

Why and When African States Engage in Productive Sector Development: Comparisons between Mozambique and Ghana

Lars Buur¹ and Lindsay Whitfield²

¹·DIIS, Politics and Government, Copenhagen, Denmark

²·DIIS, Politics and Governance, Copenhagen, Denmark

lbu@diis.dk

This paper is based on ongoing research by the Elites Production and Poverty Research programme from Mozambique and Ghana. The paper is comparative in scope, trying to elucidate why and when productive sectors are supported by state/governments through a critical engagement with the neo-patrimonial paradigm. The paper examines the emergence and trajectory of the pineapple industry in Ghana and the rehabilitation of the sugar industry in Mozambique as its starting point. Drawing on and critically engaging with the business-state literature and the political settlement perspective, the paper attempts to explain the limited expansion of the pineapple industry in Ghana by relating its emergence and evolution to how the political settlement has been institutionalised in Ghana. The pineapple industry in Ghana did not explicitly form part of the political settlement and thus received no political and administrative attention and protection. In contrast, the sugar industry in Mozambique received considerable government and state support over a fifteen year period. From the outset it inscribed itself in the political settlement as it evolved after the General Peace Accord in 1992 and support has first been declining more recently as the political settlement seems under renegotiation.

The paper argues that neo-patrimonial accounts of how African states work have their limitations, and close-up analysis of how states and governments relate to productive sectors exposes crucial problems with their veracity. The paper argues that support for industry development and the existence of ‘pockets of efficiency’ within African states cannot be identified in singular and one-dimensional terms, but must include a variety of attributes of support that emerge from a post-independence fusion of industry, state and government historical experiences of success and failure, and pragmatic as well as longer-term ideological stances where the relationship to the evolving political settlement is a key determinant.