# Guebuza Governance: Domestic And International Rent-Seeking In Mozambique

Ercílio Neves Brandão Langa

ABSTRACT: The paper analyses the Guebuza Governance in Mozambique. It uses press analysis and rent-seeking theory. With charisma, leadership, nationalist discourse and the rescue of values, Guebuza promised to fight poverty, bureaucratism, corruption and a spirit of letting go. It was praised by the IMF/WB and donors for its economic austerity. Reversal of the Cahora-Bassa Hydroelectric Power Plant and border disputes with Malawi characterized the foreign policy. The frelimization of the State, social inequality, extractive economy, dependence and external alignment were accentuated. Family businesses and the interests of the political elite mixed with economic decisions, creating Mozambican rent-seeking.

**KEYWORDS:** Mozambique. Guebuza government. Rent-seeking.

# Governação Guebuza: *Rent-Seeking* doméstico e internacional em Moçambique

**RESUMO:** O artigo analisa a Governação Guebuza em Moçambique. Utiliza análise da imprensa e teoria do rent-seeking. Com carisma, liderança, discurso nacionalista e de resgate de valores, Guebuza prometeu combater pobreza, burocratismo, corrupção e espírito de deixaandar. Foi elogiado por FMI/BM e doadores pela austeridade econômica. Reversão da Hidroelétrica de Cahora-Bassa e disputas fronteiriças com Malawi caracterizaram a política externa. A frelimização do Estado, desigualdade social, economia extrativista, dependência e alinhamento externo se acentuaram. Negócios familiares e interesses da elite política se misturaram com decisões econômicas criando o rent-seeking moçambicano.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Moçambique. Governo Guebuza. *Rent-seeking*.

DATA DE APROVAÇÃO: 17/07/2023

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DATA DE ENVIO: 10/10/2022

# Background

The paper analyses the Guebuza government in Mozambique during his two terms in office from 2005 to 2015, focusing on domestic and international action and the rent-seeking theory. Armando Guebuza was the third President of the Republic (PR) of Mozambique and the second after the introduction of a multiparty system in the country. He is a historical figure of the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) Frelimo. The paper centres on debates about Mozambique's foreign policy. It seeks to understand the government's domestic behaviour and its international actions. It takes into account actors, events, interests, institutions, the leader's personality, leadership characteristics, government programmes and decisionmaking processes.

It is based on Figueira's (2011) intermestic perspective, according to which foreign policy results from the exchange between the domestic and international arenas. From this perspective, States' decisions in international negotiations take into account not only interaction with other States, but also domestic preferences expressed by various actors and national structures (PUTNAM, 2010, FIGUEIRA, 2011). In addition to the State, other non-State actors civil society, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), multinational companies, interest groups, political parties, public opinion - participate in and influence the foreign policy decision-making process.

Putnam (2011) pointed out that domestic politics should not be separated from international politics, and that the national level should not be separated from the international level. More important than knowing whether domestic politics influences international politics or vice versa, or whether international politics is more important than domestic politics, it is necessary to understand when and at what moments one influences the other. According to Figueira (2011), foreign policy has a cross-domestic character, which means that both domestic and external factors must be taken into account when formulating State actions on the international stage. Based on this notion, the domestic situation and its interaction with international constraints were analysed in order to understand the domestic and foreign policies of the Guebuza government.

# Methodology

The study used the qualitative approach and the techniques of bibliographical research and press analysis. The bibliographical survey consisted of consulting works about the Guebuza government, its domestic and foreign policy between 2005 and 2015. Reports and publications by civil society organisations such as the Centre for Public Integrity (CIP), the Centre for the Defence of Democracy (CDD) and the Institute for Social and Economic Studies (IESE), which are actual pressure groups. Analysing the press complemented the literature review and the scarcity of official documents, as there are few studies on this government. The main events covered by the Mozambican press were analysed, from State-owned and independent media.

The Mozambican press has a history marked by attempts at control, with some presses being closed down and others nationalised by the State in the first fifteen years of independence. The period was characterised by restriction, censorship and self-censorship imposed by the one-party regime, and it was only after the introduction of multi-party system that an independent press emerged (CHICHAVA; POHLMANN, 2010). The press is currently polarised between State, independent and party media, allowing for different analyses and perspectives on the same subject or event. In this scenario, independent newspapers have been the preferred vehicles for freedom of expression and meaningful analyses of the Mozambican reality.

# Theory

In order to understand the actions and foreign relations of the Guebuza government, the theory of rent-seeking was used, the term can be literally translated as income-seeking or rent-hunting. This theory is used to demonstrate how States and public authorities benefit private interest groups in their business activities. It also explains how private groups organise and influence public or government decisions, take advantage of loopholes and weaknesses in States, manipulate the political and economic environment and do business in their favour.

As stated by Reis (2019), the term rent-seeking is used to describe the behaviour of a private agent who seeks to guarantee

their economic interests by manipulating the environment in their favour through influence, lobbying and corruption over public decisions. The theory shows the behaviour or practices of groups, entrepreneurs or individuals who seek greater economic gains and profits for themselves, while at the same time causing social harm to the majority or to competitors. Rent-seeking is the result of corporatism and private influence over public decisions, in which countries with a record of corruption and institutional fragility tend to suffer more from this practice (REIS, 2019).

Krueger (1974) is the author who best explained the theory, arguing that in market economies restrictions on government interference in the country's economic life are common. The restrictions end up giving rise to varying incomes and citizens compete to provide services, for access to income and opportunities. Sometimes the competition takes place within the law, but in many cases, it occurs in other forms, such as bribery, corruption, smuggling and the parallel market.

One example explored by this economist was the restrictions on foreign purchases to reduce imports in various countries, which made obtaining import licences a valuable commodity. There were costs associated with obtaining licences such as documentation, time spent by entrepreneurs to obtain the licence, the cost of the administrative apparatus needed to obtain the licence, etc. Resources were therefore allocated to bidding for import licences. In this way, rent-seeking activities became competitive and resources were allocated to competing and providing services to governments (KRUEGER, 1974).

This scholar has shown the existence of various licensing mechanisms used to import goods into developing countries. These include public officials who hunt and compete for import licences and the exploitation of services, etc. In addition to the technical and legal aspects, there are other illegal ones such as bribes, hiring relatives of officials or employees of the officials themselves. Sometimes civil servants become private service providers for the government. Thus, entrepreneurs and the private sector compete legally and illegally to provide services to the State (KRUEGER, 1974).

The unequal distribution of licences tends to favour certain groups. The existence of rent-seeking affects individuals' perception of the economic system. Income distribution is seen as a lottery, in which some individuals are successful or lucky in providing services to the State, while the poorest are excluded or unsuccessful in this pursuit, making this market mechanism suspect. People begin to believe that few companies could survive without exerting influence or bribing government officials. There is a perception that the price system is a mechanism that rewards the rich and well-connected, influencing decisions on economic policy. This has created a vicious circle, rent-seeking (KRUEGER, 1974). This theory has been used by Mozambican analysts to explain the capture of the State and neo-patrimonialism by certain political and economic groups. In the Mozambican case, the successful or lucky individuals would be the "successful entrepreneurs", the political-economic elite and the politician-entrepreneurs linked to the Frelimo party.

# Guebuza governance

Guebuza was well known for his "open governance", in which he visited all the provinces, most of the municipalities, rural and urban districts to find out about the real situation in the country. He spoke to governors, administrators, local authorities and Frelimo party politicians. Guebuza's open governance was characterised by millionaire expenses on helicopter rentals and fuel used to travel by him and his team.

According to Gonçalves (2013a), open governance/presidency became a milestone in Guebuza's leadership. It was conducted annually to report on progress and difficulties in the fight against poverty, encouraging governors and heads of public institutions to emulate this exercise, showing openness to receiving citizens in their offices, visiting, listening, seeing and experiencing how Mozambicans lived.

Guebuza also innovated by defining the "district as a pole of development" and in 2006 he introduced the Local Initiative Investment Budget (OIIL), a programme that allocated seven million meticais<sup>1</sup> to each rural district in the country for projects and infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> The government programme aimed at reducing absolute poverty and promoting local development became popularly known as "seven million", as this was the first time a public policy of this nature had been implemented in Mozambique (SANDE, 2011).

The "seven million" was a development fund for the districts from the Guebuza government. Its execution and management were the responsibility of the District Administrators, in a scenario in which the administrators were almost all Frelimo members. The money came out of the State budget, with no external funding. The money created a national debate about its motivations, direction and impact, sparking controversy over the statistical base generated, problems in implementation, poor repayment rates, misapplications, political exploitation of the initiative, unfair State competition with national financial institutions, etc. (SANDE, 2011; CIP, 2012).

The seven million was a measure to combat rural poverty by Guebuza, the results of which seem to have been partly successful. However, there were criticisms that most of the beneficiaries were "hand-picked" from local elites and party-State members, and that the rate of return on the loans was low (NGOENHA, 2017). Ngoenha linked decentralisation to democracy and argued that the ruling political class in Mozambique systematically sought to halt or limit decentralisation processes. An example of this was the fact that the government had increased the number of districts, but that some of these districts overlapped almost perfectly with the territory of the respective municipalities, and there was competition between the two administrative units. Another example pointed out by the author was the seven million policy. Ngoenha (2017) argued that the impact of decentralisation is not always positive for the well-being of the most disadvantaged populations, but that it is a profound, systematic and rational political, institutional and economic process that should be conducted with criteria of transparency and administrative rationality.

<sup>1</sup> Metical is the official monetary unit of the Republic of Mozambique, established in the country on 16 June 1980, replacing the then colonial currency, the Portuguese escudo. It is the official currency of Mozambique.

<sup>2</sup> Seven million meticais was equivalent to just over US\$250,000, according to the exchange rate in force in 2006, when the government programme was implemented.

The Guebuza government also stood out for its "superior orientations" - written documents and oral orders issued by authoritative figures and institutions with the intention of advising on procedures for formulating and implementing policies - typical of the Samora Machel government, which Guebuza revived during his governance (GONÇALVES, 2013b). In practice, superior orientations were informal orders of a party-political nature given by top leaders or hierarchical superiors to local chiefs during State visits, instructing them how to proceed in certain situations. These instructions were a way of not explaining or justifying the reasons for certain actions in the civil service, sometimes contrary to legalrational regulations or procedures.

Superior orientations were ambiguous and provisional, devaluing legislative work and contributing to governance without being effective in delivering services. Through them, party and State officials, vested with the authority of positions and institutions, changed the focus of public policy formulation. As a result, bureaucratic governance became less about policy implementation and more about the bureaucratic production of authority through continuous policy-making exercises (GONÇALVES, 2013b).

Miguel (2008) drew attention to Guebuza's constant use of the State media, particularly television. Guebuza was keen to differentiate himself from Chissano, even though they belonged to the same party and had been comrades-in-arms since 1962. Guebuza was known for his strong opinions, inflexibility and sometimes radicalism, unlike Chissano, who was recognised for his softness and diplomacy. The hallmark of the Guebuza government was the "frelimisation" of the civil service in Mozambique, a retreat from democracy and less participation by civil society in the country's political affairs. Guebuza was determined to gain popularity in the municipalities and provinces where the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Mozambican National Resistance) Renamo, the largest opposition party, obtained more votes (MIGUEL, 2008).

Traditionally, the media controlled by the State since independence - the diário *Notícias*, the semanário *Domingo*, *Televisão de Moçambique* and *Rádio Moçambique* - have acted as means of government propaganda and organs of the party-State. With Guebuza's running and election, the frelimisation of the State media reached the levels of the one-party period. Chichava and Pohlmann (2010) showed the bias and partisan inclinations of the media, especially during election periods, in which the Stateowned and State-linked press is accused of favouring the Frelimo party. As an example, the authors pointed out that the popular demonstrations in February 2008 were ignored by the public-State press, demonstrating government control over the sector.

According to Brito (2016), in Frelimo's electoral manifesto for the 2009 presidential and legislative elections, there was explicit mention of national unity, but there was no explicit recognition of ideological and party diversity in Mozambique. In this document, Frelimo and Guebuza were presented as the caretakers of national unity.

In the campaign for his first term as president, Guebuza and Frelimo were certain that they would win the election and were determined to win over areas of influence of Renamo and others traditionally hostile to Frelimo, with more votes than in the previous election. After being elected president, Guebuza reversed the political pluralism and economic liberalism of his predecessor Joaquim Chissano, as well as the policies that had brought Mozambique high annual economic growth rates. Frelimo's radical wing saw Chissano's government - which allowed politics, the economy and society to leave the party's domain - as a weakness. In power, Guebuza not only satisfied the wishes of Frelimo's old guard, but also tried to modernise the economy and the government through a tough, top-down approach (AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL, 2009). This political and economic movement by Guebuza and Frelimo was nicknamed *pax guebuzana*.

# The leader's personality

Before running for the presidency, Guebuza was secretarygeneral of the Frelimo party for two years, having strengthened party structures in public institutions and companies, with a strong mobilising spirit and the campaign slogan "Frelimo, the power of change". He promised a Samoran revolution and was elected president with the banners of combating poverty, bureaucratism, corruption and a "let-it-go spirit".<sup>3</sup> His speeches and ideas were regularly covered in the State press, which advertised his image. At the same time, these speeches served as messages to the outgoing president, Joaquim Chissano, his comrade in the struggle and in the party.

Guebuza had held the position of propaganda secretary for Frelimo and used his experience to campaign in the run-up to the elections. He cultivated his own personality, with a strong nationalist discourse, reviving national values and the self-esteem of Mozambicans, and criticising Western colonisation. At rallies and in press statements, Guebuza reaffirmed his nationalist image and Frelimo's record. The use of party propaganda in State-run newspapers, radio and television was notorious for relaunching his leadership image. His personal biographer described him as follows in a book:

> He has an aversion to bureaucratism, as an institutionalised practice designed to undermine the normal functioning of institutions and the performance of their employees as providers of public services. In fact, he lists this practice among what he calls the "sentinels of underdevelopment", alongside crime and the *let-it-go* spirit. Guebuza's other counter-values are tribalism and racism, which are the result of his origins and coexistence. (MATUSSE, 2004, p. XVII).

The last years of the Chissano governance were difficult due to the dissemination of Guebuza's ideas and messages in the State press, with constant references to corruption, bureaucratism and let-go. In this way, Guebuza reaffirmed and repainted his image as a Frelimo nationalist and historian, which had been scratched in the last years of the Samora Machel government.

# Speeches, ideas and actions

Chichava (2009) analysed the elements that made up President Guebuza's speech in order to explain the structures and factors that determined it. The author started from the idea that political

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of the term "let-it-go spirit" has never been clear. Because it is an ambiguous expression, it can be understood as sloppiness, disregard for public affairs or even a *laissez-faire* policy.

discourse was a question of identity or identity strategy. In his inauguration speech as president in 2005, Guebuza considered poverty to be the main enemy of Mozambicans and declared the fight against it to be his mission. He therefore demanded that his ministers change their attitudes, be more creative and swifter in their actions in order to overcome poverty as quickly as possible.

Fighting poverty was present in the titles of his speeches, it was a key word and took centre stage in his speeches. Although the political discourse on poverty has occupied a central place in Frelimo's discourse since independence, various political and economic strategies to combat it have been rehearsed and different explanations have been put forward for the causes: Portuguese colonisation, the hostility of the white minority regimes in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, Renamo's civil war and natural disasters.

For Chichava (2009), Guebuza's discourse strategy was to mark out his field, his style, his identity and differentiate himself from his predecessors. The president argued that poverty in Africa and Mozambique was an individual responsibility and derived from people's attitudes. People were poor because they were lazy, lacked self-esteem and creativity. Wealth was a virtue and all Mozambicans could be rich or should aspire to be rich, as long as they abandoned the miserabilist mentality that makes them ashamed or afraid of being rich. Foreign aid also had a special place in his speech. The president recognised that Mozambique was still extremely dependent on international aid. The legitimacy and survival of the government and the State depended more on this aid than on its ability to produce policies capable of eliminating poverty. In this way, Guebuza minimised the role and impact of foreign aid, placing it in a secondary position. For him, "living hand-to-mouth" didn't dignify Mozambicans at all, and foreign aid should only be considered a complement and not a substitute for Mozambicans' efforts to fight poverty (CHICHAVA, 2009).

This political scientist emphasised the place of tribalism and regionalism in Guebuza's discourse, which were also considered to be the main obstacles to development and national unity. He concluded that the fact that Guebuza came from a Protestant religious family influenced his beliefs and worldview, particularly the ideas of predestination to poverty or wealth. Thus, poverty was a question of the mentality or attitude of Africans/Mozambicans.

Posse (2020) analysed the instrumentalisation of the figure of the hero of Mozambique's liberation struggle in Guebuza's speeches during his two terms as president. The author argues that Guebuza used the instrumentalisation of national heroes to gain legitimacy with Mozambicans and build his idea of the nation, meeting his governance objectives, with emphasis on combating poverty, respect for diversity and the uniqueness of the nation. Guebuza sought to associate himself with the figure of the heroes, the idea that he shared the same life experiences as them, that he was the legitimate heir and bearer of the heroes' ideas.

In addition to this exaltation, Guebuza sought to win over the populations of central and northern Mozambique in response to their feelings of exclusion from the south of the country and in terms of access to State power and resources. According to this author, during Guebuza's government, part of Mozambique's toponymy was changed, particularly in the capital Maputo, a process in which the names of districts, neighbourhoods, streets, avenues, squares, lanes that honoured Portuguese figures or referred to the colonial period were replaced by names, stories, figures, languages and spellings that referred to Mozambique and Mozambicans. This would have been another attempt to reinforce Mozambicans' sense of belonging to their land and their nation.

# The curtailment of civil society

Guebuza's domestic policy left deep scars on Mozambican civil society. With Guebuza there was a curtailment of the media, a retreat in individual and collective freedoms, a greater party-political presence in the State and in the different sectors of civil society, particularly in the economic and business sector. There were investments in public security, an increase in policing, tensions in civil-military relations, in the relationship between the defence and security forces (FDS) and civil society.

In his third year in office, the Guebuza government experienced its first major popular dissatisfaction with the demonstrations on 5 February 2008 and then in September 2010, which became known as the "popular revolts", "hunger revolts" or "bread revolts" (BRITO et al., 2017). In February 2008 and September 2010, the cities of Maputo and Matola were the scene of violent protests due to the rise in the cost of living, led by the people, marked by looting and the destruction of public property. In November 2012, new protests were organised, but they were repressed by the Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM) and other units of defence and security forces. The police repression came after significant investments in men and materials by the government.

At the start of his second term, Guebuza began a siege of the independent press. He ordered the State business sector and its partners to stop advertising and to break commercial agreements with independent news organisations, radio stations, television stations and newspapers that were critical of his government. The order greatly affected the independent media, since advertising was an important source of income. Televisions and private newspapers had to lay off workers, declare bankruptcy or sell shares in order to avoid going out of business. Only the most resilient newspapers and groups managed to survive this onslaught. Some of the newspapers went out of business and others were bought by businessmen from the Frelimo party. The media that survived had to change their editorial line and adapt it to the interests of the ruling government (NHACA, 2022).

Chichava and Pohlmann (2010) stated that the printers with the capacity to print newspapers of acceptable quality and quantity were those owned by the State and people linked to the Frelimo party. This situation put the media at the mercy of the goodwill, illicit charges and censorship of those owners. In addition, the newspapers depended on advertising revenue to balance their accounts, in an advertising market in which the State and public companies were the major clients, running the risk of selective and arbitrary attributions, advertising their products only in the public-State media. The condition for the independent press to have greater access to State advertising has been the requirement to be less critical of the State and its owners (CHICHAVA; POHLMANN, 2010).

The polarisation between pro-government media and independent media was accentuated. An atmosphere of fear, political censorship and self-censorship typical of the socialist period was

established. Professors and civil servants who were critical of the government or identified with the opposition were persecuted. subjected to disciplinary proceedings and even accused of embezzling funds and public money. Others were demoted from their posts, had their progress barred, were poorly assessed by their peers, etc. In 2013 the Group of 40 (G-40) emerged, a gathering of Mozambican citizens from different sectors, made up of commentators, political analysts, journalists, intellectuals, university lecturers, high-ranking State officials, former ministers, members of the Frelimo party, public figures, etc. This group of Mozambican civil society was dedicated to praising and elevating the achievements of the Guebuza government and detracting from its critics. The G-40 was a kind of "shock troop" for the government, fiercely attacking anyone critical of the current administration, attacking opposition figures, using social media on the Internet, editorial articles and opinion pages in the printed press, talks and televised debates held weekly on television.

According to Nhaca (2022), journalists, academics and analysts critical of the government were prevented from accessing public information bodies, State television, radio and newspapers. These actors were not interviewed, heard or invited to debates in the State media. Television and radio programmes perceived as critical of the government were banned from State TV, radio and newspapers. There was a silent curtailment of press freedom, freedom of expression and democracy itself. On the other hand, musicians critical of the government were threatened, summoned to give explanations at police stations, journalists and scholars were subject to legal proceedings accused of disrespecting the authority of the president.

Guebuza made significant investments in defence and security with military logistics, weapons, armoured vehicles and secondhand MiG fighter planes bought from Romania. The Defence and Security forces were militarised and used ostentatiously on public roads, with excessive violence against peaceful demonstrations by civil society. After these investments there began a period of threats, kidnappings, torture, shootings and murders of public opposition figures, Renamo politicians and members, MPs, analysts, university lecturers, journalists, activists and opinion leaders critical of the government. The cruelty and AK-47 bullets of the "death squads" have created an atmosphere of fear, terror and self-censorship in civil society.

The peak of the death squads' actions coincided with the hardening of the language and high level of intolerance of the regime's defenders, the G-40. Members of the death squads took part in three assassination attempts on Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama between 2013 and 2016. Years later it became known that the death squads were an arm of the State, made up of members of the defence and security forces, the Special Operations Group (GOE), the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR) and the PRM (SAVANA, 2016, 2018; LOBO, 2020).

Brito (2016) drew attention to the Guebuza government's hard line towards the political opposition, particularly Renamo. This can be seen in the rejection of all opposition political proposals in parliament by the Frelimo party-State, the siege of Dhlakama's house and Renamo bases by government forces, which led to a return to armed conflict in Mozambique in 2013.

#### The consolidation of Mozambican Rent-Seeking

Various analyses and studies have described the relationship between the Mozambican political elite and State business, showing that public power has benefited private interests, and that private groups have organised themselves and influenced public and government decisions to do business in their favour (CORTÊS, 2018; NHAMIRRE; 2015; CIP, 2007). For Cortês (2018), Mozambican rent-seeking began in the 1990s with the implementation of structural adjustment policies and the privatisation of State-owned public companies. This rent-seeking is characterised by porous boundaries between public and private business involving government leaders and members, as well as the Mozambican political elite linked to the ruling party.

Nhamirre (2015, 2022) has shown that the concession of public services to private entities in the public-private partnership (PPP) model has harmed citizens and the State. Many of these private

companies have no experience in providing services, charge exorbitant prices for citizen services and most are owned by or have as majority shareholders figures from the political elite, families linked to the ruling party in Mozambique. This investigative journalist concluded that many of these private companies are set up before the State changes decrees and regulations in order to favour the monopoly of certain private entities in public tenders to provide services to the State itself. Other times, the rules of public tenders are not complied with, or are changed to favour certain competitors. In this way, public-private partnerships have been used to benefit political elites and harm the State (NHAMIRRE, 2015).

Cortês (2018) pointed to the emergence of economic groups sustained by privileged access to the Mozambican State. This access is dependent on the internal logic and dynamics of access to power within the Frelimo party. After the liberalisation of the economy and adherence to capitalism, the control of political power allowed for the accumulation of economic power by political and economic elites. His study showed that the rise to power of a new president brings with it opportunities to reconfigure the main beneficiaries in the process of capital accumulation. This would intensify the disputes and tensions between the political elites of the Frelimo party, since control of the State allows privileged access to opportunities for capital accumulation.

In the Mozambican scenario, in order to control the State one must first have control of the party, because the party controls the State. The emergence of a politico-economic elite, whose survival and reproduction is based on a privileged relationship with the State, as well as political influence, are a guarantee of property rights and contracts. On the other hand, business associations function as an instrument for controlling the private sector. Business associations have a close relationship with the government and influence in the process of formulating economic policies, as well as improving the business environment in the country. However, associations also take a submissive stance towards the government and have patronage relationships with the State (CORTÊS, 2018). This is how rent-seeking works in Mozambican foreign diplomacy:

Over the last ten years, Mozambican foreign diplomacy has focused on attracting foreign direct investment. [...]. On the other hand, the most influential members of these associations gain privileged access through formal and informal channels to the centre of political power, through conferences, symposia, lunches and dinners with the political elite and the main foreign investors, which ultimately benefits their personal interests. As a way of maintaining control over these associations, on the one hand, the political power seeks to exert influence on them by placing party members and business allies of the main figures of the political elite in the board seats (CORTÊS, 2018, p. 156-157).

For the researcher, the economic associations operate in a scenario in which public office holders and a considerable part of the political elite have economic interests in the most diverse sectors of the Mozambican economy, competing with other members of the private sector. On the other hand, the political elite have always found it easy to obtain licences, bank credits, the right to use and exploit land, and to influence the approval of decrees and regulations that benefit them more quickly than the private sector.

Corruption, money laundering and rent-seeking in the Mozambican political economy have blocked productive investment. In the Guebuza government, this happened because the upper echelons of political power and people linked to the president had access to privileged information on files concerning the extractive sector in Mozambique, particularly companies with research and prospecting claims, and those close to their final investment decision. (CORTÊS, 2022). Under the Guebuza government, public services were granted to private companies - such as non-intrusive container inspection *scanners* at ports, identity card issuing companies, number plate issuing companies, driving licence issuing companies - whose shareholders were or had links to the State party. (CENTRO DE INTEGRIDADE PÚBLICA, 2007).

In this way, a promiscuous game was played in the State business sector, in which public companies offered free services or didn't pay for services provided to other State companies. For example, the State oil company (Petromoc) supplied fuel to other State companies, which did not pay for the fuel they received. In turn, the Stateowned fixed and mobile telecommunications companies (TDM/ MCEL) did not receive the monetary values of the contracts and the use of fixed and mobile telephony, internet and credits from the other public companies that made use of their services. The State-owned airline - Linhas Aéreas de Moçambique (LAM) - issued tickets to high-ranking civil servants and members of the Frelimo party's political organisations, who travelled free of charge. Years later, these promiscuous relationships culminated in the bankruptcy of at least 24 large State-owned companies (DOMINGO, 2022).

In the State, political will was co-opted by economic will, by the desire to maintain and protect the regime's economic interests. By the end of the Guebuza government's term, the divorce between the party-State and Mozambican civil society was clear. The two terms in office were marked by social inequality, inflation and the high cost of living. As a result of rising prices, in 2008 and 2010 there were "bread strikes" which took a violent turn and ended with the deaths of citizens demonstrating against the cost of living. In September 2012, strikes once again hit the country, particularly in the capital Maputo, with a number of people killed.

# Extractive economy, Mozambican success and foreign debt

By periodising the evolution of the Mozambican economy and placing industry in the context of this development, Brito (2017) argues that after the 1992 General Peace Agreement (GPA), the introduction of multipartyism and an economic recovery based on the development of natural resource extraction activities for export, Mozambique moved from a service economy to an income economy. An income economy was consolidated based not only on the exploitation of resources, but also on dependence on income from foreign aid. Castel-Branco (2013) described the historical pattern of capital accumulation in Mozambique as essentially extractive. This author criticised the mode of accumulation in Mozambique, based on the concept of the "extractive economy", considering it necessary and useful for understanding the Mozambican economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (CASTEL-BRANCO, 2013). In an emblematic article published in 2010, this economist pointed out that foreign flows of private capital over the previous fifteen years accounted for 85% of total private investment in Mozambique. This investment was invested in a small number of large projects, mega-projects, of an extractive nature in minerals, forestry, energy, etc., which resulted in around twenty companies employing half a million workers and producing the bulk of the growth in gross domestic product (PIB) (CASTEL-BRANCO, 2010).

The author pointed out that Mozambique's economy was often presented as an example of success in promoting rapid growth and reducing poverty. At the same time, the economy had abnormally high rates of dependence on capital from foreign aid and foreign direct investment. Against this backdrop, the author questioned: How was this level of external dependence consistent with the success story? What pattern of production and trade dependent on external capital was being created in Mozambique? Wasn't the continuation of this deep dependence an indicator of the structural fragility of the economy's productive, commercial and fiscal base?

Despite the global economic and financial crisis of 2008, Mozambique was mentioned as evidence of economic success, the robustness of its economy and the prudence of its economic policies. The Mozambican example seemed to validate the neoliberal economic policy models of the International Monetary Fund/ World Bank (IMF/WB), which relied on monetary stabilisation and economic liberalisation to promote rapid economic growth and poverty reduction (CASTEL-BRANCO, 2010).

This scholar concluded that without foreign aid, the Mozambican State would collapse and would not be able to maintain its image as a service provider. Or it would have to improve tax collection, which would mean reducing the generous tax incentives for largescale foreign investment. On the other hand, the stability of monetary indicators, the reduction in poverty and the limited impact of the international crisis on the Mozambican economy were the result of dependence on external flows of public and private capital. Debt was another characteristic of the Mozambican economy pointed out by economists. In an emblematic opinion essay on Mozambique, Santos (2012) used the expression "curse of abundance" to characterise the risks run by poor countries where natural resources that are coveted internationally are discovered. According to the author, the promise of abundance resulting from the immense commercial value of the resources and the investments needed to realise it is so convincing that it begins to condition the pattern of economic, social, political and cultural development.

As risks of this conditioning, the sociologist pointed to GDP growth instead of social development; the generalised corruption of the political class - which would become increasingly authoritarian in order to defend its private interests and remain in power; the increase in poverty rather than its reduction; the growing polarisation between a super-rich minority and the immense majority of poor people; environmental destruction and the sacrifice of populations in the name of progress; the creation of a consumerist culture practised by the urban minority, imposed as an ideology on the whole of society. At the end of the cycle of the resource orgy, the country will be poorer economically, socially, politically and culturally than it was at the beginning, and whenever citizens protest, they are brutally repressed by the police and military forces. That would be the curse of abundance (SANTOS, 2012). In addition, this scholar pointed out the complicity based on dangerous conflicts of interest between the interests of the country governed by President Armando Guebuza and the interests of businessman Armando Guebuza's companies, which could result in serious human rights violations.

On the other hand, Chivulele (2016) analysed the dynamics of internal and external debts in Mozambique between 2006 and 2015 and their implications for the national productive structure. Domestic debt and commercial external debt grew at a rate around twice and twenty times higher than GDP, respectively. She drew attention to the fact that the Mozambican government was increasingly turning to non-traditional creditors such as Brazil, China and Japan, and that the financing agreements signed with these creditors were on a commercial basis. These debts were contracted to subsidise fuel, cover the losses of public companies privatised by members of the Frelimo party, construct public buildings, but they also financed dubious projects such as the Maputo ring road, the Maputo-Katembe bridge, investments in defence and security, the project to protect the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the Mozambican Tuna Company's fleet of boats. (Ematum).

The construction of structural infrastructure such as roads and bridges, the attempt to modernise the country from the district as a pole of development, the "seven million" public policy implemented by Guebuza, as well as other projects, were overshadowed by the discovery in 2015 of the "hidden debts" scandal of around US\$2.7 billion. This scandal was the subject of a trial during the term of his successor, Filipe Nyusi.

In 2013, high-ranking Mozambican State officials, their families, politicians, European bankers and Middle Eastern businessmen conspired and organised a loan worth US\$2.7 billion on behalf of Mozambique for a maritime security project for the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The 2.7 billion was equivalent to 12 per cent of Mozambique's GDP.

The loan was taken out from international banks - Credit Suisse in London and VTB Bank in New York - in secret, without the knowledge and approval of other parts of the government, parliament, civil society or international partners. None of the money from this loan went to Mozambique, with the exception of the bribes that ended up in the pockets of those involved, nor were any services created or equipment purchased for the benefit of the Mozambican people (CIP, 2021).

With the discovery of the hidden debts in 2015, as a punishment, the IMF/WB, the US, the European Union and international donors suspended foreign aid to Mozambique. The main credit rating agencies put Mozambique on the worst ratings, *literally in the trash*. The hidden debt scandal went around the world and has dominated the national and international press ever since, but the Mozambican State seemed immune to the pressures.

At the end of December 2018, Manuel Chang, Mozambique's former finance minister in the Guebuza government, was arrested at South Africa's largest international airport by Interpol while in transit on his way to Dubai, on the basis of an international warrant issued by the US. The US accused Chang of committing crimes against the US financial system, property fraud, money laundering and of having defrauded American investors (CIP, 2022). After Chang's arrest, there was a five-year legal dispute between the Nyusi government and the US Department of Justice, in which each side requested his extradition to its territory.

In an attempt to clean up its image and show credibility before the South African and US courts, in 2019 the Mozambican justice system led by the Nyusi government arrested nineteen people involved in the hidden debts case, including the eldest son of former president Armando Guebuza. It was only in August 2021 that the trial of the hidden debts began, which ended with the conviction of eleven defendants, with sentences of between ten and twelve years. These sentences were considered light in view of the economic embezzlement caused. The trial created friction in the Frelimo party between the wings of the former president Guebuza and the current president, Felipe Nyusi.

The Mozambican State led by Nyusi spent more than six million rands on private South African law firms to defend Chang and try to repatriate him to Maputo. Five years later and after all judicial appeals had been exhausted, in July 2023 Chang was extradited to the USA, where he is being held accountable for his crimes. The extradition was seen as a lesson for the Mozambican government.

# Guebuza's foreign policy

The Guebuza government's foreign policy represented a continuation of Chissano's foreign relations, with Mozambique's neoliberalism being emphasised. His government was highly praised by international economic governance organisations such as the IMF/WB for conducting an assertive economic and financial policy. His discourse on fighting poverty and reducing State bureaucracy was well received by international donors. However, Guebuza's foreign policy was also marked by friction in diplomatic relations and border disputes with neighbouring Malawi, as well as the reversion of the Cahora-Bassa Hydroelectric Plant (HCB) from the hands of the Portuguese State to the Mozambican State.

#### Mozambique-Malawi border frictions

The relationship between the two countries has always been tense for historical reasons. Malawi collaborated with the Portuguese colonial regime and hindered the progress of Frelimo's independence struggle in the 1960s and 1970s. It then collaborated with South African apartheid and supported Renamo's war with men, bases and civil-military logistics. In addition, President Samora Machel died in a plane crash in 1986 on his way back from a meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Mbala, Zambia, where he had discussed regional issues, including Malawi's support for the South African apartheid regime and Renamo.

At this meeting, Samora demanded that the Malawian president, Kamuzu Banda, stop supporting Renamo and threatened to close Mozambique's border with the country, Malawi's only access to the sea, the Indian Ocean. In addition, Samora and the heads of SADC States pressurised Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire to stop supporting the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita), which is also supported by the South African regime, something that is said to have irritated Pretoria. The Mozambican authorities suspected that South African apartheid and Malawi were involved in Machel's death.

Malawi borders Mozambique by land and water, sharing the Chire and Zambezi rivers and Lake Niassa. Located in the *hinter-land* and with a hilly territory, Malawi has no outlet to the sea. The geographical location and economic relations between the two countries reveal the interdependence of their populations. The navigability of the Chire and Zambezi rivers and Lake Niassa are important waterways for Malawi's economic survival.

The tense relations between the two States eased with Malawi's participation in the AGP, which put an end to the Mozambican civil war, signed in 1992 in Rome, in which the neighbouring State brokered talks with Renamo. Relations between the two States have always been shrouded in mistrust on the part of Mozambique. Guebuza's second term was marked by friction with his Malawian counterpart, Bingu wa Mtharika, over issues related to land and maritime borders, particularly the navigability of the Chire-Zambeze rivers and Lake Niassa.

The possibility of the Shire and Zambezi rivers being navigable has revived an old Malawian dream of an outlet to the sea through Mozambican territory, in the direction of the Indian Ocean. This is a relationship of co-operation and conflict between one country in the *hinterland* and another on the coast, which touches on questions of rights to access waterways (CHAMBOTE, 2015). The exit through Mozambican territory represents Malawi's shortest route to the sea and reduces the country's dependence on Tanzania for the flow of goods, as well as the fact that Mozambique charges cheaper railway-port fees than Tanzania (LALBAHADUR, 2013).

In 2005, the Malawian government of Bingu wa Mtharika presented a proposal for the navigation of the Chire and Zambezi rivers. In 2006, Malawi presented a feasibility study funded by the European Union, the results of which did not recommend navigability due to environmental issues and recommended an additional study. In 2008, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique signed a Memorandum of Understanding and in the same year an international tender was launched for a new feasibility study, which was awarded to a South African company (CHAMBOTE, 2015).

However, in 2010, Mozambique's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) considered the company carrying out the study to be unsuitable and to favour Malawi's interests. The company began the studies on behalf of Malawi without consulting the other signatories to the Memorandum. Even before the study had been approved and carried out by the three signatories, the Malawian government began building the port of Nsanje, as part of its plan to develop the waterways of the Zambezi and Chire rivers. This project would only become operational if the Zambezi and Chire rivers were opened up to navigation, which ran up against the economic interests of the Mozambican government and environmental NGOs. At the same time, the project was an opportunity for Mozambique to act as a guarantor of SADC regional economic integration (CHAMBOTE, 2015).

In 2009, diplomatic relations between the two countries became even more tense due to clashes between the border guards of the two States, which culminated in the firing of tear gas and the burning of the Mozambican post. The border clashes coincided with Bingu wa Mtharika's visit to Maputo, the aim of which was to strengthen bilateral relations. The border clashes ended up dominating the diplomatic agenda.

In Maputo, the Mozambican media defined the incident as an act of war by the Malawians, intensifying the unease. During the Malawian president's visit to Maputo, there were problems with the protocol of the visit, and Bingu wa Mtharika returned to his country without informing and meeting his Mozambican counterpart. The disappointing visit left relations even colder, although the following month, the two States set up a joint commission to clarify the incident. The report indicated that the Malawian border guards had acted on their own and ended with an apology from the Malawian government (LALBAHADUR, 2013).

In 2011, ties between the two countries deteriorated again when a Malawian ferry destined for the inauguration of the port of Nsanje was seized by the Mozambican authorities, who accused the ferry of invading Mozambican territorial waters. These were difficult times in bilateral relations between Mozambique and Malawi, with mutual accusations of sabotage and bad intentions, leading to a deadlock in the agreements signed. The Malawian president ended up cancelling his interconnection project.

Lalbahadur (2013) points out that relations between the two States began to normalise after the sudden death of Bingu wa Mtharika in April 2012, in which the Mozambican government made a symbolic gesture by offering food and oil for the funeral. In return, Malawi's new head of State, Joyce Banda, visited Mozambique in May 2012, signalling the importance of a strategic bilateral relationship with Mozambique.

During this visit, the two States signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the energy sector and revived the river interconnection project and the understanding on political and diplomatic consultations, in order to regularise relations and avoid a new collapse. The continuation of the Chire-Zambeze waterway project was also announced. In 2013, President Guebuza visited Malawi. However, the projects are progressing slowly due to disagreements over the price of energy. In the disputes between Mozambique and Malawi, in addition to historical mistrust, the personalities of the leaders, both Bingu wa Mtharika and Armando Guebuza, stood out.

# The reversal of the Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant

Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant was the largest Portuguese investment outside Portugal and in Africa. At the time of its construction in 1969, it was one of the five largest hydroelectric dams in the world and included investments from Portuguese, German, British, French, South African, Italian and American companies, with the Portuguese share capital being the highest (81.66 per cent). It was the largest dam ever built by Portugal and the fourth largest in Africa. It was inaugurated in 1974, a year before Mozambique's independence, and began operating in 1977, with *apartheid* South Africa as its main client (PATRÍCIO, 2010).

The construction of the hydroelectric plant was a high-risk investment by the Portuguese colonial regime, as it had only one potential client, South Africa. At the same time, the Portuguese colonial regime was facing a colonial war against Frelimo in Mozambican territory, which carried out sabotage actions during its construction. The Portuguese regime had to create a security perimeter to protect the project. The hydroelectric plant was a monumental undertaking, there were no industrial projects in Mozambique and no domestic market capable of absorbing the energy it produced. There was a risk of it becoming a white elephant.

In the context of Mozambique's independence, Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant was the only property left untouched under the Lusaka Agreements, signed between the Portuguese State and Frelimo on 7 September 1974. In its secret clauses, the Lusaka Agreement provided for Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant to revert to the Mozambican State only after the Portuguese State had recovered the entire amount invested in it (PATRÍCIO, 2010). With Mozambique's independence in 1975, Portugal held 82 per cent and the Mozambican State 18 per cent. After Mozambique's independence, Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant continued to operate as planned during Portuguese colonisation and was not nationalised by the Frelimo government, as was the case with most companies and services in the country. The hydroelectric plant was dependent on its main client: apartheid South Africa. According to Patrício (2010), for decades South Africa was Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant's only client, benefiting from highly favourable rates, which made it an inflexible negotiator, blocking Portuguese attempts to increase the price of power tariffs.

The fact that Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant remained in the hands of the Portuguese government after Mozambique's independence was a wound, "a toad" that the Mozambicans, and particularly Frelimo, had to swallow. In the hands of Portugal, Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant was a humiliation for Frelimo because it was like a Portuguese enclave within Mozambican territory, a colonial spine. At Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant, the difference in salaries between Portuguese and Mozambicans who had the same qualifications and performed the same jobs was quite shocking.

When he came to power, Guebuza set the reversion of Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant to Mozambique as the primary task of his government's foreign policy, and made diplomatic contacts to this end, despite resistance from Portugal. On 31 October 2007, the Agreement for the Reversion and Transfer of Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant to Mozambique was signed in Maputo between Portuguese Prime Minister José Sócrates and President Guebuza, in which Portugal sold a large part of its stake, dropping from 82% to 15%, for around 760 million euros. The remaining 85 per cent of the share capital thus became the property of Mozambique in exchange for 950 million dollars. The transaction was completed in November 2007 when Mozambique paid the final instalment of the agreement (HCB, 2007).

At a public meeting held in Songo in November 2007, President Guebuza officially announced the reversion of Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant in favour of Mozambique, at a ceremony attended by high-ranking figures and heads of State and government from neighbouring countries. At the ceremony, Armando Guebuza uttered the famous phrase "Cahora-Bassa is ours!". Thus, 30 years after it began operating, Mozambique became Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant's main shareholder (HCB, 2012).

The Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant Reversion Agreement represented a personal victory for Guebuza's diplomacy. "Cahora-Bassa is ours" was the most repeated phrase for more than six months in the Mozambican press and during Guebuza's term, constituting the greatest achievement of his government. The reversal of the hydroelectric plant was symbolically considered Mozambique's second independence, economic independence. It was believed that the reversion of Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant would represent a step change in Mozambique's development.

After the reversion, Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant became the most prominent power generation company in Mozambique, being one of the biggest contributors to State revenues, through taxes and the sale of energy to neighbouring : South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia. In addition to taxes, in 2010 Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant also began to contribute a larger volume of dividends that it channels to Mozambique, as the company's majority shareholder. Two years after the reversal, in 2009, Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant achieved record electricity production of 16,574,140GWh (HCB, 2012). With these results, the Guebuza government won the approval of civil society and delighted the Mozambican people. It was believed that Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant would be one of the driving forces behind Mozambique's socio-economic growth and development and the electrification of various areas of the country.

A few years after the reversion of Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant, Julian Assange's WikiLeaks website released hard-hitting information about the business dealings of Mozambique's political and economic elite, citing telegrams from the US embassy in Maputo. Reports in the international media indicated that President Guebuza had received a commission of between 30 and 50 million dollars for Cahora-Bassa hydroelectric plant's reversion to Mozambique. Guebuza was quoted as saying that he was involved in all the mega-project agreements worth millions of dollars in the country, with stipulations in the contracts that he had to work with the Mozambique's richest businessman and financier of Frelimo's election campaigns was accused by the US of being one of Mozambique's biggest drug traffickers. And that such activities were impossible without the complicity of the highest level of the State.

# Conclusion

The paper analyses the domestic and foreign policy of the Guebuza government, showing the consolidation of Mozambican rent-seeking in the period under analysis. The Guebuza government represented a paradigm shift in Mozambique, in the relationship between the State and civil society, in civil-military relations and in the patterns of economic accumulation. Guebuza was a businessman-president with a neoliberal and religious outlook. With Guebuza in power, the formerly staunch Marxist leaders took on the neoliberal capitalist identity once and for all. From comrades, they became bosses and were no longer "afraid to say they were rich". At the end of his two terms in office, the neo-patrimonialism and illicit profiteering of the political elites at the expense of State business became clear. The extraction of natural, mineral and energy resources and the export of raw materials became the country's main source of income, transforming the Mozambican economy into an extractivist one. The Mozambican elites became lazy and started to live by rent seeking and renting out licences to extract and exploit resources - minerals, energy, forestry, fishing, precious stones, timber, etc. - to foreign investors. High-ranking civil servants set up private companies and began providing services to the State itself and to multinational megaprojects. At the end of his government, the families of the ruling party members were enriched, their businesses dominating different sectors of the economy.

The study pointed out different examples of the Guebuza government's penchant for rent-seeking and the consolidation of an economic elite that has grown substantially to the detriment of the fight against poverty that Guebuza had announced in his election campaign. The discourse of combating corruption, bureaucratism and the "let-it-go spirit" produced harmful effects by favouring the political and economic elite and impoverishing the working classes. Rent-seeking was thus consolidated, allowing the families of highranking party-State leaders to exponentially increase the number of companies, holdings in different businesses, assets and wealth whenever a family member occupied a high-ranking public position. Despite the nationalist discourse, the revival of values and the self-esteem of Mozambicans, Guebuza's foreign policy was one of obeisance to the interests of multinationals. Mozambique remained dependent on the IMF/WB and foreign aid donors. Frelimo's hegemony in elections, the State and public institutions, the curtailment of the media and freedoms of expression, thought and demonstration reached an apex reminiscent of the one-party era. In foreign policy, the reversion of Cahora-Bassa to ownership by Mozambique and Mozambique's control of navigation on a large part of Lake Niassa were his greatest diplomatic achievements.

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