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Aid, democracy and extraversion,
or the usefulness of comparing Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique

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INDEX
1. Introduction:
The politics of good governance in context
2. The comparison:
Aid and politics in two postcolonial states
3. Conclusion:
Variations in the African extraversion

Introduction: The politics of good governance in context

It is well known that since the end of Cold War, African countries have experienced political changes from one party or military regimes towards multiparty regimes. These processes have internal as well as transnational dimensions. One of these dimensions is the politics of conditionality of aid institutions and the new emphasis on *good governance* in development discourse\(^1\).

Some authors give an extraordinary importance to this phenomenon when try explain contemporary African politics. According to Rita ABRAHAMSEN, "the good governance discourse is an intrinsic part of the governance of the African continent by the North, and one of the ways in which contemporary international structures and relations of power are maintained and reproduced"\(^2\).

This short paper about the relations between aid and political processes in Africa adopts a

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different approach. My aim is not to analyse how good governance is instrumental to the main world powers, but to study how international processes can affect in very different ways African politics, depending on the specific history and international connections of distinct countries. Secondly, I would like to underscore how discourses, such as good governance, assume different relevance according to those circumstances.

Aid is considered here as a part of the *extraversion* of African politics, described by Jean-François BAYART\(^3\). With this concept we can understand how the dependency and unequal relationship with external environment, which characterised sub-Saharan political landscape, is one of the main resources in political actors’ hands to maintain their power over their populations. My intention is to show how extraversion changes along time and space. For that, I concentrate in two distanced countries, Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique, whose comparison can be very useful to avoid too big generalisations, and, at the same time, can prove the existence of broad processes that affect many places in different ways.

A secondary assumption, not quite developed here, is that Africans, and especially governmental elites, make use of international languages, such as good governance, to pursue their own agendas, in which survival becomes central\(^4\).

**Decolonisation**

The territorial states of Mozambique and Equatorial Guinea find their origins in their independence from two southern European countries, Portugal and Spain, characterised at the time by authoritarian government. Nevertheless, despite similarities in colonial imaginary and rule, both colonies suffered very different decolonisations.

As I tried to show in my PhD dissertation, nationalists of Equatorial Guinea found in United Nations and the Afro-Asiatic movement a very convenient scenario to push Francoist regime against its phantoms of international isolation\(^5\). As a consequence, independence in 1968 was characterised by negotiation. For its part, the Portuguese decision to stand against retirement was contested in all its colonies by armed insurgencies that in the case of Mozambique were headed by one movement, the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO). The independence in 1975 was thus obtained in great part, through a violent process.

The international arena played, in both cases, a big part in the way and the results that assumed decolonisation, though in different ways. In Equatorial Guinea the United Nations fostered a negotiated exit to the colonial tension, and promoted a unified independence between the two parts of the territory (Bioko Island and Rio Muni, in the mainland). In Mozambique, the colonial war made of decolonisation a regional process, at the time when Cold War was entering Southern Africa. During conflict, FRELIMO defined its main foreign alliance with Tanzania or the communist block, and its compromise with the end of its neighbour white regimes.

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Modernisation and authoritarianism during Cold War

After independence, governments of Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique adopted modernisation language as part of their legitimacy. Modernisation justified in part the establishment of authoritarian regimes in both countries, though they adopted very different character.

Whereas in Mozambique the compromise with social transformation of FRELIMO nationalist elite was quite strong, in Equatorial Guinea modernisation was almost rhetoric. It hardly justified few investments in infrastructures, whereas colonial economy collapsed and Guinean families concentrated on subsistence farming. If the state administration subsisted was due to some international aid from the old colonial power, France and socialist countries, USSR and China. A never clarified coup d'etat justified the imposition of a terror government by the elected president, Macías Nguema, in March 1969, five months after independence. The repression reached the old colonial as well as the nationalist elite, and terror and fear became the main instrument of power. The state was restructured along Nguema's family, making Guinean politics a family affair. Disorder, as Chabal and Daloz put it, prevailed over any other political articulation. And the opposition was hardly able to create a movement in exile, ANRD, which rallied little international support.

In Mozambique, modernisation project was much more incorporated to FRELIMO's struggle, and since 1977 it was expressed in the language of Marxism. The postcolonial government tried to implement effective politics to transform the rural economic structure, similarly to those of TANU in Tanzania. This social engineering required the centralisation of all power in the party and the elimination of alternative authorities. The resistance of part of the population provided some social support to the guerrilla movement created by Rodhesia regime, which started a civil war in 1978. All this encouraged FRELIMO's authoritarianism, which was justified in the need of national unity against the foreign threat and modernisation against recalcitrant traditionalism.

The international insertion of both states was also very different, despite initial similarities. Old colonial powers, Portugal and Spain, due to their weakness and the way independence was reached, lost most of their influence and economic presence after their withdrawal. New international connections appeared which included in both cases socialist countries, specially the Soviet Union and China. And international norms related to self-determination and sovereignty played also a big part supporting the new postcolonial states.

But this was most obvious in the case of Equatorial Guinea, where international norms claimed in United Nations had helped to end colonialism. International recognition was not made dependent on the effective participation of the population in the state, and new independent government could allege sovereignty and non-intervention principles to justify and to reject any external criticism to the repression of internal dissidence. Postcolonial

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opposers did not find in the international norms the support that anti-colonial nationalists had found.

In Mozambique, on the contrary, the principle of non-intervention did not help the new government to avoid foreign interference. The white regimes in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa that surrounded the new independent country supported an internal guerrilla army, RNM-RENAMO, in order to destabilise a FRELIMO government in which anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements, ZANU and ANC, found a firm backer.

In summary, if in Equatorial Guinea international norms such as the principle of non-intervention and the international aid upheld a government based on fear and repression, in Mozambique the violation of these same principles by Rhodesia and South Africa did not help the rights and liberties of Mozambicans. On the contrary, it contributed to a conflict that impoverished the country and killed hundreds of thousands of people.

**Aid and the politics of adjustment**

At the beginning of the 1980s, all these economic and political dynamics brought the postcolonial states to a crisis that was economic as well as of legitimacy. New international actors appeared in Africa, specially the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which, in exchange to their finance support, demanded the almost complete change of the nationalist approach to development. The neoliberal orthodoxy demanded the end of the state as the main promoter of modernisation and advocated for the markets as main instruments to go out the crisis and meet development goals.

During the liberal moment of the 1980s, our two countries suffered a certain rapprochement towards western countries. In Equatorial Guinea, the nephew of the dictator, Teodoro Obiang Nguema, gave a palace coup against his uncle in 1979 and breded expectations of democratisation and new affluence of western aid. In fact, multilateral and bilateral aid flew to the country. The new government signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation with old colonial power, Spain, which sent numerous Spanish technicians to the old colony during the 1980s. United Nations helped to organise two conferences in 1982 and 1988 with a Round Table of Donor Countries, where they adopted an economic development program. Equatorial Guinea entered the Franco CFA zone in 1988 and the multilateral agreements between EU and ACP countries. Finally, the government accepted an IMF proposal of Structural Adjustment Plan in 1988. During these years, aid became the main resource of the state, for economic activity was not reactivated.

None of international aid programs was directed to the strengthening of democratic institutions, and its disbursement was not conditional to the effective respect of human rights. Actually, unconditional aid facilitated that Obiang government did not entail a real change in social and political structures, which were maintained under Nguema family's control. Only political assassinates became less frequent; but poverty and repression kept being used by governments to assure their preponderance.

In Mozambique, FRELIMO government began to transform its economic and foreign politics after the IV Party Congress in 1983. Since then, FRELIMO started to abandon its model of society and regional relations, and adopted politics of economic liberalisation, as a way to make new economic resources from international financial institutions available. At the same
time, in 1984, Mozambique and South Africa signed the Nkomati agreement, with which Maputo, promising the closure of ANC headquarters in the country, aspire to put an end to South African support of RENAMO. After President Samora Machel death in an unclear accident in 1986, Joaquim Chissano reinforced the economic conversion of FRELIMO, and in 1987 adopted a program of structural adjustmen (Programa de Recuperação Económica-PRE). Its basic aims were the promotion of agriculture and the reduction of public expenditure.

However, neither the Nkomati agreement nor the structural adjustment reached their aims. RENAMO kept receiving support from Pretoria, and the liberal economic policies did not promote a significance growth, whereas inflation and reduction of social services affected gravely to the population. What happened was an extraordinary growing of aid and humanitarian programs in the country, which permitted the FRELIMO government to survive, but at the same time diminished the government capacity to control the economic decisions and design the development strategies.

Democracy and aid in early 90s

The political changes that experienced the African countries after the end of Cold War also affected our two cases. The new attitude of donors, more favourable towards democracy, and the winds of change in the continent, pushed the government of Equatorial Guinea to draw a new constitution in 1991 establishing a multiparty system with periodic elections for the legislative assembly, the presidency and the town councils. Many political parties were recognised, and in 1993 they and the party in power, PDGE, signed a National Pact. However, at the same time, the government developed new forms of repression and co-optation against the now recognised opposers. Many of them were detained and tortured. And the government learnt how to manipulate the elections and its results, and to intimidate the citizens to force them to desist from participating in political activities.

International donors replied to the halt of the political transition. Spanish government retired most of its institutional aid programs in 1994 and the Clinton Administration closed the US embassy and the rural development programs of the Peace Corps two years later. Also in 1996, IMF suspended its programs due to lack of accomplishment of fiscal measures and corruption. At the same time, the country was suffering the effects of the devaluation of franc CFA in August 1993. The economic crisis that followed pushed Equatorial Guinean government to ask again for foreign support. Donors, especially Spain, take advantage of the situation and conditioned the disbursement of aid to the fairness of next elections. Actually, local elections in September 1995 are considered the fairest of all celebrated since 1991, where opposition propose a joint list that won 19 out of 27 town councils (though government only recognised 9).

In Mozambique, the democratic moment coincided with the negotiation and pacification process and the end of war between FRELIMO and RENAMO. The diminishing of external

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resources in the context of the end of apartheid and Cold War facilitated the positive attitude of government and guerrilla to finish the armed struggle and to recognise each other as legitimate political parties in an electoral contest. The Mozambican process was intensely penetrated by internal and international actors. The definite location of negotiations was the headquarters of Community of Saint Egidio, in Rome. And implementation of agreements (which suffered different problems and delays in relation to demobilisation of troops) was in charge of UN mission, ONUMOZ.

The reform of the political system was one of the main pieces of the peace process. The government had approved a new constitution in November 1990, transforming the one party state in a multiparty system, in which the president and the parliament were elected by universal suffrage, and liberal rights were recognised. Rome agreements included an electoral law and the compromise to celebrate elections in 1993. Finally elections took place in 1994. FRELIMO won, for a small difference over RENAMO, first elections, which were accepted by United Nations despite accusations of intimidation during elections. Chissano obtained 53,3% of votes, and Dhlakama 33,7%, whereas seats in parliament were distributed between FRELIMO 129, RENAMO 112 and União Democrática 9. Despite international pressures, president Chissano did not accepted the constitution of national unity proposed by donors as United States.

The stability of new government was based on external resources. Aid became the main proportion of national budget, and it was also the mean by which RENAMO survived. In this context, international donors and development NGOs had reinforced its presence and its capacity in Mozambique, and constitute a powerful web of influence on the government, which is often compel to accept their programs and proposals to assure the continuity of the finance flow.

Variations in African Extraversion: Oil and Aid dependencies

The importance of aid for Mozambican politics contrasts with the situation of Equatorial Guinea since mid-90s. In 1994, the oil production in Equatorial Guinea waters started to grow sharply, from 17,000 bpd in 1996 to 371,700 bpd in 2004. The ascendancy of aid agents and diplomats was replaced by the influence representatives of big oil corporations, mostly Americans. These newly arrived economic groups turn to be far less interested in promoting democracy or human rights. The arrival of American businessmen at the time US embassy were closing and diplomats leaving is good symbol of all this.

Oil production put an end to Equatorial Guinean aid dependency, and also to external democratisation pressures of early 1990s. In 2002, the mandate of the UN special representative for monitoring the human rights situation in Equatorial Guinea was not renewed, as a consequence of effective pressures of the Guinean government. Despite the astonishing economic growth and the net diminution of aid resources, many multilateral and bilateral mechanisms has been reactivated. None of them has been conditioned to political reforms. In the new economic context, compromise of donors with democracy has

11 The day before, the leader of RENAMO, A. Dhlakama, announced his withdrawal, provoking a vigorous response by the part of "international comunity", specially United Nations, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Italy and United States, who offered additional financing to Dhalakama.

In 1997 was celebrated a National Economic Conference, backed by donors, in which government approved an Economic Strategy for 1997-2001, with components of structural adjustment. Spain, main bilateral donor, transformed again its policy towards Equatorial Guinea after the discovery of oil in 1999, both government celebrated an new agreement on aid and co-operation (IX Comisión Mixta), focused on education and health, but without any "democratic clause". This was just afterwards a wave of repression against the Movement for Self-determination of Bioko Island and the celebration of legislative elections considered by observers as non-transparent. Spanish government has also accepted to cancel and renegotiate parts of the debt Equatorial Guinea had with it. Oil has become one interest more in addition to those traditional Spanish interests in that country: in 2003 Repsol got a contract to co-exploit an oilfield. Finally, due to pressures by the part of Equatorial-Guinean government closed its radio programme dedicated to Equatorial Guinea, which was the only space of freedom of speech in the country.

The political consequences of the new political economy are evident: the president has widened the politics of patronage and clientelism through distribution of part of oil rents. The biggest part of it, however, has gone to personal bank accounts abroad. As a consequence, opposition has suffered a periodic process of fragmentation and absorption by the party in power, and today only one party, CPDS, stands legally against the government. The enclave oil economy reinforces the state as the main social source of accumulation, and assists the government in its particular politics of disempowerment and impoverishment. Temptation to collaborate with the party in government to get a job or simply avoid police harassment is bigger and bigger since the discovery of oil. The so-called "Dutch Disease" has the effect of depressing other economic areas, and small producers and entrepreneurs only find obstacles to their economic activity, despite the favourable environment for big business.

Elections since 1996 had been characterised by open fraud. Electoral processes in 1996 (presidential) and 1999 (legislative) had confirmed Obiang Nguema and PDGE in power. Opposition did not run for local elections in 2000. In December 2000 Obiang won again presidential elections with 97,7% of votes, after opposition candidate decided to renounce little before the end of voting day. All this happened at the same time that main opposition leader, Plácido Micó, and some other opposers were kept in jail, after a trial that Amnesty International and others human rights organisations considered unfair. Last local and legislative elections in April 2004 were as fraudulent as previous ones, and "public vote" of citizens dominated the voting.

Despite the small interest of donors on democracy in Equatorial Guinea, there has recently appeared a new concern on other related issue: transparency. This was due to some pressures made by international advocacy organisations and campaigns –such as Global Witness or Publish What You Pay –, which denounce the connections between extraction of natural resources and human rights abuses. The discovery that US$ 700 million of Equatorial Guinea's oil revenues had been placed in an account of an American Bank (Riggs')

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under the direct control of President Obiang Nguema, was also denounced by the same US Senate.

As a reaction, the Equatorial-Guinean government has shown a strong interest to participate in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) of Tony Blair's government, and to get IMF certificate of transparency. Though IMF considers that "important progress has been made with regard to transparency and accountability of oil-related revenues and public finance" in its 2005 Public Information Notice for Equatorial Guinea, organisations such as Global Witness are trying to make conditional Equatorial Guinea participation in international initiatives to real participation of civil society in them. The efficacy of these international pressures to the country democracy and politics is something to be seen in the future.

In Mozambique, the question of democracy adopts different lines. International donors have kept backing electoral process in Mozambique and economic and institutional reforms. Aid constitutes the bigger part (40%) of GDP, which gives international agencies a big capacity to define government politics, and debtors had cancelled big part of Mozambican debt since 1996, when it entered to take part in the HIPC Initiative. The paradox of democracy in Mozambique is that at the same time that international actors make pressures on FRELIMO to respect the rules of the democratic game, they try to impose politics and programs not socially agreed. Liberal economic policies have been deepen and have favoured external inversions (especially South African) in agriculture, tourism or infrastructures, as well as the conversion of part of the political elite in a new national bourgeoisie.

Many authors consider that this situation undermines Mozambican sovereignty, so much defended by FRELIMO in its initial nationalist project. But others emphasise the fact that FRELIMO maintains control of the state thanks to a remarkable use of language of democracy and reconstruction, of mechanisms of patronage and clientelism and of the need that donors have of a "success story". At the same time, RENAMO obtained part of the peace dividends and electoral participation in form of external financing.

Benefits of all these reforms for the majority of population had been less spectacular. The end of civil war allowed people to come back to their places and economic activities, to move freely and to have access to the few social services by the government, the RENAMO and the international NGOs. But the persistence of poverty, worsened by cycles of draught and flooding, did not favour the capacity of people to participate in public affairs. For its part, electoral democracy has been faulty, as RENAMO did not run for 1998 local elections and accused of fraud 1999 presidential and legislative elections. Abstention has been very high in local elections in November 2003 and presidential and legislative in November 2004. Clientelistic and patronage webs, dominated by FRELIMO and in lesser extent by RENAMO, greatly condition political participation.

In this context, the great implication of donors in Mozambican political process makes good governance one of the express aims with which they justify their presence in the country. The language of good governance works more as a compensatory and balancing discourse of the

effects provoked by neoliberal economic policies than a coherent part of it. Good governance inspires programs to assist institutions, looking to strength as well as to reform the state. The state that donors want to develop is one more efficient, with more territorial presence and a facilitator of market relations. One of the most sensitive and controversial programs of good governance in Mozambique is the reform of the Justice sector. The aim of the Justice reform is double: (1) to improve the juridical security for national and international business; (2) to address the violations of human rights in prisons and police stations, as well as the difficulties for ordinary citizens to reach the Tribunals. These programs of good governance have some contradictory aims: they seek to assist the state and at the same time the civil society that should control it. This has created a space for Mozambican civil society – religious churches, lobbying organisations or NGOs – that have got some autonomy from state due to external finance. But, at the same time, the external finance is strengthening the role of population as beneficiaries and clients more than citizens. There is also an evident contradiction between demands of democratisation and the fact than meetings between government and donors are more important than decisions in Parliament. The abstention in late general elections confirms the general perception among population that their votes are rather useless to decide politics.

Conclusions

The dependency of African governments on external resources, and their role as gatekeepers between international processed and clientelist internal networks, do not favour democratic participation of citizens on public affairs. As far as governments do not fully depend on their population for the survival of the state, the relashionship between rulers and citizens is not mainly based on the respect of their rights, and fear and disorder may become main instruments of social control.

This notwithstanding, and as we have seen through the comparison of two cases, extraversion in African politics suffers numerous variations in time and space. The relevance of international connections makes African states very sensitive to transformations in the international arena. One of these late transformations has been the emergence of political conditionality of development aid. Other variations refer to the particular insertion of countries in economic international currents: the possession of oil greatly differentiates Equatorial Guinea's extraversion from that of Mozambique, where aid has become state's main resource.

The different kind of extraversions can affect differently to African democracy or the capacity of African people to participate in the public domains. It could be thought that when the main resource of the state is aid, and the hegemonic language of aid industry is good governance, it can make donors a factor of greater democratisation.

But the efficiency of international efforts to promote democracy, through the conditioning of

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18 The most committed donors had promoted the co-ordination between all donors in a specific group for Justice sector. At the same time, they had encouraged the creation of a Council of Co-ordination of Legality and Justice among all the public institutions related to Justice: Tribunals, attorney-general, and Ministry of Justice, and to some extent, the Police. Local and community instances of resolution of conflicts are not seriously attended.

aid is proving to be quite limited. The main reason is precisely that aid forms part of the extraversion of the African state, which is at the same time base of the autocracy in Africa. Political conditionality and programs of institutional strengthening not only do not question the extraversion of the government but on the contrary, they foster it. Therefore they do not provide enough stimuli for African governments to empower their population.

The limits of democratisation through aid are expressed in different ways. The concept of democracy considered in the processes of political conditionality or the programs of good governance is quite partial, usually too centred on elections. In this circumstances, democracy is becoming a kind of sham, and liberty language, a fictitious discourse, in a way it seems as if African rulers and foreign donors had tacitly agreed to trivialise the transformative potential of democratic freedoms20. Despite this new relevance of institutions for development discourse, it still promotes depolitization of African problems so well described by James Ferguson21.

There are also many contradictions between political and economic demands: simultaneously to requesting democratisation, donors try to impose economic policies that would not probably get the general consent of population if asked. Finally, external pressures can be very random as there exist conflicting interests by the part of donor states, which included not only or mainly development or democracy, but economic benefits, control of immigration or diplomatic support in international fora. That is obvious in Equatorial Guinea, where oil has become the main aim of foreign countries.

Nevertheless, when extraversion is based on exploitation of a natural resource and this makes aid unnecessary, pressures for democratisation became even less efficient. Enclave economies generated by oil or diamonds disempower populations more than aid does. Only the emergence of advocacy campaigns on issues such as human rights or transparency can counteract the interests of powerful transnational actors at the international level. For its part, and independently of conditionality, aid can generate spaces of participation and personal survival aside from the state. In cases as Mozambique, the presence of international aid agencies seems to favour certain consensus in relation to the rules of the political game and respect of human rights. The effects of all this on democracy is still to be seen.
