

Conclusion

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The proposal for a comparative analysis on the correlations between peace (and war) and the evolution of poverty at Portuguese-speaking African countries has resulted in a collection of apparently more intuitive conclusions – i.e. about the mutual implications between events – and in another collection of ideas deserving further research. Among these, it is emphasized the need for a rising combination of the qualitative and quantitative types of information: the relevance of including an *emic* approach in researches; the differentiated but equally important burden of situations of instability and insecurity on the living conditions of individuals and, consequently, on the development; the relevance of other factors conditioning poverty, other than war and instability; the existence of both constraints and possibilities for individuals and their life strategies in environments of war and insecurity. The ability to establish this sort of conclusions is fundamentally due to the meaningful and qualitative nature of most part of the studies conducted in the realm of this project, a fact confirmed in the majority of texts.

The starting point – as initially declared – was the recognition that this group of countries shares a colonial and independence history that, on the surface, could concur for the production of similar development contexts. Meanwhile, the study of the results from over thirty years of independence clearly shows the differences in terms of evolution of the indicators for poverty and development.

In the context of independent African countries, having conflicts and wars as a key explanation for the economic underdevelopment and the decline (Rodrick, 1999), this relation is not always considered to be a direct causality. The evolution of political systems and warfare situations stipulates, in a distinguished manner, the possibilities for economic growth and development, but this is not the only explanation for the perseverance of the negative poverty indicators. In every PALOP, the independences took place in 1975 – with the exception of Guinea-Bissau, where it was unilaterally declared in September 1973. At first single-party states (until 1990/1992), currently these countries' political regimes have transitioned into multi-party systems, having been recently conducted legislative elections: in Angola, the most recent one in 2008; in Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe, in 2006; in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, in 2009.

In spite of many difficulties registered throughout the consolidation of democracies following the independences, the sense of political evolution is, in every PALOP, increasingly founded on systems of democratic representation, being the fight against poverty their main and latest guideline. Nevertheless, along these paths there have been several political events that led to the permanence or occurrence of conflict situations. The occurrence of sporadic conflicts (in Guinea-Bissau and in Sao Tome and Principe) and prolonged wars in two of these countries – Angola and Mozambique – has constituted an essential conditioning feature for the development and aggravation of poverty situations. Conversely, the inexistence of conflicts or war in Cape Verde during

these decades has created conditions for the accomplishment of better development indicators. Even so, the inequality represents yet one of the main characteristics of Cape Verdean society and economy.

The foremost conclusion to be taken into consideration within this frame is that, despite having been established a direct – and almost evident – correlation between the events poverty and war, there are other factors which, in a combined manner and inside specific contexts, also concur to the continuation and/or augmentation of poverty rates. Therefore, these other explanations should be related in the best possible manner to the perspective that places war at the center of the research on poverty and development, again attributing a special relevance to the particular contexts and evolutions in each country.

War also had differentiated durations and intensities in each one of these countries, which has allowed, at the present time, for differentiated development conditions. In Mozambique, it went from 1977 until 1992; in Angola, it had extended until 2002, marked by various accords and a brief pre-electoral peace in 1992; in Guinea-Bissau, in addition to several attempts and coups (1980, 2003) the war of 1998/9 stands as a symbol of the “institutionalized” precariousness of political situation that, nowadays (in 2009), has been portrayed by political assassinations; with a relatively lesser frequency but equally affecting the rates of stability and security, the attempted overthrows in Sao Tome and Principe represent a feature enabling some instability.

Regarding the political orientation, after the independence all these countries have adopted systems with a socialist foundation, framed within specific circumstances of geostrategic and international politics issues which, in the final stage of the Cold War, had been weakened and reshaped in diverse ways at each country. Furthermore, with reference to the economic frame, these countries have shared similar post-independence backgrounds, at first oriented to a centralized model and then, since the end of the 80s decade, proceeding with a gradual approach to the free market. In Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe and Guinea-Bissau, the structural adjustment was started in 1987, followed by reform programs conducted in Mozambique between 1984 and 1990. Since 2001 have been initiated the PARPA, specific programs for the relief and reduction of poverty. In Angola, the transitional period into the market economy was also started in 1987, while in Cape Verde the economic stabilization programs were launched in 1991.

In all these countries, recent political and economic guidelines have put an emphasis on the need for stabilization and development. Meanwhile, poverty is persevering and affecting high percentages of the population: absolute poverty reaches 68% in Angola (2001), 65% in Guinea-Bissau (2003), 54% in Mozambique (2005) and Sao Tome and Principe (2001), and 37% in Cape Verde (2002). Regarding extreme poverty (less than one Dollar a day), it afflicts 26% of the population in Angola, 21% in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, and 15% in Sao Tome and Principe, at the same years referred above (Feliciano *et al.*, 2008: 84).

Taking into consideration the background of conflicts and wars and the poverty indicators, it matters then to focus the analysis on probable directions – which is to say, the product of political, social and economic orientations and the outcomes truly achieved in every moment – more than on a simple comparison of poverty rates or development rates among several countries, since the performances concerning the subject of poverty are quite discouraging in all PALOP. The Cape Verde case makes for an accurate demonstration: considered one of the best countries in Africa for matters of political rights and civic liberties, the subjacent factors to the “good governance and the

construction of an open and non-violent society” were the geographic and historical conditions, although these have not eradicated poverty or the dependency on donations (Baker, 2006).

There are numerous contributions resulting from this study for the research theories, either relating to conflicts in Africa or relating to studies about poverty, allowing for a reflection on the PALOP cases which is rarely referred in these terms. The mutual influences between poverty and peace are properly delivered in specialized literature (Smith, 2005; Bush, 2004; Green and Hulme, 2005; Narayan, 2000; Bernard, 2002; Solomon and Cilliers, 1996; Bryant & Kappaz, 2005; Murshed, 2002; Collier & Hoeffler, 1998; Wodon, 2007; see also Justino, 2009: 315). Namely, these studies start from the analysis of the direct consequences of a transfer of resources into the warfare and material destruction and economic damages caused by war (Collier, 2003). Although not as frequently, poverty is also considered an extremely important factor for the occurrence of conflicts (Bryant and Kappaz, 2005: 25). Several authors have selected as main causes for the occurrence of conflicts the scarcity of resources (or its abundance) in determinate contexts and the existence of dysfunctional institutions (Theisen, 2008: 815), the vulnerability of poor families participating in armed conflicts (Justino, 2009), or the precariousness in matters of food and nutrition security (Pinstrup-Andersen and Shimokawa, 2008). On the contrary, in some cases is discernible that the occurrence of conflicts takes place in less impoverished regions and in places where are located populations with better living conditions. Among these is included, for instance, Liberia (Hegre *et.al.*, 2009), reinforcing the set of researches that place “opportunity” (for conflict) as one of the main factors for the occurrence of conflicts (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004), a cause more plausible than resources deprivation.

Consequently, there is a whole field of research on this correlation among these concepts that, in fact, underlines the extreme relevance credited to the systematical contextualization in historical, social, political and economic levels to which the local perspectives about poverty should be associated. This definition of a concept of poverty has been revealing many issues, mostly related to the phenomenon’s multidimensionality. In some cases, when trying to overcome these issues, the best option is to employ quantitative data and statistical analysis – namely all kinds of national statistical records – that have been used as the basis for the formulation of theories and rationalizations (Hegre *et.al.*, 2009). For that reason, it is noticeable a clear predominance of the monetary approach in most descriptions and researches about poverty (Stewart et al, 2007: 1). Other methods to define poverty include the capability approach, the social exclusion and the participative approach (*idem*, p.2). The monetary approach is mostly centered on the definition of poverty as a shortage in terms of consumption (or income) with reference to a poverty line. The capabilities approach – according to the works of Amartya Sen – is focused on the features of deprivation related to certain minimal or basic skills. The line of approach of poverty through social exclusion is connected to socially defined processes of marginalization and deprivation. Regarding the participative approach, it is inscribed in a notion of poverty as defined by its own subjects instead of externally (*idem*, p.24). Following this outlook, the analysis conducted in the realm of the project Poverty and Peace endorses matters concerning the self-definition of the implications of war and peace over the impoverishment processes and, consequently, over the self-definition and self-perception of poverty in itself, as mentioned above, which has resulted in one of the most relevant contributions of this investigation.

Finally, the cases under analysis – and their corresponding accounts – have allowed accumulating a diversified collection, at an individual and familial level, which have demonstrated precisely that the effects of war and conflicts are diverse and are affecting living conditions and poverty in diverse manners. In several texts appear some references to constraints and possibilities during wartime and peacetime, putting forward once more not only the diversity of situations, but also a need to understand the correlation poverty-peace within the larger sphere of individual and familial strategies, being such strategies in constant adaptation and reformulation. This analytical amplification to other factors at stake releases new opportunities for the research and knowledge of poverty and peace occurrences.

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