
RESEARCH & ANALYTICAL PAPERS

MOZAMBIQUE: THE REGIONAL VOTE IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

African Research Group

This paper focuses on provincial voting patterns in the two general elections in Mozambique since the adoption of a multiparty system (October 1994 & December 1999). While results show that the two main parties, Frelimo & Renamo, each had clear regional support-bases, the vote elsewhere appears to be more fluid and finely balanced.



Mozambican Provinces

1. Since independence on 25 June 1975 the province has remained the key territorial unit in the selection process for a national Assembly or Parliament. The capital – Maputo City – is treated as a province in itself. There are ten others: Maputo Province, Gaza, and Inhambane in the south; Manica, Sofala, Tete, and Zambézia, in the centre and the centre/north of the country; and in the far north, Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Niassa. The size of a province's population varies widely: according to the 1997 census, from less than one million (Maputo Province, Maputo City, Manica and Niassa Provinces) to almost three million (Nampula and Zambézia Provinces).

Legislative elections in 1977 & 1986

2. If the province has remained important in legislative polls since independence, the electoral system has changed radically. Mozambique's June 1975 single-party Constitution provided for a People's Assembly, but its composition and the criteria for election of its members were left open. As ideas took shape the Constitution was amended accordingly, starting with provision for Provincial Assemblies in 1976. A People's Assembly was finally formed in 1977. It stood at the apex of a pyramid of indirectly elected assemblies. Direct popular voting took place only at the lowest (locality and city) level. District and provincial assemblies were in turn indirectly elected from below. Provincial assemblies then elected the national People's Assembly.
3. In 1977 the "election" of deputies was from a single list of candidates chosen by the Frelimo Central Committee, which was unanimously adopted by the provincial assemblies at their first session. Elections held in September-November 1986 saw an extension of democratic practice. Candidates then had to be approved by Frelimo, but did not have to be members of the party. On that occasion the provincial assemblies themselves were responsible for choosing deputies to the national legislature, the People's Assembly. A further innovation was the use of the secret ballot not only in the national assembly poll, but at the provincial, urban and district levels below it. At the local level, choice of candidates remained by show of hands, after they had answered questions from electors at public meetings.

The adoption of multipartyism

4. On 30 November 1990 a new Constitution came into force which provided for multipartyism. Part III, "Organs of the State", stipulates that representative institutions are to be chosen by elections, in which political parties compete through "direct, secret, personal and periodic vote". Previously automatically Head of State by virtue of being President of Frelimo, the President of the Republic was henceforth to

be elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term.¹ Although under the old system Mozambique's indirectly elected pyramid of people's assemblies had had an element of proportionality built-in, the first-past-the-post system was now what was envisaged, both for election of the President and of Parliament.

5. Renamo had not been involved in the drafting of the 1990 Constitution. During the Rome talks leading to the signature of the General Peace Agreement (GPA) on 4 October 1992 Renamo insisted on a system of proportional representation replacing that of first-past-the-post. A threshold of at least 5% of the vote at national level was also introduced for any party to qualify for parliamentary seats.
6. The 250 seats in the future Parliament were allocated to the eleven provinces (ten plus Maputo City) on the basis of numbers of registered voters, not overall population size. In 1994, the province with the largest number of seats was Nampula (it retained this position in the December 1999 poll, despite losing four seats following a new registration of voters). Seats were distributed as follows: Nampula 54; Zambézia 49; Cabo Delgado 22; Sofala 21; Inhambane 18; Maputo City 18; Gaza 16; Tete 15; Manica 13; Maputo Province 13; Niassa 11.²

The PR electoral system

7. Each province thus became a large, multi-member constituency. A system of proportional representation through party lists was adopted, with votes being converted into seats by the de Hondt method. 6.1 million people, 78% of those eligible, registered to vote. The turnout was 88%. A relatively high 11.7% of votes were spoilt.
8. At the October 1994 poll only Frelimo, Renamo and the Democratic Union (UD) won parliamentary seats, with 44.3%, 37.8% and 5.1% of the validly cast national vote respectively. None of the other eleven parties and coalitions attained the 5% threshold (indeed, none reached even 2%). Part of the UD's relative success has been attributed to possible voter confusion, for they were allocated the same slot on the ballot paper for the legislatives that Chissano had occupied in the presidentials (that is, some illiterate voters may have thought that they were voting for Frelimo).
9. Ironically, if the electoral system in 1994 had been first-past-the-post and not proportional representation, Renamo would have taken an absolute majority of seats in the Assembly of the Republic. It has been calculated that with the same number of votes, and with the same provincial constituencies, Renamo would have won 152 seats as the most voted party in Tete, Manica, Sofala, Zambézia and Nampula, and not their actual 112 seats. Frelimo would have won only 98 seats, instead of 129. The UD would have been wiped out – instead of 9 seats, none at all.³

¹ M.Hall & T.Young, "Recent constitutional developments in Mozambique" in the *J.of African Law*, Vol.35, No.1

² The results of the registration process and allocation of parliamentary seats in 1994 & 1999 are annexed.

³ Norberto Carrilho, "The electoral legislation in Mozambique and the political and social achievement" in Brazão Mazula (ed.), *Mozambique: Elections, Democracy and Development*, Maputo: 1996 (pp.125-148).

Regional voting patterns

10. Though not as clear-cut as the results of the May 1994 legislative elections in neighbouring Malawi⁴, regional voting patterns were easily discernible in Mozambique. Grouping the provinces by north, centre and south, the following was the allocation of seats in the Assembly of the Republic after the final count and distribution of vote:-

Northern provinces	Frelimo	Renamo	UD
Cabo Delgado	15	6	1
Nampula	20	32	2
Niassa	7	4	0
[Total -	42	42	3]

Central provinces	Frelimo	Renamo	UD
Manica	4	9	0
Sofala	3	18	0
Tete	5	9	1
Zambézia	18	29	2
[Total -	30	65	3]

Southern provinces	Frelimo	Renamo	UD
Gaza	15	0	1
Inhambane	13	3	2
Maputo City	17	1	0
Maputo Province	12	1	0
[Total -	57	5	3]

Overall total	Frelimo	Renamo	UD
	129	112	9

11. Therefore Frelimo won in the four southern constituencies, and the two furthest north, Cabo Delgado and Niassa, while Renamo took all the provinces of the centre/north and centre. A Mozambican political scientist, Luís de Brito, has made a detailed analysis of the provincial and district level results.⁵ He found that the two main parties each had "sanctuaries" where in 1994 they won more than 75% of the vote. Frelimo's coincide with the areas in the south from where many of the party's historic leaders came, and the areas in the far north where the struggle for independence was waged for the longest, and where Frelimo established "liberated zones". Renamo's coincide with the central regions where their military activities began, and from where many of their cadres were first drawn; he also suggests that a sense of marginalisation from the Frelimo state afflicting those areas has translated into voter support for Renamo, as well as identification with the leadership.

⁴ Where the United Democratic Front (UDF) won most of the seats in the Southern Region, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) continued to enjoy strong support in the Central Region, and the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) took all the seats in the Northern Region.

⁵ Luís de Brito "Voting behaviour in Mozambique's first multiparty elections" in Brazão Mazula (ed.): 1996 (pp.455-477).

12. However large parts of the centre/north and northern provinces were “sanctuaries” for neither party, and the vote was much more balanced. They included some of the more densely populated areas of the country, where de Brito was also unable to establish any obvious correspondence between voting behaviour and ethnic affiliation.

The regional vote, December 1999

13. In Mozambique’s second multiparty legislative elections Frelimo received 48.5% of valid votes cast, Renamo-União Eleitoral (Renamo-UE) 38.8%, and others 12.7%. (Percentages in 1994 were Frelimo 44.3%, Renamo 37.8%, UD 5.2%, and others 12.7%). Turnout was about 70% - well down on 1994. There was a high number of blank and invalid votes (8.4% and 3.2% respectively). The results of the December 1999 election apparently show an even more bipartisan pattern than that of 1994, for neither the UD, nor any other minor party or grouping attained the 5% threshold to qualify for a seat in Parliament:-

Northern provinces	Frelimo	Renamo-União Eleitoral
Cabo Delgado	16	6
Nampula	24	26
Niassa	6	7
[Total-	46	39]
Central provinces	Frelimo	Renamo-UE
Manica	5	10
Sofala	3	18
Tete	8	10
Zambézia	15	34
[Total-	31	72]
Southern provinces	Frelimo	Renamo-UE
Gaza	16	0
Inhambane	13	4
Maputo City	14	2
Maputo Province	12	1
[Total-	55	7]
Overall total	Frelimo	Renamo-UE
	132	118

14. While holding ground in their “sanctuary” areas identified by de Brito from the 1994 election results, the two main parties made inroads into their opponents’ areas outside them. It has been pointed out that in six provinces the party that was runner-up in 1994 gained seats in 1999.⁶ Only in Zambézia did the gap between the parties grow significantly. However, the much more populous Zambézia stands second only to Sofala Province as a “sanctuary” of Renamo support. In addition, four non-Renamo

⁶ *Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin* (ed. Joe Hanlon), no.24, Jan.2000

political leaders stood on the joint Renamo-UE ticket, and the provincial gains may also reflect this fact.

15. While Renamo's strength still lies squarely in the central zone of the country (Manica, Sofala and Zambézia), and Frelimo's remains based in the south and in Cabo Delgado in the far north, three provinces in the centre and north are now closely balanced, with Renamo slightly ahead. Those three are Niassa, Tete and (large and important) Nampula. In fact, the two weightiest provinces in electoral terms demonstrated opposite trends in this last election as compared with 1994: Renamo gained further support in Zambézia but lost ground to Frelimo in Nampula. This mixed picture can be contrasted with the clear triparty regional divide in neighbouring Malawi's June 1999 legislative elections: - The Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) won 85% of seats in the Northern Region; the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) took 75% in the Central Region; and the United Democratic Front (UDF) gained 86% of seats in the Southern Region.

Seats in parliament for each party now & in the previous parliament

	1999		1994		
	Frelimo	Renamo-UE	Frelimo	Renamo	UD
Cabo Delgado	16	6	15	6	1
Nampula	24	26	20	32	2
Niassa	6	7	7	4	0
Manica	5	10	4	9	0
Sofala	4	17	3	18	0
Tete	8	10	5	9	1
Zambézia	15	34	18	29	2
Gaza	16	0	15	0	1
Inhambane	13	4	13	3	2
Maputo City	14	2	17	1	0
Maputo province	12	1	12	1	0
TOTAL	133	117	129	112	9

Changes in numbers of seats for the 2 main parties:

Province	Frelimo	Renamo	Total seat difference for the province since 1994
Cabo Delgado	+1		
Nampula	+4	-6	(-4)
Niassa	-1	+3	(+2)
Manica	+1	+1	(+2)
Sofala	+1	-1	
Tete	+3	+1	(+3)
Zambézia	-3	+5	
Gaza	+1		
Inhambane		+1	(-1)
Maputo City	-3	+1	(-2)
Maputo province			
TOTAL	+4	+5	

(Adapted from the *Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin* 24 – Jan.2000)

Future trends – influence of the smaller parties?

16. Effectively, Frelimo and Renamo-UE divided between them the 9 seats which had belonged to the UD in the previous parliament. However, the Renamo-UE parliamentary seats include leaders of ten small parties who formed a joint list with Renamo, having agreed to support Dhlakama's candidacy for the presidency in exchange for a guarantee of one or two winnable seats on the electoral list. The new MPs from this joint list include:-
- ALIMO (Independent Alliance Party) – Khalid Sidat (Nampula) & Sérgio Neves (Sofala)
 - FAP (Patriotic Action Front) – José Palaço (Zambézia) & Raúl da Conceição (Sofala)
 - MONAMO-PMSD (Mozambique National Movement-Social Democratic Party) – Máximo Dias (Zambézia) & Zelma Vasconcelos (Inhambane)
 - PCN (National Convention Party) – Lutero Simango (Sofala) & Abel Mabunda (Tete)
 - PPPM (Peoples Progress Party) – Padimbe Kamati (Cabo Delgado)
 - PRD (Democratic Renewal Party) – Maneca Daniel (Zambézia) & Lourenço Juma (Nampula)
 - PUN (National Unity Party) – Hipólito do Couto (Sofala) & Bachir Kássimo (Niassa)
 - UDF (United Democratic Front) – Mariano Pordina (Manica)
 - UNAMO (Mozambique National Union) – Carlos Reis (Zambézia).
 - Francisco Masquil (Sofala), who is a former Governor Of Sofala, a former member of the Frelimo Central Committee, and leader of the independent members of the Beira municipal assembly was also elected on the Renamo-UE list
 - Celina Solomone, a UD parliamentarian since 1994, joined the joint list (Tete) and was elected.
17. The agreement between Renamo and the smaller parties in the coalition has not been published.⁷ However, the reaction of the leader of one of them to Renamo's threat made in February to set up "parallel governments" in six of Mozambique's eleven provinces suggest they retain an independent voice, although they have not set up a bench separate from Renamo in the new parliament. To summarise the background to this development:-
18. On 22 December Renamo appealed to the Supreme Court for a recount of votes for both the presidential and legislative elections. The appeal was based on 24 claims. It seems to have had several motivations: a) Renamo's established bargaining tactics of obstruction and procrastination; b) genuine distrust of the Frelimo-controlled state and a belief that they must have secretly manipulated the computers which delivered the (delayed) result; as well as the very narrowness of Frelimo's victory, especially in the presidentials. (Chissano had 52.3% of the vote as against 47.8% for Dhlakama, but 330,000 votes were not accounted for because they had "irreparable flaws"). On 4 January the Supreme Court unanimously rejected the appeal.

⁷ The Mozambique United Front-Democratic Convergence Party (FUMO-PCD) split over the decision to join Renamo-UE. The party was initially rejected by the National Elections Commission (CNE) on the grounds it had not followed its own procedures in agreeing to join the coalition. But the party went to the Supreme Court, which on 24 November overruled the CNE. It was then reinstated within the coalition.

19. On 12 February Renamo's National Council issued an ultimatum. Failure to meet its demands would mean Renamo would go ahead with the creation of parallel governments in six of the eleven provinces where it had obtained a majority of votes. (Zambézia, Sofala, Tete, Manica, Nampula and Niassa). Afonso Dhlakama indicated that some of Renamo's demands of Government could entail three possible remedies:- a) a re-examination of the votes allegedly having "serious flaws"; b) early elections which could be held next year; c) nomination of Renamo Governors and district administrators to the six provinces.
20. The real point may be Renamo pressure on Chissano to concede c) above. (The position of Governor, who is a presidential appointee, carries much authority in a province). However, the notion of parallel provincial governments also constitutes a potential threat to national unity, and Dhlakama must know this. MONAMO Secretary-General Máximo Dias, who was elected to a Zambézia parliamentary seat on the Renamo-UE list, publicly distanced himself from Renamo's call. A constitutional lawyer, Dias objected that any such move would contravene the country's constitution.

By way of a conclusion:

21. In a comment on Chissano's visit to Cabo Delgado on his campaigning tour of the north, the weekly newspaper *Domingo* (21/10/99), noted that:-
 - "Cabo Delgado, an eminently matriarchal society, is empowering Marcelina Chissano, a daughter of the soil who married during the war of national liberation, above even voting for Chissano".
 The reference is to President Chissano's wife, who is Makonde and hails from Frelimo's liberation war stronghold of the Mueda Plateau. At another level, the presidential couple is portrayed as personifying the Gaza Shangaan/Makonde alliance born of the anti-colonial struggle.
22. There are those who would view Renamo as a mirror-image Ndau/Sena alliance of the central region. However, personalities count. The leadership of both main parties campaigned on national-level politics in the run-up to the December 1999 legislative elections, and did so within their rivals' strongholds as well as their own. Neither harped on about the parochial, sought to exploit ethnic factors, or emphasised the bitter experiences of the civil war.
23. It would be a pity if a descent into regional divisiveness now follows the election results. Dhlakama desisted from confrontation politics in the wake of the country's devastating floods. However, he has recently adopted a harsher tone following clashes between his supporters and police, demanding the appointment of Renamo members as provincial governors and integration of ex-Renamo combatants into the Rapid Intervention Police (PIR).
24. The future relationship between Renamo and its small coalition partners bears watching as much as that between it and Frelimo. Their leaders represent a potential resource for Dhlakama, to compensate for the relative lack of educated cadre in his

own party. In particular, they could be useful if Dhlakama plans to contest the local elections scheduled for 2003, rather than mount a boycott of them, as in July 1998. This could in turn increase any restraining influence on Renamo that they wish to exercise.

REGISTRATION RESULTS & ALLOCATION OF SEATS 1994 & 1999

Province	Voters registered 1994	Seats 1994	Voters registered 1999	Seats 1999
Cabo Delgado	568,169	22	618,451	22
Nampula	1,365,796	54	1,434,764	50
Niassa	282,513	11	356,693	13
Manica	322,201	13	421,266	15
Sofala	530,066	21	593,877	21
Tete	397,260	15	503,422	18
Zambézia	1,270,098	49	1,384,626	49
Gaza	398,381	16	465,151	16
Inhambane	471,524	18	495,981	17
Maputo City	459,166	18	455,640	16
Maputo Province	330,887	13	369,234	13
TOTAL	6,396,061	250	7,099,105	250

NB.

The largest percentage increases in the electorate since 1994 took place in border provinces (Manica – 30.7%; Tete – 26.7%; Niassa – 26.2%). The probable explanation is return of war refugees to their homes.

Source: Mozambique News Agency Report no.166 (6 Oct.1999)