographic problems, the countries of the Union present very great inequalities in demographic terms. Indeed, the highly varied population, with types of structured and heterogeneous societies on the linguistic and cultural levels, presents a very unequal spatial distribution, with centers of high concentrations, visible on the coasts, rail and road nodes as well as in urban centers. Beside these exceptional concentrations, there are vast spaces of demographic depressions which correspond to desert areas and mountainous areas. Demographic problems manifest themselves essentially at three levels in the community space:

- An imbalance between economic growth and population growth;
- An imbalance in the spatial distribution of the community population;
- Migration from the interior to coastal countries (WAEMU, 2003, *op.cit.*).

These demographic problems therefore constitute a challenge for regional integration, and one of these corollaries is evident in urban centers. According to the framework document for community territorial planning policy, most cities in the member countries of the Union were characterized by accelerated urbanization before 2004. The supremacy of capital cities is such that the WAEMU space hasn't real cities only these political or economic capitals. This situation is detrimental to economic activities which can't flourish fully, across space without a minimum of spatial organization.

In addition to demographic problems and that of urban centers, the poverty of populations and economic inequalities can explain certain urban and demographic problems in the States of the Union. According to A. Diop and M. Diallo (2013), the institutional approach to regional integration that has been put in place has certainly made it possible to make progress, but the African model of regional integration has not taken into account socio-economic logic populations. However, G. Poujol (2017) underlines that imagining the future of regional integration in the WAEMU space without the informal sector, practiced above all by the populations in almost all localities, seems impossible, as this sector is essential, because it is transverse. According to the framework document of the community development policy (WAEMU, 2003, *op.cit.*), in the great majority of the populations of the WAEMU's space, the standard of living remains very low. The persistence of poverty is partly due to the disparity in the levels of development of the member countries of the Union. This disparate level of development of the Member States is accompanied by the weakness of the production support sectors.

Thus, regional disparities and the weakness of production support sectors are not likely to promote or facilitate the regional integration of WAEMU, which also has its challenges to defend and safeguard. The development of regional complementarities, the rebalancing of development poles and the exploitation of cultural values are important issues in the WAEMU regional integration process. Thus, apart from the development of complementarities to consolidate the internal market, the rebalancing of the development poles of the region is also a concern.

Regional integration must take advantage of the complementarity of the economies of States, mainly between the coastal zone and the continental zone. Also, the Union has a currency which is a support for its construction. This should benefit from greater support through dynamic and competitive economies. The implementation of community development projects on the basis of potential is one of the means to achieve this. It is therefore necessary to rebalance the development poles of the WAEMU space. Indeed, since 2002, the Ivorian crisis has highlighted the insufficiency and the great imbalances of the network and the connections between the coastal cities and those of the interior of the region (WAEMU, 2003, *op.cit.*).

According to the same source, the Union could fully play its role of integration, if it pursues policies which encourage the promotion of development poles and which contribute to a better rebalancing of the population and the emergence of genuine networks functional cities. The development of complementarities and the rebalancing of development poles are challenges for the community policy for territorial planning.

This policy should also exploit regional cultural values, because WAEMU:

Is characterized by great cultural diversity and a significant diaspora which are potential factors for development. The reference to these cultural dimensions could be used for technological improvement, the choice of the model of society to be built, consumption to be valued, ambitions and interests to be defended (WAEMU, 2003, p.27).

Border regions also deserve to be revalued around the concept of "border countries" in order to give life to historical entities cut off by state borders (WAEMU, 2003, *op.cit.*). Along the same lines, A. Diop and M. Diallo (2013) argue that instead of relying solely on the mobilization of all States for the construction of a community space, we must also encourage real integration through the definition of "concentric circles" regrouping two or three States.

## Conclusion

This research is a study of the factors that favored the adoption of the community territorial planning policy of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).

The study shows that the evolution of the organization of the regional space, the missions of the Union, the weaknesses of national planning policies as well as the need for regional solidarity to take up and face the challenges and community issues constitute the main foundations of community territorial planning policy. As well as the weaknesses of countries' territorial planning policies and the need for solidarity community, constitute the main bases for the development of community territorial planning policy.

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