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Title: Politics and the longue durée of African oil communities: rentierism, hybrid governance, and anomie in Gamba (Gabon), c. 1950s - 2015 (and beyond)

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Politics and the *Longue Durée* of African Oil Communities: Rentierism, Hybrid Governance, and Anomie in Gamba (Gabon), c. 1950s - 2015 (and Beyond)

Propositions

1. Differing epistemological approaches are responsible for theoretical disagreements over the relative impact of local politics on peri-urban and rural African communities.
2. Oil-bearing communities in sub-Saharan Africa, as extreme cases of international and state dependence, are ideal for determining the relative impact of various institutions on local livelihoods.
3. Indicators of “good governance” are not valid measures of livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa, and can instead be replaced by evidence of social and political anomie which have universal applicability and which are also detectable via fieldwork.
4. Careful historicization is essential to determining the causes of anomic structures over time, whether they be derived from oil rent-seeking, “decentralized despotism,” institutional plurification, or otherwise.
5. Oil-rent dependency (rentierism) cannot account for the timing and occurrence of anomic structures in Gamba (Gabon) from the 1960s to 2015, nor can it embrace problematized conceptions of the “state.”
6. Gamba’s successive oil booms did not lead to intensified social and political anomie, mainly because Shell-Gabon’s insertion into the local political economy fit pre-existing modes of local governance based on state-concession company duopolies dating back to the 19th century.
7. By collapsing the state-private binary and expanding the definition of local institutions of public authority, the hybrid governance paradigm is able to account for the incongruity of institutional proliferation following the creation of local assemblies in Gamba (Gabon), as well as political disaffection as a result of ineffectual state services.
8. The Western Region (Ghana) avoided intensified social and political anomie after the arrival of the oil industry because a largely state-led discourse of transparency and democratic governance encouraged proliferating institutions to act in concert towards common goals.
9. Local politics are likely to become detrimental to livelihoods in African peri-urban/rural spaces when structural changes take place in a context of both extraverted state elites (as in Gabon) and local institutional proliferation, enhancing the risk of “decentralized despotism.”

10. Repeated observations suggest that Gamba's local 'Dutch disease' has had no impact on the price of artisanal palm wine and braised capitaine consumed within ten meters of a moonlit beach.