

Assessing governance assessments; the case of Mozambique : governance assessments in the context of aid effectiveness discourse

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Propositions Accompanying the Thesis

Assessing Governance Assessments; The Case of Mozambique Governance Assessments in the Context of Aid Effectiveness Discourse

by Laura Torvinen

1. “Development” has multiple meanings ranging from economic growth and social wellbeing to freedom and peace. In essence, development entails breaking away from absolute poverty, which in itself constitutes the biggest human rights violation in today’s world.
2. Development aid cannot solve the problem of absolute poverty, but it can play a critical role in creating the necessary conditions for economic growth, improved access to basic services and participatory democracy.
3. Development aid is faced with a dilemma: the goals posts of aid are constantly shifting and therefore the simplistic question of whether aid works renders simplistic answers.
4. “The post-war period [in Mozambique] has seen a steady recreation of their [Frelimo party's] power and hegemony and the opportunities of the new, more capitalist economy, have allowed many members to transcend their political base and amass wealth. Party members can now use political clout to gain control of economic resources and Frelimo has also become the source of class power as well.” (Sumich and Honwana, 2007)
5. The management of the natural resource wealth in Mozambique is the litmus test not only for the country’s governance, but also for poverty reduction, inclusive growth and sustainable development.
6. Good governance is good politics: good politics requires rule-based participatory democracy which also protects the rights of the poor and vulnerable in a given society. “The *quality* of governance is ultimately attributable to its democratic content.” (Santiso, 2002).
7. Governance reforms cannot be imported but they can – and must – be supported by aid agencies in their attempts to reduce poverty. To do so, they must explicitly address issues of political economy and power relations.

8. Governance assessments constitute one type of political conditionality exercised by aid agencies collectively in diverse country-specific settings. Aid agencies are not apolitical “development experts”. Rather they impact upon the governance discourse globally and in their partner countries, irrespective of their stated policies.
9. Governance assessment tools are sophisticated products of the constantly evolving global aid industry where fashions change rapidly. In practice these tools tend to serve least those who most need tools for improving governance.
10. When assessing – and interpreting – governance assessments, bear in mind the maxim: “Not everything that counts can be counted. Not everything that can be counted counts.” The detailed governance scores are based on false precision as every number is in reality a qualitative statement in disguise.
11. “A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” (Margaret Mead)