

Mozambican perspectives about China in Mozambique: a comparative analysis of discourses from Government, civil society and communities

João Feijó(*) (CEA – ISCTE)

(*) PHD candidate - Research is integrated in the project “Understanding Entrepreneurial Configurations in Africa and China: a four nation study,” also financed by FCT (PTDC/AFR/72258/2006).

1. Government perspectives

- Formal and defensive speeches
- Good diplomatic relations between Chinese and Mozambican Governments / historical friendship
- Development opportunity: Technical and Financial support for the construction of infra-structures in Mozambique (roads, ministry buildings, sportive equipments, water, agriculture research and training institute)
- No political and economic conditions attached
- Alternative in the credit access
- Chinese workers skills, competences and work capacity – an example for Mozambicans.
- “Anti-Chinese movement” is a result of a Western concern about China.

2. Civil society perspectives

Table 1: Social Representations of China in the weblog:

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Illegalities and unrespect for Human rights	102	34,1%
Scramble for African raw materials	92	30,8%
Developing opportunities	44	14,7%
Conflictual relations with Mozambican workers	31	10,4%
Chinese strategies in Africa	13	4,3%
Dependency and wrong application of Chinese investment	11	3,7%
Chinese cultural influence	6	2,0%
Total	299	100,0%

2. Civil society perspectives



3. Communities perspectives

- Low wages (cuts in salaries)
- Any social benefits (transport, meals)
- Low safety conditions
- Long/heavy working hours
- Low promotion opportunities
- Language barrier and low learning opportunities

4. Communities perspectives

- High power distance (“military discipline”) but with informal relations
- Lack of respect for local traditions (religious or family obligations)
- Too much task orientated (too obstinate)
- Too much demanding, nervous and violent (“confusos”)
- Lack of respect for the labor law / bribing the police
- High level of turn over

5. Some final observations



中国援莫桑比克国家体育场项目技术组
Equipa Técnica Chinesa para Construção de Estádio Nacional Moçambique

平安吉祥
争英豪

全
心
全
意
立
新
功

让中莫友谊
Amizade entre a China e Moçambique
天长地久
revalecer como o céu e a terra

创精品工
Este projecto será feito
为国
perfeição de modo a dar

5. Some final observations

- Good relations at the top level / Tense relations at the ground level
- Mozambican – Chinese civil societies are very fragile and are not communicating
- Civil society and communities critics are not only directed to China/Chinese but also to other foreign investors (Portuguese, South Africans)
- The critics to China investment are also a critic to the Mozambican Government (not transparent, corrupt, do not protect nationals)
- Mozambican Government defensive attitude can be explained in the communities / civil society discontent.