

Relations with People and Relations with Things: Management of Human Resources in African Companies

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Abstract. This article intends to analyze the viability of a paternalistic human resources management model in companies of the formal sector, where a logic of profit maximization assumes a more demanding dimension. Paternalism is used as a metaphor to understand the relations between employers and employees as modelled on relations between parents and children. The concept demonstrates the transformation of exploitation and authoritarian relations, guided under the imperative of regulation and profit, in ethical and affective relations, where the feeling of duty towards a protector predominates. A paternalist practice consists, in a general way, of attributing a set of affective and social benefits, in exchange for low wage indices, perpetuating employees' dependence in relation to the company. In fact, the model is criticized for not encouraging African workers' autonomy and social emancipation, promoting instead servility and submission to the authorities. This article intends to examine to what extent paternalist practices are adapted to sub-Saharan social and economic needs, compensating for the fragility of the Welfare State. Finally, it aims to reflect on the epistemological presuppositions of development conceptions.

Keywords: management of human resources; development in Africa; African companies; African entrepreneurs

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