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STRATEGIES TO SURPASS
THE VULNERABILITY OF THE
SMALL ISLAND STATES
WITH FEW RESOURCES:
The Case of Cape Verde

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Criado em 1981, o Centro de Estudos Africanos tem como objectivo promover, de forma consequentemente interdisciplinar, os estudos africanos em ciências sociais.

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O trabalho do CEA deu origem à criação no ISCTE, em 1997, da Área de Estudos Africanos, unidade departamental encarregada de organizar cursos de licenciatura e de mestrado, bem como um programa doutoral, no domínio do desenvolvimento e dos estudos africanos. Entre esta Área e o CEA existem laços estreitos de colaboração.

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1. Brief review on the problem of SIDS

The problem of small Island Developing States (SIDS) is quite recent, end of the 80s and 90s, still looking for a theoretical consolidation.

SIDS, as small states in development, formed by one or several islands geographically dispersed, present reduced population, market, territory, natural resources, including drinkable water, and, in great number of the cases, low level of economic activity, factors that together, hinder the gathering of scale economies. To these diseconomies they come to join the more elevated costs in transports and communications which, allies to lower productivities, to a smaller quality and diversification of its productions, which difficult its integration in the world economy. In some SIDS these factors are not dissociating of the few investments in infrastructures, in the formation of human resources and in productive investments, just as it happens in most of the developing countries. In ecological terms, many of them with shortage of natural resources, but integrating important ecosystems in national and world terms, but with great fragility relatively to the pollution action, of excessive fishing, of uncontrolled development of tourism, factors that, conjugated and associated to the stove effect, condition the climate and the slope of the medium level of the sea water and therefore could put in cause the own survival of some of them.

The drive to the awareness of the international community towards its problems summed up with the accomplishment by the United Nations in the Barbados's Conference, 1994 where the right to the development was emphasized, through the going up the appropriate strategies and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of the SIDS. The orientation of the regional and international cooperation in that sense, sharing technology (namely clean technology and control and administration environmental technology), information and creation of capacity-building, supplying means, including financial resources, creating non discriminatory and just trade rules, it would drive to the establishment of a world system economically more equal, in which the production, the consumption, the pollution levels, the demographic politics were guided towards the sustainability.

It constituted an important step for the recognition for the international community on the specificities of those states and it allowed the definition of a group of norms and politics to implement at the national, regional and international level and it was important that they continued in the sense of the sustainable development.

But this Conference had in its origin previous summits: the Summit of Rio de Janeiro about Environment and Development, accomplished in 1992, which left an important document - the Agenda 21, in the Conference of Stockholm at 1972 and even in the Conference of Ramsar, 1971 about "Wetlands."

Later, the Valletta Declaration, Malta, 1998, the Forum of Small States, 2002, get the international community's attention for the problems of SIDS again, in the sense that they act to increase its resilience.

If the definition of “vulnerability” was the inability of the countries to resist economical, ecological and socially to the external shocks and “resilience” as the potential for them to absorb and minimize the impact of those shocks, presenting a structure that allows them to be little affected by them, a part of the available studies, dated of the 90s, indicate that the SIDS are more vulnerable than the other developing countries.

The vulnerability of SIDS results from the fact the they present an assemblage of characteristics that turns them less capable of resisting or they advance strategies that allow a larger resilience to the external shocks, either anthropogenic (economical, financial, environmental) or even natural, connected with the vicissitudes of the nature.

If these vulnerability factors were grouped with the expansion of the economic capitalist system at world level, the economic and financial globalisation, the incessant search of growing profits on the part of the multinational enterprises, the technological accelerated evolution drives to a situation of disfavour of the more poor.

The creation of the resilience to the external shocks, to the process of globalisation, demands from SIDS and of many other developing countries the endogen definition of strategies and solid but flexible programs of integrated development. These must be assumed by the instituted power, but also by the other stakeholders, including companies and organizations of the civil society and for the population in general. But that demands strong investment in the formation of human resources, in infrastructures, in investigation centres; it demands the creation capacity not only to produce, but also to produce differently and do international marketing. It demands institutional capacity. Cape Verde is on its way to this stage.

2. Typology proposal

Starting from the eighties a typology to contain SIDS began to sketch, according to the strategies of development adopted and the available resources for implementing. We cannot stop referring the contribute of Bertram and Watters, the neo-Zealander investigators that created the word MIRAB to designate an entire group of islands of the Polynesian and of Micronesia, with similar characteristics, but whose subsistence and the development model were intimately linked to the emigration and respective remittances, to the international aid and where the public sector was the main employer.

This model expanded itself, the term being used not only for the SIDS at this specific area, but for all the other ones with similar characteristics in terms of strategies adopted for its development. The studies on the African islands are much more recent and perhaps more limited, especially because of the number of independent African territories with characteristics of SIDS is not very numerous (Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Comoros and Maurícias).

A new typology has appeared more recently: TOURAB (Tourism, Aid, Burocracy), perhaps less dependent, in spite of the volatility of the tourism, and BD (Balanced Diversification), whose analysis is not included of this communication, owing to the fact the Cape Verde is typically a MIRAB.

3. Brief characterization of Cape Verde

Cape Verde is an archipelago formed by ten islands, nine inhabited, with very different dimensions, morphology, orography and climate also different, tends in 1999 a population of 434 000 residents. All the islands, one with larger intensity than the others, suffer strong influence of Sahel, what gives them an arid or semi-arid climate. The lack of courses of water of permanent character and the little hydraulic infrastructures doesn't allow the use of the rains that, given the rain irregularity, with successive periods of drought (except in 1999 since the decade of 60), when they drop they originate strong torrents, provoking the erosion of the soils. The fight against the aridity and the erosion is extremely important in all the islands of the archipelago.

The lack of natural resources is also characteristic of Cape Verde. Its geographical situation just allows the use of its territory a platform in the aerial and marine routes.

All these environmental characteristics formed an alliance with the shortage of infrastructures that led these people to the acceptance of the hired work in other Portuguese colonies to flee to the hungers. These conditions made Cape Verde a territory historically linked to the emigration, movement that stayed after the independence. A superior portion of the resident population in Cape Verde lives abroad.

Table 1 - Evolution of the migratory Balance of Cape Verde

1980 - 1988

Year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Index	100	51,3	79,3	108,5	54,8	74,4	108,6	100,9	176,5

Source: Lesourd (1995), p. 275

But these emigrants maintain a strong cultural, economical and family ties with the country, a national identity, which is a factor of resilience and justify the elevate value of the remittances.

Data of the decade of 90, relative to the emigrants' remittances, indicate its

increase. Some more significant destiny countries were the following ones:

Table 2 - Main remittances of emigrants for origin countries

(values in millions of escudos CV)

Counties	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
USA	780,9	768,0	749,0	1238,0	1470,0	1143,9	1184,8	1399,6	1625,1	1948,9	2321
Netherlands	611,9	679,0	674,0	888,0	914,1	1024,1	898,2	839,2	1137,8	1386,5	1136
France	495,4	510,0	561,0	696,0	688,8	794,8	760,8	673,0	824,1	877,7	1034
Portugal	238,5	370,0	453,0	440,0	779,9	1271,9	1481,4	1057,0	1878,7	1490,1	1578
Italy	270,6	329,0	358,0	340,0	345,2	443,4	557,5	484,8	552,1	637,9	608
Germany	150,5	162,0	200,0	216,0	200,0	242,0	258,6	241,9	235,1	245,4	273

Source: Bank of Cape Verde

The socio-professional structure of the population emigrated shows that, most of them, have a weak professional formation, finding uses mainly in four activities: use domestic (women), navy, work factory and civil construction, this last one with 58,6% of the total of the emigrants.

If Cape Verde wants to maintain the current migratory face to the exterior it should invest in the formation, so that it satisfies, in professional terms, the actual search of the industrialized countries. Especially because the Diaspora can constitute a resilience factor when attenuating the deficit of the trade balance, for the shipping of remittances in goods so that they attenuate the poverty levels, and in the emigrants' case highly qualified by the institutional and factorial relationships that can establish at the reception countries.

Some islands, present good natural conditions to the development of tourist activities. The islands of Sal and Boavista present extensive beaches, of white sand and crystalline waters, with a temperature of the water and the air compatible with the development of marine activities during the whole year. The island of Santo Antão, for its steeps, presents excellent conditions for the practice of mountain tourism. The island of Fogo has its volcano as an element to explore touristly. It was in this sector that has the large concentration of foreign investment with 58% of total¹.

Its sea is also considered rich in some fish and crustaceans species. It is a potentiality that can come to be explored, but also cautiously, so as to assure the reproduction of the species. The lack of the coast control, its great economic exclusive area, the pollution in the zones of urban concentration, has not always been allowing the more correct exploration of these resources.

4. Strategies of development of Cape Verde

¹ Program for the National Action to 2001-2010

Cape Verde was one of five African SIDS identified by the United Nations. But why are they integrated in the group of MIRAB? What was their developing strategy?

Cape Verde ascended to the independence, after April 25 in Portugal, to July 05, 1975, after five centuries of Portuguese colonialism and without armed fight in its territory, but with an awake nationalist spirit, fruit of the work of PAIGC, party founded by Amílcar Cabral, in 1956 in Bissau, with the aim of the liberation of Guinea and of Cape Verde of the Portuguese colonial domain.

Cape Verde adopted two different strategies to its development: between the independence to 1990/91, the other after 1991.

Period	Political option	Economic Strategy	Development plans
1975-1991	Only-party system I Republic	Centralization State economic intervention	I and II Plan
After 1991	Multi-party system II Republic	Liberalization Private initiative	III and IV Plan

Table 3 - Development strategies

The first was characterized by the economic intervention and only-party system, based in the Marxism and third-world perspective, in the theories of the dependence, self-reliance with the goal of satisfaction of basic needs and the employment (reducing poverty), not neglecting, however, the formation of human resources, considered from the independence the largest potential of the country. It was the period of the I Republic.

We can say that this option for the strategy proceeded by Cape Verde was not strange to the international conjuncture: the support of the Soviet Union to the liberation movements and the geo-strategic position of Cape Verde, in a context of the Cold War.

If we compare Cape Verde in the period before the independence, after ten years of the only-party system, the evolution was significant.

In the moment of the independence, Cape Verde was in a situation of extreme poverty. Of the political point of view Cape Verde recognized the important paper of the planning and of centralizing all the activities a form of improvement of the life conditions. In economic terms the justification for the centralization was to get a group vision of the economy, «globalizing», what would allow a better hierarchization of the priority needs.

Besides, in this period, the rupture with the market economy was never really done. Two factors justified it: the elevated number of emigrants spread by

countries of capitalist economy and the opening need to the international aid,

Indicators	Values
GDP growth	8,4%
Public investment	80% of the total
Public investment financed for the foreign aid	70%
Rate of covering of imports of goods	4%
Rate of covering of imports of goods and services	25%
External debt	48% of GNP
Remittances	18% of GNP
Official Development Assistance	27,8% of GDP

namely that was coming from the countries and institutions of capitalist economy.

The economic performance was positive when compared with other developing countries, with a medium growth of GNP large superior. The table 4 indicate this.

Table 4 - Annual medium growth of GNP-decade of 80

Countries	Annual growth of GNP -%
Cape Verde	6
Low income countries	2,8
Sub-Saharan Africa	2,6
PALOP	
- Mozambique	(-) 1,1
- São Tomé and Príncipe	(-) 1,2

Source: PNUD (1997-b); PNUD (1994)

Other indicators that reinforce this performance are presented in table 5.

Table 5 - Other indicators of Cape Verde - decade of 80

Source: PNUD (1997-b), Lesourd (1995); Third World Guide (1998)

The progresses in terms of GDP growth was a result of the intervention of the State in the economy, with high public investments in infrastructures (80% of the total investment) directed to the rural development, transports and communications, with creation of public companies, great foreign aid by these public investments which are financed 70% of them. Also presents a small external debt (48% of GNP) if compared with other countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (82%)².

A negative aspect was the rate of covering of the imports of goods that was just of 4%, but the ones representing goods and services were already of 25%, in consequence of the services of provisioning of airships and ships. This deficit was covered partially by the remittances that represented 18% of GNP and for ODA that represented 27,8% in 1990.

² Lesourd (1995)

Starting from 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet block, the strategic option went to economic liberalization and the multiparty democracy. It was the II Republic. Cape Verde was the first African SIDS to establish the plural democracy.

This second strategy is based in the private initiative, the openness to the foreign investment, to take advantage of the regionalization and the globalization, assuring the internal and external balances, to value the natural resources, to develop the systems of transports, communications and energy, to promote the drainage, protecting the biodiversity with the goal of the human development. It's, therefore a very much bolder strategy, very much audacious, whose proposed measures insert in two fundamental slopes: the creation of basic infrastructures and the education/ formation/ information. They are basic aspects of the present development process. Without basic infrastructures the population doesn't have a healthy life and without formation it is not capable to have an active paper in the development process, of creating incomes not only the satisfaction of the basic needs, but the satisfaction of a group of social needs, turning its elements an active and transformers of the own society, in the sense of its own development. The serious situations of poverty that, reflected in the inability access to the fundamental goods such as food, health, education, were incompatible with the economic development

The two National Plans of Development (III and IV Plans) that determined the great directed lines of the economic strategies during the ten first years of these II Republic constituted an alteration that tried to accompany the economic and political changes around the world: the fall of the centralizing regimes of the European East, the end of the bipolar world, the new norms of the World Trade Organization and the economic, technical and financial globalisation. The creation of a climate of stability and trust would be a factor to stimulate the national and foreign investment, important to the resolution of the problems of poverty and of unemployment.

In spite of the alteration of the economic and social political strategies between I and II Republics, the continuity in the development programs was not broken, it allowed a significant and continued development, although not yet enough.

But this insert in global economy, with the environmental fragility of the country as a special SIDS, should be done through the valorization of its natural resources, that deserved special prominence, the use of the touristic and piscatory potentialities, its geo-strategic position, in the crossing of Atlantic routes and in the regional space of western Africa (ECOWAS), and through the empowering of human resources. It is essential to make possible the national and the foreign investment, but also to allow the valorization of the emigrated human resources, important to increase the capacity of economic, political and social intervention, for the creation of a social dynamics directed to the human development and to a larger dialogue capacity of international negotiation, indispensable to the insertin in the world economy and to the reception of the external aid .

Table 6 - Economic Acting in the 90s

Indicators	Period	Medium annual value -%
Rate of growth of GNP	1991-95	6,2
	1997-99	7,0
Public investment -% of GDP	1991	13,8
	1995	12,8
Private investment -% of GDP	1991	15,4
	1995	25,7
	1998	28,0
OD A - % of GDP	1994	22,0
	1994-97	16,0
	1998 and next	20,0
Unemployment rate	1999	26
Public employment	1991-93	10

Source: PNUD, INE-CV, Grandes Opções do Plano(1997-2000), Programa Acção Nacional (2001/2010)

This strategy allowed a retake in the economic growth that had decayed in 1990/91, for a significant increase in the foreign investment with large importance in the sector of the tourism, for the retakes of the emigrants' remittances that compensated the decrease of the public investment. The chronic deficits of the goods and services balance continue to be compensated by the emigrants' remittances and by the aid.

The external aid was quite significant under the bilateral or multilateral form, being of special importance the multilateral aid of the EU, some donation, of the BAD (ADB), World Bank, some lending. The bilateral aid of Portugal, Holland, Luxembourg, Sweden, France and Germany, has also been important, to non reimbursable title, whose amount in the maintainable social development was significant, namely in the financing of electrical, water and drainage infrastructures, transports and communications, formation of human resources, but that began to decline in the end of the nineties, in more positive result of the indicators, but less than the expected in consequence of Trust Fund constitution, financed by contributions and concessional loans and of the economic reforms supported by World Bank for the elimination of the foreign debt. The Portuguese aid to the structuring of the financial system and the connection of the escudo of Cape Verde to EURO (Exchange Cooperation Agreement), constitute aspects that give credibility to the economy of this country.

Cape Verde interferes in three different spaces, some giving them adverse effects other positive ones: space of the sahel, the lusophone and of West Africa spaces and space of SIDS.

Cape Verde is, without a doubt a MIRAB. Its strong emigration, its high remittances relatively to GDP, the high level of bilateral and multilateral ODA directed for the creation of infrastructures, formation of human resources, support to the construction of a financial sector and Institutional capacity, and the high level of the Public Administration in the employment, doesn't seem to leave doubts.

The great vulnerability of Cape Verde has to do with the environment, but it seems that development strategies haven't neglected it. But another problem, also common to other SIDS is the unemployment rate that was still 26% in 1999³ at Cape Verde.

The Human Development Index, presented on table seven, suggests that the two strategies improved the welfare.

Table 7 - Human Development Index - Cape Verde

Year	HDI	Place in the ranking
1992	0,474	122
1995	0,591	117
2000	0,715	100

Source: PNUD (Human Development Report)

But will it be that MIRAB presents conditions of sustainability in long term, with a decreasing ODA, a fixation of technical emigrants abroad and its high dependence on the remittances and on the aid? The present world based in the competitiveness, in what the innovation nets are big responsible for the world economic dynamic will allow MIRAB a human development? The definition of very precise strategies, a very effective administration of the human, financial and technician's resources, investments in Investigation and Development, establishment of strategic partnerships in know-how terms, can be an exit to decrease the vulnerability of MIRAB. But, in spite of these strategies, in the case of Cape Verde, the dependence is yet strong. The aid has been important to the development, but I think it cannot be a solution forever.

³ National Action Program (2001-2010)

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