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## **GLOBALIZATION AND CHALLENGES TO THE POLITICAL AUTONOMY OF THE ASSOCIATIVE SECTOR IN CAPE VERDE**

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***Abstract***

*This article presents the outcomes of a qualitative exploratory study carried out in Cape Verde within the scope of a research project aimed to understand the dynamics of the associative sector in African countries of peripheral modernity. Data analysis revealed: a sector comprised by very heterogeneous organizations which operate as an arm of the State, particularly in areas such as education and health; as well as that United Nations through the Delivering as One Program, is indirectly contributing to restrict the already limited political autonomy of Cape-Verdean social organizations.*

**Keywords:** Globalization. Economic Neoliberalism. Cape Verde. Associative Sector. Political autonomy. Delivering As One Program.

## Introduction

This article presents the outcomes of a qualitative exploratory study carried out in Cape Verde, within the scope of a broader research project aimed at shedding some light on the dynamics of the associative sector in African Lusophone countries characterized by peripheral modernity. Data collected sought to answer the question: “Do the local social organizations in these countries comprise a social sphere of opposition and fight, of debate and claims shaped by historical forces” (Bayart, 1986)? And, being so, are they helping to build a strong civil society? The analysis of data – collected by means of observational techniques, use of secondary sources and semi-structured interviews based on purposive sampling – revealed: a sector comprised by very heterogeneous organizations which, however, bear common features such as a growing financial dependence upon the State and uncritically adhere to UN’s discourse and proposals on Millennium Goals and poverty reduction; a sector in which the most structured social organizations operate as an arm of the State, undertaking activities incumbent upon this latter, particularly in the education and health areas; that the UN – through the Delivering as One Program, which establishes that the bunch of financial resources from UN’s various agencies shall be channeled through the central Government – is, indirectly, contributing to restrict the already limited political autonomy of Cape-Verdean organizations of the associative sector.

The paper is organized into five sections. The first one is dedicated to define what we mean, here, by ‘country of peripheral modernity’. The second section delineates a brief profile of Cape Verde, the country where the study was conducted. The third section describes methodological procedures. The fourth presents the profile of Cape Verdean associative sector, while the fifth and final section is dedicated to describing and analyzing how changes in the field of international cooperation interfere in Cape Verdean chances to consolidate a strong civil

society. The article concludes delivering a set of considerations that suggest new studies on this subject.

## **2. Countries of the Peripheral Modernity in Globalized Times**

By proposing the expression ‘countries of the peripheral modernity’, which he employed first to characterize Brazil, Souza (2006) calls our attention to some factors that refer both to structural transformations in the State, under the aegis of the neoliberal economic logic, and to elements of the political culture, especially clientelism and the process of naturalizing inequalities, typical of countries where income concentration is high.

Among the main indicators employed by Souza for defining what he understands by “modernity” in the context in question, this author highlights: (i) privatization of the economy, followed by the incorporation of the set of neoliberal guidelines, originally designed for private sector reengineering in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, to the management of both public and private activities (Neave, 1988); (ii) relations between State and Market guided by the ideology of competitiveness (Petrella, 1995; Hermet, 2005); (iii) change of the State’s stance, from that of public services provider to that of regulatory agent, which sets the conditions under which the internal markets, both private and public, will operate, and keeps for itself the role of auditor, who assesses the outcomes (Scott, 1995 *apud* Ball, 2004, p. 80). As to the word “peripheral”, it is employed for representing, in the international sphere, the state of economic and political submission to the logic of capitalist accumulation in its globalized stream. Submission that is observed, insofar as decisions affecting the country stem from a complex network of interactions which include governments of the central economies, transnational corporations, intergovernmental organizations and global NGOs (Bayart, 2004) and often have the

compliance of national authorities whose power and legitimacy turn out stronger by adhering to the discourse of “inclusive development” (Ruckert, 2008). In the domestic sphere, the state of submission rests on the process that naturalizes inequalities, which amounts to blame on individuals the lack of conditions to attain by themselves a fair quality of life, and to impute to them the responsibility for overcoming this situation. Such naturalization conceals the privileges enjoyed by the elites (Spink & Spink, 2006).

The association of the terms “modernity” and “periphery”, thus, would be indicating countries whose governments are exerted by an elite comprised by techno-bureaucrats of the public sector and by representatives of the private sector, who are aligned with the neoliberal thesis – the one that deems the State responsible for providing and guaranteeing competitive conditions for private capital operations and that delegates to the nonprofit sector the accomplishment of those social enterprises which lack economic interest. These are countries where the governments, furthermore, would tend to consider “the extra-state violence as a failure in either the institutionalization or in the political development, and where social issues are, at large, understood as a disturbance in the political field” (Badie, 2009, p.51).

## **2.1 Cape Verde, Country of the Peripheral Modernity in the Path of Globalized Capitalism**

Located at 455 km from the northernmost point of Western Africa, at the same latitude as the Sahara desert, Cape Verde is an island country comprising an archipelago of ten islands, nine out of which are inhabited. A country of Catholic tradition, with a population of 491.575 inhabitants (INE, 2010)<sup>1</sup>, historically ravaged by calamitous droughts, which decimated significant contingents of population, as it is fully accounted in the native literature, Cape Verde

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<sup>1</sup>The population growth, between 1980 and 2000, has been of 1.94%, and between 2000 and 2009, 1.76%. In case this growth is sustained, it may imply a doubled demand for food and other resources by 2015 (Reis: 2011).

was a colony of Portugal from 1460 to 1975. Having a poor soil for agriculture, no industrial tradition and an economy based, more recently, in the services sector, Cape Verde is a country which depended and still depends on external resources for promoting its own development. Concurrently, although emigration flows have shown a drop, especially on the grounds of the constraints imposed by both the European countries and by USA, it is still considered a diaspora country.

In 1975, following the struggle for national liberation, the country won its political independence from Portugal and became part of the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. This period will be later characterized by an option for a “self-centered” development model, “which postpones the confrontation with the problems regarding integration to the world economy” (Reis, 2011, p. 262).

As of 1989, following the break of Soviet Union, Cape Verde starts migrating to the zone of influence of the European Economic Community (EEC) and to a model of pluralist democracy, a process that culminated in the first multi-party elections, held in January of 1991.

One year before, in 1990 therefore, the government – already imbued with the neoliberal ideas and under the rationale that it was necessary to “regulate cooperative entrepreneurship” – had issued a decree (Decreto Lei 101-H/90) which, in line with the economic logic newly in force, called the population to undertake the community development (Évora, 2000) *et à la limite*, transferred the responsibility for promoting the social inclusion of disadvantaged people to the own communities.

In 1993, following the launch of the Third National Plan for Economic Development (1993-1996) and counting then on a new Constitution, the government of Cape Verde assumes the goal of integrating the country into the global economy on the basis of the privatization of

public enterprises; the liberalization of capital account, allowing foreign investments in the country; and the deregulation of economy so that to favor private sector.

Conversely to most African countries, Cape Verde is a politically stable country, governed by the principles of liberal democracy and which is trusted by members of the former G8, among whom the country is pointed as a “model of good governance”. Such expression was used by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, in her visit to the country in August 2009.

*No other African country has managed to evolve in all of the aspects of development as Cape Verde has, from good governance to transparency and responsibility on the part of political powers, including laws and a democracy that has managed to lift its population out of poverty, raising these islands to the category of medium income country (Hillary Clinton’s discourse during her visit to Cape Verde, August, 2009).*

In recent years, as illustrated by Hillary’s discourse, the country has received widespread approval by both leaders of the central industrialized countries and by representatives of intergovernmental organizations as the World Bank and the United Nations (UN) probably for: its alignment with the economy of the world-system (Wallerstein, 1997); the international policies for drug and terrorism control; the marine protection and the control of migration flows, among other factors. However, the stated main reasons are the improvement in human development indicators (HDI), the governmental investments on education and the policy of *boa governação*, or democratic governance, compliant with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) guidelines.

This is the territory, or *field* in the bourdian sense of the term (Bourdieu, 1998), that we have found when seeking to shed some light on the relations between the self-defined NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations), locally established social organizations of Cape Verde, and the State, in the face of the clearly neoliberal character of the development plan that is being implemented in the country.

Would their initiatives and practices qualify them as representatives of a “social space for struggle, contention, debate and demands shaped by the historical forces” according to the role attributed by Bayart (1986) to civil society? Or else, as Mandani (1996, *apud* Bayart, 2004, p. 108) suggests, would have they turned into, “less than a means of democratization and social justice”, a mechanism for control and management of periphery by the core entities of the world system of power and accumulation, or otherwise into a form of restructuring centralized despotism?

### **3. Remarks on the Method and Methodology**

With regard to its nature and method, the study qualifies as a descriptive exploratory research, carried out as a case study. The field work was developed between the months of January and February of 2009, during June of 2010, and in the week from 12 to 18 October, 2010. It was based on observation techniques, examination of secondary data and semi-structured interviews. This latter technique involved representatives of the local society including: politicians, members of the State’s bureaucracy (public administration authorities and ministries officials); faculty members of Cape Verde Public University (Universidade Pública de Cabo Verde - UNI-CV); and leaders of local nonprofit organizations. In addition, we interviewed the head of program at the UN local mission, and the official of the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD), placed in Paris, in charge of France foreign affairs related to Cape Verde.

The first stage of research started with information available in *Guia da Plataforma das ONGs de Cabo Verde* (2009), using as selection criteria the Non Governmental Organizations most cited as representatives of a significant contribution to the development of the country. Based on the concept of saturation, or redundancy, the search resulted in a list of thirty two

social nonprofit organizations that develop public interest activities. Nineteen out of these were chosen for interviews with their respective coordinators, on the grounds of convenience, although making sure that the most varied sample as possible was formed in terms of both the kind of activity and geographical area of operation.

The organizations whose leaders have been interviewed are as follows: Cáritas, Atelier Mar; Associação dos Amigos da Natureza (AAN), CITI-Habitat; Associação para a Defesa do Meio Ambiente (ADAD); Associação de Apoio à Auto-Promoção da Mulher para o Desenvolvimento (MORABI); Associação Nacional dos Municípios de Cabo Verde (ANMCV); Associação Cabo-verdiana para a Proteção da Família (VERDEFAM); Plataforma das ONGs (PLATONG); Associação de Apoio às Iniciativas de Auto Promoção Familiar (FAMI-Picos); Associação para o Desenvolvimento Integrado de Rui Vaz (ADIRV); Associação Garça Vermelha (AGV); Associação Beneficente Intercultural Dinamismo de Jovens Artistas Para as Nações (ABID-JAN); Fundação Irmão Alá; Associação Crianças Desfavorecidas (ACRIDES); Djuntamon – Serve para Servir (DJUNTAMON); Asociación para la Cooperación con Cabo Verde (ACCVE - Cooperación Española); Associação Nacional da Diáspora Solidária em Cabo Verde (ANDSCV). Four out of these operate in rural areas, although being located in Santiago Island, and five operate in Sao Vicente island.

#### **4. Profile of Cape Verdean Associative Sector**

Estimates account the existence of about 800 social organizations in Cape Verde<sup>2</sup>, out of which nearly 250 are associate members of the Cape Verdean Platform of NGOs (CVPN)<sup>3</sup>, an

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<sup>2</sup>.According to information provided by the Secretary General of Plataforma das ONGs (Platform of NGOs) of Cape Verde.

<sup>3</sup> According to a document elaborated by this organization, with the financial support of French Cooperation, the major part (70%) of its 250 member organizations operates in Santiago island, where Praia, the capital of the

organization which Toulmin would classify as a *quango*. That is, it would belong to the category of organizations that, in spite of adopting the label of “nongovernmental”, operate effectively as State branches. Such a classification is truly appropriate to the situation of CVPN, which works as interlocutor between the State and the other non governmental organizations which develop social initiatives in the Cape Verdean public sphere. To be affiliate with CVPN confers to the leader of these organizations the symbolic capital ascribed to individuals willing to contribute to the general welfare of society. While a significant role is played by the Platform of NGOs in managing interaction between the State and the associative sector, occupying a singular position in view of its proximity to the center of political decisions in the country, the other organizations of the sector can be classified according to five major groups.

A first one is comprised by national offices of international Non Governmental Organizations and Programs such as Caritas, WWF and the UN-Habitat Program locally managed by renowned individuals of Cape Verdean society who are acknowledged – including by the State – for their commitment to the causes they advocate for. Devotees of networking action, and familiar with the participation in international forums, the leaders of these organizations – who used to enjoy a great deal of political autonomy – have seen their incomes shrink in recent years, what is already affecting their operational capacity.

A second group is formed by organizations aimed directly to the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals. These are organizations with well-defined goals. Whose activities are focus in the health areas and in training young work force for the labor market. Among the organizations of the first group, some are the major agents responsible for putting into practice Cape Verdean governmental health policies, in compliance with World Health

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country, is located, and other 14% of these, in Sao Vicente island. The remaining organizations are spread across the islands of Fogo, Sal, Boa Vista, Santo Antao and Sao Nicolau.

Organization's (WHO) guidelines. Holding an eminently operational character and working on issues such as the control of sexually transmitted diseases, they act as a state agency, whose activities are supported by international agencies. As to the organizations aimed at vocational training, they generally offer technical courses that prepare for crafts, tourism and cuisine, arguing that the country has too many unemployed people who have higher education, whereas there is a lack of main power to perform technical functions. One of the surveyed NGOs supplements vocational training activities with both microcredit grants and the organization of internship for young apprentices from the vocational courses, for them either start-up their own businesses or getting prepared to supply the labor market demand, whose jobs offers are increasingly requiring previous experience. Regarding the funding sources of this same organization, they are varied: membership fees; resources provided by State bodies responsible for poverty alleviation policies; project funds granted by foreign organizations and governments; donations received from Cape Verdean citizens living abroad (diaspora people); resources provided by private firms, mainly by means of grants for internship, including in their headquarters abroad.

Although this cannot be generalized to all organizations that claim to develop "educational" activities, in Cape Verde, one may observe the presence of a small group of quite dynamic and highly visible ones that are used to work in simultaneous partnership with various sponsors and are familiar with the requirements of international donors. However, they are also beginning to feel the squeeze in international cooperation resources, and having trouble in getting funding for their medium term actions, insofar as the trend has been towards project based funds. This hinders the development of medium-term programs, and requires much energy to be spend on fundraising.

By sorting these organizations out into two categories, as composing a specific organizational profile, we look less to their absolute number, which is quite small in comparison to the total number of NGOs in Cape Verde, than to their relevance for the implementation of social policies in the country, and their representativeness, inasmuch as they are usually pointed out by representatives of international organizations as emblematic of the practice of democracy in Cape Verde.

A third group that deserves particular attention is formed by municipally based community organizations. Locally born and present in virtually all administrative units of Cape Verdean territory, at different levels of organization, they seek solutions to problems that affect local population, ranging from the need for a bridge or a dam, to the building of a school, implementation of irrigated culture, promotion of microcredit, or actions aimed at local development, such as government incentive to a particular kind of cultivation, or even the promotion of activities aimed at generating income, as cheese production, fishing, crafts. That is, they are territorially based, with geographically delimited operation, and play a crucial role in the defense of the interests of small localities. For surviving, they rely on the political activism of their members and their ability to sensitize and mobilize local politicians for the nationwide defense of the causes they advocate. These are organizations that have also been facing the gradual withdrawal of direct international financing, and find themselves increasingly dependent on domestic public resources. With regard to their effectiveness, it is quite variable. The power of local leaders to influence the national political context, which greatly benefits from the fact of belonging to the political party in power, is crucial for obtaining financial resources, especially considering that constitutional transfers of national government to municipalities are hardly sufficient even to honor payroll of administrative personnel. Such set of factors encourages and

nurtures the political clientelism inherited from the Portuguese colonial rule, as well as the cult of personality, remnants of the period of Soviet domination.

A myriad of other small social organizations (add to these three groups of social organizations, and which comprise the great majority of Cape Verdean associative sector organizations) can, generally, be grouped into two big categories: the philanthropic ones and the representatives of particular interest groups. Having an essentially charitable nature and aimed at assisting particular groups of population as, for instance, a fishing community, philanthropic organizations operate in delimited geographical areas. For the most part managed by their own founders, who generally have no previous experience in the social area, these organizations rely, for surviving, on material and financial resources raised abroad by friends and relatives belonging to the diaspora. Occasionally they get some resources from the State, or even from international sources. These are, however, incidental supports, often supplied in the form of in-kind resources such as second-hand computers, teaching materials and clothes which, according to testimonies of leaders, though important, do not fulfill the needs of resources. With regard to the operational practices, they generally work alone and depend significantly on the charisma of the founder to keep working. In spite of their philanthropic nature, we could observe situations in which the charity's discourse "that doing good is everyone's duty" was replaced by UN's discourse of entrepreneurship and the attempt to make the beneficiaries co-responsible for overcoming their own needs.

A second subcategory is comprised by specific associative dynamics, knitted according to the interests of small groups. Even if, in view of the way they emerge, the organizations comprising this subcategory resemble small social movements, there is a difference regarding a certain corporate character they hold, for being focused on the particular interests of their

members in a specific cause, which can either be the art of music or a dance group. As the previous subcategory, these are generally quite fragile organizations which, moreover, share the fact of not having a political project of their own.

## **V. Changes in the International Cooperation for Development system and the UN political presence in Cape Verde: an example of soft power**

The beginning of the new millennium is marked by changes in the conception, the focus, the strategies and the destination of resources aimed at the promotion of “development” in countries peripherally integrated to the capitalist regime of accumulation in its globalized version. In such process, a special place is reserved by the international organizations to *good*, or *democratic* governance. However, when we aim to shed light on the implications of this setting for the possibility of consolidating the incipient Cape Verdean civil society, a further factor comes into play. Namely the propensity of local population to adopt European and American standards and values as models for constructing the national identity (Anjos, 2002), to the detriment of what would be the adherence to the community of African countries that, likewise the Portuguese colonies, are at the origin of their ethnic constitution, and that, just as Cape Verdeans, coexisted with the slavery regime and, until very recently, with direct colonial exploitation.

For holding such a "truncated" national identity, Cape Verde becomes even more vulnerable to the ‘soft power’ exerted by international organizations – representatives of the world system and subservient to the neoliberal economic project, as is the case of the United Nations (Cobério, 2011)

As an example of this context, we can present the ‘Delivering As One’ (DAO), a program conceived by experts of the United Nations (UN), which enables this organization to not only locally coordinate, organize and control the allocation of the “development” funds it channels to a given country, as also to shape the process of local governance.

Conceived by UN and presented to the member states, in 2007, as a response of the entity to the challenge put by the “need of accelerating efforts, enhancing efficiency and efficacy in fighting poverty” (UN Reform Process, 2007), DAO is a program that, on behalf of the respect for the precepts of *good* governance, or *democratic* governance, implies the direct and active interference by UN local office personnel in the formulation of public policies and in the management of the country’s public budget.

Through the implementation of *Delivering As One*, UN local personnel point the guidelines, indicate the proceedings and align the public policies aimed at development to be carried out by the State. The presentation of the program in the official website of the organization, diplomatically toned down, is quite distinct, showing an eminently technical image of the program:

The concept of *Delivery as One* allows aligning programs and funding more closely to national priorities, strengthening government leadership, ensuring that governments have access to the experience and expertise of a wider range of United Nations organizations to respond to their national priorities.

The pilot countries agreed to work with the UN system to capitalize on the strengths and comparative advantages of the different members of the UN family. Together they are experimenting with ways to increase the UN system’s impact through more coherent

programs, reduced transaction costs for governments, and lower overhead costs for the UN system (UN System Reform, 2007).

Political neutrality and exclusively technical contribution, two attributes that characterize, likewise, the discourse of the head of Coherence Unit of UN mission in Cape Verde. According to his statement<sup>4</sup>, DAO would be a tool - yet very powerful - created with the purpose of supporting “good governance”, or “democratic governance” in developing countries. The objective of such tool would be to assure for the donor country the rationalization of the process of granting aid and, to the recipient, always a national State, the optimization of the use and control of received resources<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, although the central industrialized countries justify their recent choice for channeling/centralizing the management of funds of cooperation for development on the grounds of the need to guarantee the good governance, to limit their motivations to the administrative efficacy of the process is a mistake. Managerial tools are not neutral instruments. They are loaded with ideology and, therefore, they serve political projects. The attempts of draining them of their political content comprise an old strategy of international organizations, as noted by Cartier-Bresson (2000).

Programs such as DAO, which manage the centralized destination, administration and control of international resources addressed to the said “developing” countries, constitute strategies for external interference, irrespective of the dressing under which they are

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Jose Navarro, head of Coherence Unit of UN Cape Verde, carried out in June 2010, in Praia, the capital of Cape Verde.

<sup>5</sup> One example of this policy is the monetization of the Food Aid resources of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). That is to say that the Food Aid for Cape Verde has been converted into currency and now is directly channeled to the National Treasury, the institution in charge of the economic implementation of DAO in the country.

presented. This means to say, furthermore, that on behalf of good governance, or democratic governance, of efficacy, efficiency and/or the need of transparency in the processes, they comprise particularly effective strategies for the control of national financial accounts and for restriction of the political sovereignty of the country.

Another instance of the influence of UN's discourse in the imaginary of Cape Verdean leaders of the community sector is illustrated by the answer given by one of our respondents to the question "What you mean by development?", which we reproduce below:

*Development is a process [...] that **presupposes** an increasingly greater democracy; an **increasingly greater participation of all actors**; an increasingly **greater freedom**; that we all are conscious of our duties, in order to be prepared to demand our rights. **It is not possible to reach it without education and, more specifically, without building capabilities** [...] education is essential, specially for Cape Verde, an insular country, a country without material resources, where the only resources are we ourselves, the Cape Verdean people; it is essential today building the capabilities of Cape Verdean people. **It is worth noting that, in spite of all difficulties, both financial and of other nature, people are investing seriously in education.** I am not talking about the education policy, I think that the society have already got conscious of the importance of investments in education of the individuals. **It is not possible to get freedom**; it is not possible to reach democracy; to reach citizenship, **without education** and, more precisely, without technical capabilities.*

Thus, as we may observe, this is a discourse referred to the neoliberal vision of development (Dubois & Mahieu: 2009), in which the ability of individuals to adjust to the requirements of the economic system, as it was conceived by Amartya Sen (1999), is a condition, or prerequisite, to the right to freedom and to the benefits of progress.

The changes in relations between central and peripheral countries with regard to the funding of development are, however, not limited to the actions coordinated by Intergovernmental Organizations (IGO) and Agencies traditionally involved with the promotion of

development. Innovations have been similarly observed in the strategies used, either together or individually, by the central countries.

France, for instance, by means of the reform in its Ministry of International Relations, has, just like the USA, an Agency aimed exclusively at the management of the loans made to countries of the “South. The *Agence Française du Développement* (AFD) is, in fact, a state bank whose objective is financing the “development” of peripheral countries, a process that involves the concession of loans, both to the public sector and to the private one, regulated by interest rates that are very similar to those current in the market.

It is undeniable that the "foreign aid for development" of the peripheral countries has favored the interests of rich countries (Navarro-Flores, 2007; Simião *et al.*, 2007). A situation that was exemplarily illustrated by Freud (2009), when he analyzes the adjustment of the French international cooperation strategies aimed at its former colonies to the changes in its own economic interests following the formation of the European Economic Community.

## **VI. Final remarks**

This study allows us to claim that the Cape Verdean associative sector consists of a heterogeneous cluster of organizations that – though varied as regards origin, type of activities, funding sources, society’s perception of their social contribution, as well as their degree of economic/financial dependence on the state – share the lack of a political project of their own. In spite of a recurrent blame on the state for failing to adopt clear criteria for the distribution of the public resources aimed at the social areas, we did not observe any remark that could suggest concerns about the country's political future. On the contrary, the statements rather beared the sense of a process of consensual submission, thus reinforcing the thesis of the hegemonic

character of the process of ideological domination by the Centre in relation to Cape Verde<sup>6</sup>, in this case, the “periphery” of the world-system. Another factor that may contribute to this situation is that appearing before the international community as a "model of good governance" bestows a significant symbolic weight on the decision of foreign investors to channel, or not, resources to a country.

Meanwhile, the local associative sector has shown to be not only devoid of critical thinking, as also scarcely coordinated. In 2008, summoned by the Prime Minister to submit a proposal for the development of the country, local leaders did not reacted, even though he has publicly committed himself to create a specific budget line to fund the initiatives that were to be presented.

At present, we can say that the Cape Verdean state – whose political culture is marked by clientelism and where the proximity to incumbent politicians can be an ultimate factor for the access to public resources – keeps the dynamics of the country’s associative sector under its control. A sector, this latter, that has no recent tradition of political mobilization and that is economically dependent on the state. Such dependency is deepened by the centralization in the National Treasury of the resources of International Cooperation, which have once been channeled directly to NGOs.

It is also worth noting that the void left by the impediments put to the access of Cape Verde to certain international development aid funds paves the way for the entry of private investments, coming from countries which have traditionally made part of international

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<sup>6</sup> No one of the interviewed NGO leaders has expressed, albeit covertly, doubts about the priority attributed by the country to the accomplishment of the "Millennium Goals", which were implemented in Cape Verde with the support of the program ‘Delivering As One’. It’s also worth noting the passive acceptance of the official discourse that imputes the increasing unemployment rates in the country due to unsuitable profile of manpower in the face of market demands.

cooperation. This is the case of França<sup>7</sup>, which, as it seems, aiming to more efficiently reaching municipal assemblies, has established a special partnership with Associação de Municípios Cabo-Verdianos - (AMCV)<sup>8</sup>. (Association of Cape Verdean Municipalities). Such a dynamics would be encouraging uncritical alignment of this organization of civil society to the economic logic implicit in the inflow of French funds in Cape Verde.

As to the program 'Delivering As One', although the centralization of UN funds in Cape Verdean National Treasury is aimed at improving the quality of local governance, it should be taken into account that Cape Verde is a country still marked by political clientelism , and where, just like it happens in Brazil, incumbent politicians tend to favor the local leaders aligned with their own political affiliation. Such situation is aggravated when the democratic institutions are still weak, as is the case in Cape Verde. These circumstances, indeed, acquire an even worse dimension in view of the fact that the creation of a new municipality in that African country does not occur as response to the accumulation of some wealth and administrative experience, but rather to the need of acquiring such status in order to gain access to the scarce resources of the

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<sup>7</sup> The analysis of the cooperation policy adopted by France towards Cape Verde allows us to imply that it constitutes a mixed model - centralized in terms of multilateral cooperation and decentralized when dealing with bilateral cooperation. It is also a model that, in a sense, is less institutionalist than that imposed by *Delivering As One* and less based on the State and on the real pattern of international relations.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding the French cooperation it was observed a close relationship with the Associação dos Municípios de Cabo Verde (AMCV).

State. At the same time, we must also consider that, perhaps due to the absence of adequately structured municipal administrative bodies, the Cape Verdean Central Government tends to transfer barely the minimum resources required for the payment of municipal servants. This means that further resources necessary for the dynamics of territorial development must be negotiated on a case by case basis by local politicians with the central government.

It is worth recalling, as well, that the State Reform underway in Cape Verde, in line with the guidelines set by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, is having as a side effect the concentration of decision-making in a small elite of government officials, who, as pointed out by Chavagneux (2010) in his analysis of the constitution of the new world order under globalized capitalism, tend to adjust to the interests of international capitalism. As a consequence, in order to access resources for their small communities, local politicians need to resort to lobbying strategies, what comprises a further factor to favor the consolidation of clientelism.

If political participation is an intrinsic condition for sustainable development, we can say that DAO, in contradiction with UN's discourse, instead of contributing to the strengthening of the incipient local civil society, would be rather collaborating with the consolidation of clientelism and the bureaucratization of State-Society relations in Cape Verde; what, according to Hermet (2005), is a trend in contemporary societies.

The considerations delineated so far contribute to understanding why, when heard individually, the interviewed community leaders expressed a sort of nostalgia for the "good times" of decentralized cooperation, when they enjoyed close and direct relationships with foreign NGOs, especially those from Canada, USA, Spain and Luxembourg, and they did not need to "bargain" with the State.

Questions that have arisen in our return from Cape Verde, after the exploratory study in 2009, began gradually to be answered. The ‘boom’, that is, the dramatic growth in the number of local NGOs following the establishment of democratic rule in the country (1990s) would, then, be not a consequence of the creation of an autonomous civil society with an own political project, but rather the result of a perverse confluence of a number of factors, two out of which are outstanding: on the one hand, a governmental techno-bureaucracy subject to rules of State structural adjustment, dictated by the World Bank and the IMF; and, on the other hand, the changes in the rules of game of international cooperation. These, combined, shape an associative sector compelled to adapt to external requirements, that is, to “take-up with” the political guidelines so defined. Such elements indicate a Cape Verdean community dynamics that makes this sector to appear as an arm of the state. Although these organizations may be carrying out actions of significant social contribution, they are not based in grassroots mobilization, being rather the result of a civil society that plays the role of supporting actor and is subjugated to a developmental project that weakens the country. Indeed, a situation that is fatal to the principles of autonomy and participation of society, which configure the discourse of international agencies such as the UN, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. A situation that refers us to Borges’ (2003) analysis, when he enquires about the real meaning of the term *participation* in connection to the discourse of cooperation agencies on the importance of “empowerment” for development. He draws the conclusion, with which we agreed by studying the implementation of DAO in Cape Verde, that this is a deeply ideological program which serves for fitting countries in the periphery of the “world system” (Wallerstein, 1997) to the rules of globalized capitalism.

Finally, an unexpected result of our study, which entailed the need to review the theoretical basis that originally guided it: the inadequacy of Eurocentric explanatory paradigms

for interpreting the realities of the "South". In this sense, it was extremely valuable to resume the reading of authors who have contributed to the consolidation of neocolonial studies, especially Mignolo (1995; 2008), Quijano (2005) and Grosfogel (2005; 2008) whose analyses allow for understanding that formal political independence is not necessarily correlated to political emancipation and, accordingly, to the presence of a strong civil society

Among the limitations of our study, it is worth mentioning that, for practical reasons, the sample of Cape Verdean social organizations did not include either cooperatives and other solidarity economy initiatives, or unions. Nevertheless, we believe that, in view of the low representation of this kind of organization in the local context, and of the careful sampling process that sought to include local organizations with distinct profiles and different types of activities, the findings here described provide a fairly accurate picture of the standing of associative sector in Cape Verde, given the country's alignment to the neo-liberal project.

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