

**VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN MOZAMBIQUE: A STUDY OF MAXIXE  
DISTRICT**

By

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to all members of the Matsimbe family.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give all the Honour and Glory to the living God for being the centre of it all, throughout my long journey and for protecting my young family while I am away. With you Lord, everything is possible.

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## DECLARATION

I, **Zefanias Alberto Matsimbe**, declare that this thesis is my own unaided work, both in concept and execution. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other university.

Zefanias Alberto Matsimbe

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Pretoria, February 2017

## ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

This thesis identifies and examines factors that shape voters' choice in Maxixe district in order to understand how voters decide in general in Mozambique. It is a case study of Maxixe district, one of the fourteen districts of Inhambane Province in southern Mozambique, which is historically a stronghold for the ruling Frelimo party. It is an interesting region for study because it is an economic hub and a cosmopolitan town, with a multi-ethnic population comprising three ethnolinguistic groups, yet at times it has been assumed to be a homogeneous region. As such, one cannot rush to conclude that ethnicity plays a major role in politics and voting behaviour. Yet no studies on voting behaviour have been conducted in this region. The study is based on four theoretical frameworks commonly used in election studies, namely the sociological, socio-psychological, rational choice and the cognitive awareness approaches. Methodologically, it prioritises the social constructivism paradigm, case study research design and qualitative research approach. Findings confirm that ethnicity does not determine party choice or voting behaviour in Maxixe. Age forms an important cleavage among voters as the elderly always vote for Frelimo while younger voters are more independent. Party identification influences voting choice to some extent, but mainly for strategic purposes. While the economy determines voting behaviour to some extent, voters do not use their dissatisfaction to punish the incumbent ruling party and political sophistication does not influence voting.

**KEYWORDS:** voting behaviour, elections, ethnicity, economic performance, FRELIMO, RENAMO, Maxixe district, Mozambique.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

- ANC – African National Congress
- AR – Assembleia da República (National Assembly)
- AU - African Union
- AWEPA - Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa
- CAP – Centro de Análise de Políticas (Centre for Policy Analysis)
- CC – Conselho Constitucional (Constitutional Council)
- CCM – Conselho Cristão de Moçambique (Christian Council of Mozambique)
- CDE – Comissão Distrital de Eleições (District Election Commission)
- CEP – Centro de Estudos da População (Centre for Population Study)
- CNE – Comissão Nacional de Eleições (National Election Commission)
- CNEP – Comparative National Election Project
- CSO - Civil Society Organisation
- EISA - Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
- EMB – Electoral Management Body
- EN1 – Estrada Nacional 1
- EUEOM - European Union Election Observation Mission
- FRELIMO – Frente da Libertação de Moçambique (Front for Liberation of Mozambican)
- GDP - Gross Domestic Product
- GPA – General Peace Agreement
- INE - National Institute of Statistics
- MDM - Movimento Democrático de Moçambique (Democratic Movement of Mozambique)
- MP – Member of Parliament
- OAU - Organisation of African Unity
- OE – Observatório Eleitoral (Electoral Observatory)
- ONUMOZ – United Nations Operation in Mozambique
- PR - Proportional Representation
- RENAMO - National Resistance of Mozambique
- RM - Rádio Moçambique (Radio Mozambique)
- RUE - RENAMO União Eleitoral (RENAMO Electoral Union)
- SADC - Southern African Development Community
- SOICO – Sociedade Independente de Comunicação (The Independent Communications Society)

STAE – Secretariado Técnico da Administração Eleitoral (Technical Secretariat for Election Administration)

STV – Soico Television

TVM - Televisão de Moçambique (Mozambican Television)

UD – União Democrática (Democratic Union)

UEM – Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (Eduardo Mondlane University)

UMC - United Methodist Church

UN – United Nations

USD – United States Dollar

ZANLA - Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

ZANU - Zimbabwe African National Union

ZAPU - Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZIPRA - Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

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## CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This thesis studies electoral behaviour in Maxixe, one of the fourteen districts of Inhambane Province in southern Mozambique, historically a stronghold for the ruling Frente da Libertação de Moçambique (Front for Liberation of Mozambican) (Frelimo) party. This is an interesting region to study because it is the economic hub of the entire Inhambane province (Braa *et al*, 2001; Farré, 2008) and a cosmopolitan town with mixed social, cultural and political dynamics that are likely to influence the political attitudes and voting behaviour of local dwellers. It is one of the few districts in the country with a multi-ethnic population comprising three ethnolinguistic groups (Gitonga, Xitswa and Cichope) sharing the same geographical space; yet at times it has been assumed to be a homogeneous region. As such, one cannot rush to conclude that ethnicity, for example, plays a major role in politics and voting behaviour. Yet no studies on voting behaviour have been conducted in this region.

Studying electoral behaviour is important since elections are the keystone in modern liberal democracies because they allow citizens to elect their representatives and ensure responsive, accountable and legitimate governments (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Keulder, 2000). In less developed democracies, like in Africa, voting is the most important form of political participation (Goerres, 2007; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008). However, for elections to play an important role in democracy it is “to a significant extent dependent on citizens’ rationale for how they behave at the polls” (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008: 95). Therefore, studying voting behaviour becomes important (Keulder, 2000) to contribute towards an understanding and consolidation of democracy.

How do voters decide in elections in Maxixe? Understanding how voters make their electoral decisions is important and numerous studies have been conducted in attempts to address this question (Lazarsfeld *et al*, 1944; Downs, 1957; Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Fiorina, 1981). In fact, voting behaviour is one of the oldest or classical fields of political science, particularly in the field of comparative politics, and the most developed areas of empirical social research (Basedau *et al*, 2011; Erdmann, 2007a; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Evans, 2004; Catt, 1996; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Erdman, 2007a; Basedau *et al*, 2011; Keulder, 2000;

Thomassen, 1994; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Pereira, 2008) particularly in well-established democracies.

Crucial questions can be asked including the following: What motivates voters to go to the polls in new democracies in Africa? What makes voters align with a particular candidate or political party? Are Africans more evaluative or non-evaluative in their voting rationale? Do different factors influence different voters equally? Do voters consider the same factors from election to election across different times? If changes occur, what makes voters consider other alternatives? Research responding to these questions has been limited (Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Erdmann, 2007a; Basedau *et al*, 2011; Young, 2009).

In comparison to Western democracies, Africa lags behind in research to understand how voters decide (Keulder, 2000; Basedau, 2011; Young, 2009; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008). This is in part because multi-party democracy itself is a recent phenomenon as most of African states only embarked on the democratisation process in the early 1990s (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008). Nevertheless, those studies that have been conducted so far use theories borrowed from advanced democracies (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008) as Africa has not yet developed its own research tools (Keulder, 2000). Research in Africa still concentrates on understanding the functioning of institutions, state structures and elite transitions (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008) in electoral processes, structures and electoral outcomes (Keulder, 2000), rather than focusing on individual voting behaviour (Keulder, 2000). The literature on voting studies suggests that voting decisions can be based on an evaluative rationale or a non-evaluative rationale (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008).

Do African voters behave like other voters elsewhere? Because “Africans are commonly believed to be strongly rooted in local communities through primary ties of blood and belonging, including those of kinship, family, language and religion, as well as longstanding cultural bonds” (Pereira, 2008: 1), the common explications of voting in Africa are based on variables such as ethnicity, tribe, patronage, clientelism, personal ties, rural and urban settings, and regional cleavages (Horowitz, 1985; Keulder, 2000; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Erdmann, 2007a; Erdmann, 2007b; Erdmann 2004; Pereira, 2008; Erdmann, 2007a; Basedau *et al*, 2011; Fridy, 2006; Erdmann, 2007b; Basedau & Stroh, 2009). “The ethnic vote thesis eliminates all other possible explanations of the vote without putting them to the



test. This amounts to a monolithic explanation of the vote” (Keulder, 2000: 268). Important structural factors such as class, gender, age, social status, employment status, and ideological orientation likely to influence voting rationale have been ignored (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008).

Recent and more systematic research has challenged the conventional wisdom of ethnic determinism of voting (Basedau *et al*, 2011; Erdmann, 2007b) for lack of evidence for the ethnic claim (Basedau & Stroh, 2012:5; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Bratton, 2005) and scholars attribute this ecological fallacy to methodological flaws, caused particularly by the use of aggregate data or national election results (Erdmann, 2007a) and claim that ethnic voting is more often assumed than proved (Keulder, 2000).

Studies conducted in Africa using individual data surveys and aggregated data show that ethnicity matters, but it is not the only determinant of voter choice and party affiliation (Basedau & Stroh, 2012; Basedau *et al*, 2011; Erdmann, 2007a; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008). Lindberg & Morrison (2008) found that parties are not formed along ethnic lines, most probably because the low ethnic polarisation and lack of mobilisation of ethnicity during the ‘one-party era’ soon after independence did not allow for politicisation of ethnicity (Basedau *et al*, 2011).

In Mozambique, studies on elections were pioneered by Brito (1996) in his analysis of the voting behaviour in the first democratic elections of 1994. This was followed by a limited number of studies analysing electoral processes in a non-systematic manner (Shenga, 2013; Pereira, 2007; Pereira, 2008; Rosário, 2009) and surveys conducted by the Centre for Population Study (CEP), Centre for Policy Analysis-Eduardo Mondlane University (CAP-UEM), Comparative National Election Project (CNEP) and Afrobarometer. Almost all these studies show a clear regional distribution of votes between the two main contestants, with Frelimo winning in the south and extreme north, and the opposition National Resistance of Mozambique (Renamo) winning in the centre and centre-north regions of the country (Brito, 1996; Shenga, 2008; Pereira, Davids and Mattes, 2002; Pereira, 2007; Chichava, 2008; Pereira, 2008). This geographical distribution of votes reveals the existence of a kind of regional cleavage but studies provide scant explanation of what is behind this regional distribution of voting throughout the country (see, for example, Brito, 1996; Shenga, 2008; Pereira, Davids & Mattes, 2002; Pereira, 2007; Chichava, 2008; Serra, 1999; Mazula, 2006).

The above cited studies also analyse single elections, single case studies and they are mostly historical descriptive narratives. These studies, including the surveys, produced misleading results due to methodological flaws (Shenga, 2013; Brito, 2007; Brito *et al*, 2005). Their explanation of regional voting behaviour focussed mostly on factors such as the urban versus rural cleavage, regional economic imbalances, place of origin of party leadership, the socio-historical trajectory and social exclusion (Brito, 1996; Pereira, 1997; Chichava, 2007). Unlike in other political parties on the continent, ethnicity does not seem to have a direct effect on voting behaviour. This illustrates that despite the fact that Mozambican democracy is over 20 years old, little is known about the factors that influence voting decisions of the citizens. Understanding how voters behave “will continue to be a crucial piece of the puzzle in understanding [of Mozambican] politics” (Pereira, 2008: 256).

## 1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A better understanding of voting behaviour is an important step towards a better understanding of democratic institutions (Degan & Merlo, 2004) if not of democracy as a whole (Thomassen, 1994). However, in less consolidated democracies this understanding remains limited (Pereira, 2008). This is even worse in Lusophone or Portuguese speaking countries in Africa, which, for most of the time have been excluded from cross-national surveys due to language limitations. In Africa these surveys have been dominant in Anglophone countries.

The few studies that have been conducted in Mozambique were based on cross-national surveys (Pereira, 2008; Brito *et al*, 2005) or aggregated national election results (Brito, 1996), methods that are not always suitable for the Mozambican context characterised by low levels of formal education and low political sophistication. By focusing mostly on aggregate data these studies failed to explore in depth the real and current factors that drive voters towards a particular choice in a particular moment or electoral event. As a result, like other studies conducted in Africa, these studies portray unresolved methodological problems (Erdmann, 2007a; Erdmann, 2007b). Furthermore, by using a country as the unit of analysis, these studies ignore the fact that political context can vary between regions of the same country (Anderson & Heath, 2003). With national aggregated data, for example, regional differences may go unnoticed.

Other studies relied heavily on socio-historical analysis (Chichava, 2007 and Rosário, 2009). In their well-done attempt to interpret the current behaviour based on historical factors, these studies fail to explain how factors, such as candidate assessment, government evaluation, electoral campaigning, and socio-cultural factors, particularly social networks, influence voting.

Earlier studies in Mozambique also tested voting behaviour theories or approaches selectively. Brito (1996) and Brito *et al* (2005) looked mostly at the issue of ethnicity, rural and rural versus urban cleavages, while Chichava (2007) and Rosário (2009) opted for the socio-historic and identities analysis. Results of analysis based on one theory cannot be undermined; however, given the intertwined nature of factors that determine voting behaviour it is important to explore multiple theoretical approaches in order to get a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. Pereira (2008) exceptionally tested different approaches, but his focus was on factors influencing partisanship.

This study intends to fill some of the gaps from earlier studies in the country. Firstly, by moving from aggregated to more individual-level generated data on voter motivation the study presents an important step towards an exploratory understanding of Mozambican politics. Secondly, by focusing on a particular region of the country this study represents an important point of departure for studies of regional dynamics of voting in Mozambique. This study also tests simultaneously four approaches using qualitative data, thereby offering a ground-breaking approach likely to open avenues for future studies on multiple aspects of voting behaviour.

While results from this study are unlikely to be generalised to explain voting behaviour in other regions of Mozambique, given the diversity of socio-economic and political contexts in different areas; the study will, however, provide an important methodological and theoretical contribution that can be replicated in other regions of the country in exploring and understanding factors that determine voting behaviour and also in interpreting the regional divide of the electorate in the rest of the country and in other African or emerging democracies. Furthermore, the study has generated helpful information for politicians to better strategise their electoral campaigns and boost the democratic competition (Pereira, 2008) in Maxixe and in Mozambique as a whole.

### 1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed at determining the factors influencing voting behaviour in Maxixe. The analysis of the various factors was based on the following theoretical approaches:

- Sociological – to understand how social factors other than ethnicity, for example, language, region of origin, social networks and age influence electoral choices;
- Socio-psychological – to investigate to what extent voters' choices are determined by party identification;
- Rational choice – to determine how economic factors influence voting behaviour; and
- Cognitive awareness - to examine how political knowledge influence voting behaviour.

### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of this study is: What factors shape voting decisions of voters in Maxixe district? Four secondary research questions asked are:

- To what extent do social factors, other than ethnicity, for example, language, place of origin, religion and age influence electoral choices? What other social factors determine voting decisions in Maxixe?
- To what degree does party identification play a role in voters' choice in Maxixe?
- Does the economy matter in electoral decisions? If yes, what economic factors have the most influence? Are voters concerned with the collective well-being or about improving individual living conditions? Do voters assess the incumbent based on what they have done or failed to do or on what they promise to do? How do voters punish or reward government performance?
- Does political knowledge and information play a role in determining their voting decisions? If yes, what are the most important sources of information? How do voters select and use the information in their voting decisions?

Answers to these questions not only helped to bring to the surface exploratory data on how social, political and economic factors influence electoral choice (Clark & Causer, 1991), but also makes a contribution to the body of knowledge on voting behaviour in Mozambique and

opened new avenues for further research on electoral behaviour, not only in Mozambique, but also in other African countries.

## 1.5 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

Based on the literature survey of election studies conducted in Mozambique and elsewhere in Africa, the study was approached with the following assumptions:

- Ethnicity, known as the most important cleavage determining voters' choice in Africa, does not have a significant influence among voters in Maxixe. This is because historically, ethnic groups have not been politicised strongly in Mozambique;
- Like in most of Africa's emerging democracies, party identification does not determine voting behaviour in Maxixe. Landslide victories for the ruling Frelimo party in Maxixe are more associated with the historic ties, habituation and lack of a trustworthy alternative rather than party attachment;
- The strong support for Frelimo in Maxixe is also driven by the high levels of patronage and social control on the ground;
- Voters vote for Frelimo to gain rewards or to avoid sanctions;
- Economy matters in determining voters' choice. Voters use elementary indicators such as unemployment, inflation, corruption in public institutions, and lack of water and health facilities to assess government performance. However, despite of widespread levels of dissatisfaction voters do not use their vote to punish the government;
- Limited access to information has contributed to low levels of political awareness. However, unlike the cognitive awareness assumption that states that informed voters participate effectively due to high levels of interest in politics, in Maxixe better informed voters tend to abstain from politics.

## 1.6 CORE THEORETICAL APPROACHES

How do voters decide? Different explanations have been advanced in attempt to answer to this complex question. The explanations are grouped into four main theoretical approaches, namely the sociological, the socio-psychological, the rational choice and the cognitive awareness approach (Erdmann, 2007a; Erdmann, 2007b; Erdmann, 2004; Basedau *et al*,

2011; Anderson & Heath, 2000). Despite differences in interpretation, the four approaches are intellectually linked and some originated from others in the form of a complementary critique (Evans, 2004; Anderson & Heath, 2000). The next sub-sections provide a brief explanation of the origins and the main assumptions of each of the core theoretical assumptions used. More details about the assumptions, their complementarity and incompatibility, merits and critiques (Anderson & Heath, 2000) are provided in full in the next chapter.

### **1.6.1 The Sociological Approach**

The central assumption of the sociological approach is that voting behaviour is determined by social structures. That is, a voter votes for a particular political party or candidate influenced by his or her belonging to a particular social group (Andersen & Heath, 2000; Thomassen, 1994; Andersen & Heath, 2003; Evans, 2004, Pereira, 2008; Catt, 1996; Achen, 2002; Brooks *et al*, 2006; Andersen & Yaish, 2003). Since social group membership will likely influence the voter's attitudes and interests and consequently the vote (Andersen & Heath, 2000), "a cross on the ballot is an implicit statement of social identity" (Harrop & Miller, 1987:173; see also Evans 2004: 42; Keulder, 2000). And because voters vote for a political party or candidate that best represents their group's economic and social interests (see also Andersen & Heath, 2000; Pereira, 2008; Andersen & Heath, 2003) voting becomes instrumental (Andersen & Heath, 2000; Pereira, 2008; Catt, 1996; Andersen & Heath, 2003).

Research by Lipset & Rokkan (1967) originated the social cleavage model, a sub-model of the sociological approach (Norris & Mattes, 2003; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Colomer & Puglisi, 2005). According to the social cleavage model, social identity not only influence voting behaviour, but also determine the number of political parties since political parties will develop in response to cleavage structures in a given polity (Andersen & Heath, 2000; Evans, 2004; Anderson & Heath, 2003; Zielinski, 2002; Basedau *et al*, 2011). The social cleavages model was very influential in voting behaviour research particularly in Western Europe. In Africa it has been modified by integrating ethnicity and region as basic social cleavages to explain voting behaviour, party formation and party systems (Erdmann, 2004; Erdmann, 2007a; Pereira, 2008).

## 1.6.2 The Socio-psychological Approach

The main postulation of the socio-psychological approach is that voting is influenced by long-standing psychological attachments that voters develop towards a particular political party (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Catt, 1996; Evans, 2004; Goren, 2005; Weinschenk, 2010). The psychological predispositions (beliefs, values and attitudes) towards a particular political party are acquired from childhood (Chandler, 1988; Catt, 1996; Evans, 2004) through family members, mostly parents (Pereira, 2008; Andersen & Heath, 2003; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Weinschenk, 2010; Catt, 1996; Evans, 2004) and reinforced by group membership and strengthen over life cycles (Pereira, 2008). This affective orientation rarely changes, which guarantees certain stability in voting behaviour (Thomassen, 1994; Evans, 2004; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Catt, 1996; Chandler, 1988; Rosema, 2006; Thomassen & Rosema, 2006; Weinschenk, 2010; Goren, 2005).

From the socio-psychological approach, there developed one of the most influential concepts in election studies, the concept of party identification, which later became a model in itself. Party identification represents the affective attachment that voters develop towards a particular political party. It is party identification that helps voters to be much more knowledgeable with policy positions and ideology of their party (Frank & Jackson, 1983; Evans, 2004; Pereira, 2008). Because in elections voters use their identification with a party as a shortcut (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002), voting is assumed to be expressive or affirmation rather than instrumental (Andersen & Heath, 2000).

The socio-psychological approach and party identification have been influential in well-established democracies, particularly in America. However, its use in Africa has been limited. There is even a debate on whether the concept exists or not in the continent (Pereira, 2008). Few studies based on cross-national data have examined the relevance of party identification on the continent (Bratton *et al.*, 2005; Pereira, 2008; Erdmann, 2007a).

## 1.6.3 The Rational Choice Approach

The chief assumption of the rational choice approach is that voting is determined by the economy. In elections voters choose the party whose policy platform or performance matches

their individual economic interests and priorities based on cost-benefit analyses (Downs, 1958; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011; Rosema, 2006; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Catt, 1996; Evans, 2004). Voting is instrumental in the sense that voters vote for parties that are likely to help them to achieve personal goals or to affect policies leading so that they get what they want (Andersen & Heath, 2000; Pereira, 2008; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Catt, 1996; Evans, 2004; Downs, 1957).

In the rational choice approach voters pay particular attention to the economic performance of the incumbent ruling party (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000); therefore, “in good economic times voters reward the incumbent, in bad economic times they punish the incumbent” (Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011:288; see also Chandler, 1988; Rosema, 2006; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2008; Bratton *et al*, 2012). Voters have their evaluation based on their personal economic conditions—these are called pocketbook or egotropic voters or take their decisions based on the evaluation of the macro-economy or national economy—these are the labelled sociotropic voters (Aidt, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000; Lewis-beck & Paldam, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2009; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2008; Fidrmuc, 2000; Keulder, 2000). Finally, voters can judge the ruling party retrospectively or prospectively. Retrospective voters judge the ruling party through the evaluation of the past economic performance; while prospective voters base their assessment on future economic expectations (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2009; Campbell *et al*, 1960; Lewis-beck & Paldam, 2000) while others combine the two types of evaluations together (Pereira, 2008). The influence of economics in voting has not yet been well explored in Africa.

#### **1.6.4 The Cognitive Awareness Approach**

The main postulation of the cognitive awareness approach is that political attitudes and voting behaviour are greatly influenced by cognitive factors. That is, the behaviour of citizens in elections will depend on the degree of exposure to political communication/information and knowledge about parties and candidates (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944; Downs, 1957; Marthaler, 2008; Pereira, 2008; Zaller, 1989; Kuan & Lau, 2002; Hobolt, 2005). Different exposure to political information implies different levels of political awareness of the voter and different skills to reason about politics (Zaller, 1989; Kuan & Lau, 2002; Hobolt, 2005).



The level of political awareness influences the voter's level of interest in following politics. It enables voters to evaluate issues, ideologies, party candidates and how to interpret political institutions and political systems. More sophisticated voters tend to be interested in getting involved in politics. Sources of information can range from the public media, informal groups and social networks.

## **1.7 EPISTEMOLOGICAL PARADIGM: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Given the nature of this study, with much focus on voters' views or perspectives on voting decisions, social constructivism is the most appropriate epistemological paradigm to be used (Creswell, 2013; Mauki, 2014). The social constructivism paradigm states that for a better understanding of the phenomenon, the researcher has to focus on capturing participants' views as much as possible because they reflect their understanding of the world they live in and represent the meanings given to their lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Willig, 2008). Applying this paradigm during research made it possible to pay attention to a multiple and variety of informants' views about their electoral decisions. Participants were allowed free use of the language of their choice to ensure that they expressed their views and feelings comfortably and clearly. This helped to capture different aspects of their motivations behind their electoral choices.

The social fabric in which voters are integrated is an important element to be analysed in the voting behaviour research (Thomassen, 1994). The fact that social constructivism allows for broad, general and open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013) allowed this researcher to gain comprehensive insight into how the environment that voters live in, interactions with their peers, their cultural, linguistic and historical background influence their voting decisions. The understanding of the local languages spoken in Maxixe and of the cultural setting helped in grasping the most influential factors behind their electoral choice.

## **1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study is purely qualitative. Given the complexity in understanding voters' attitudes and behaviour (Erdmann, 2007a; Erdmann, 2007b; Erdmann 2004) as well as the multiplicity and variety of influencers of voting behaviour (Rose & McAllister, 1986) the qualitative inquiry

was selected for use because it allows for the application of a combination of different research methods (interviews and focus group discussions) in data collection which in turn allows the researcher to have a holistic approach of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012).

Furthermore, a qualitative inquiry allows for a continuous interaction with informants in their natural setting (Allan, 1991; Yin, 2011) which allowed for the building of trust and in-depth understanding of how voters in Maxixe make sense of their lived social, political and economic experiences and how they convert them into preferred political choices. Earlier studies conducted in the country that used cross-national aggregated national result elections or surveys concluded that only the use of a qualitative approach could deepen understanding of how citizens conceive of and approach politics, political parties, electoral management bodies, government institutions and elections in influencing the voting behaviour (Brito, 2007; Pereira, 2008).

### **1.8.1 Case study approach**

The study of voting behaviour requires an analysis of the context in which voters live and sometimes requires in-depth descriptions of certain social phenomena and the use of multiple data. Because of this, the case study approach was considered the most appropriate. The study combined two types of case studies, namely; exploratory and descriptive, because as Barbie (2005) indicated “reporting the voting intentions of an election is descriptive, but reporting why some people plan to vote for Candidate A and others for Candidate B is explanatory” (Barbie, 2005: 99).

### **1.8.2 Selection of the case (Maxixe)**

The study was conducted in Maxixe district, covering both urban and rural areas. Being the economic hub of the Inhambane province (Braa *et al*, 2001; Farré, 2008) since the colonial period, Maxixe attracts people from all over the province, resulting in a social and cultural mosaic. The population of the area increased during the 16-year civil war until 1992, with people from the neighbouring districts seeking refuge in Maxixe city. Three ethnolinguistic groups (Xitswa, Cichope and Gitonga) inhabit the district. Because of its multicultural nature, Maxixe became a suitable location for this study to test voting behaviour.

Without assuming that ethnicity plays a major role in politics in Maxixe, the researcher wanted to understand whether belonging to an ethnolinguistic group influences how people in Maxixe decide during elections. This was also an attempt to understand how the interactions between heterogeneous and multicultural groups influence the building of political images, concepts and the voting behaviour. Inhambane is one of what Lindberg & Morrison (2008) called the ‘safe haven constituency’ of the liberator and incumbent ruling party (Frelimo) in southern Mozambique. Therefore it was important to explore what variables explain the persistence of such a voting pattern giving landslide victories to Frelimo in both general and local government elections.

### **1.8.3 Access to the field**

Studies such as this one, requiring interaction with different informants for a long period of time, are only possible with “permission from gatekeepers” (Rule & John, 2011: 112) or administrative authorities of the site and its informants. In Mozambique, with high levels of surveillance of citizens by state authorities and low levels of a democratic culture, talking about politics is sensitive. Therefore, to circumvent these limitations, it was necessary to follow all administrative procedures before entering the field. Letters of introduction requested from University of Pretoria and the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique were presented to the authorities in Maxixe and the supervisor joined the researcher in meeting with local authority officials to explain the purpose, methodology and methods employed in the study, and permission was granted. More caution was exercised while accessing the field and the respondents, given the fact the fieldwork coincided with the electoral period. This was done to minimise confusion regarding the research and campaigns of political parties. Visits to local offices of political parties and contacts with prominent members or leaders of political parties and government authorities were kept to a minimum to avoid suspicion.

### **1.8.4 Selection of participants**

There is a big debate on whether social sciences use the concept of sampling or not. For some authors, research in social sciences does not apply sampling, but selection of participants (Thomas, 2011). However, for Yin (2012) the two terms, sampling and selection of

participants are synonymous; therefore, they can be used interchangeably. This study uses the term ‘selection of participants’. It consisted of 60 interviews and three focus group discussions involving women and men of 18 years of age or older (eligible voters), residing in the rural and urban areas of Maxixe. Efforts were put in place to include people from a wide range of backgrounds (gender, education, ethnic/linguistic group, religion, economic status and occupation, age, rural and urban). Unfortunately, more men than women interviewed due to high levels of refusals by women to participate in the study. More details about the selection criteria and challenges encountered during the fieldwork phase of the research are provided in chapter three of this thesis. This includes an in-depth discussion of the strategies that were employed to ensure representativity of the interviewees and focus group participants.

### **1.8.5 Data collection**

The use of multiple data collection techniques from multiple sources widens the possibility of explaining and understanding a social phenomenon in its complexity (Swanborn, 2010). For this study, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, two of the most used methods in qualitative research, were used. Given that this research aimed at gathering opinions, beliefs and feelings, open-ended interviews were the most suitable technique to allow respondents to express their viewpoints openly (Flick, 2009). Furthermore, considering the recent history of Mozambique where citizens feel unease to express their political views in public, one-to-one interviews allowed for open discussion because conversations were more personalised and private (Maundeni, 2000).

Interview participants were free to choose where and when to be interviewed. They were also free to speak in the language of their choice. An attempt was made to build good working relationships and trust with all participants, which allowed for more openness and confidence in the follow-up interviews. The interview schedule (see Appendix B) was prepared in English and then translated into Portuguese. Interviews were conducted either in Portuguese or in the language of the respondent. Interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and then translated into English for analysis. The researcher originates from Maxixe and is fluent in Portuguese and the other three languages.

A focus group discussion is an “interview conducted with a group” (Kelly, 2006: 304; see also Cronin, 2008) to “explore different participants’ views and experiences on a specific subject in depth” (Cronin, 2008: 228). In a focus group discussion, participants interact amongst themselves about a particular issue, with the researcher only playing the role of moderator to guide the discussion (Thomas, 2011). This study focused on voting behaviour, to gather a shared view on what motivated people to participate in elections and what criteria they use to elect their preferred political party or candidate. The focus group discussions followed a guide (see Appendix C) and they were also recorded, transcribed and translated.

During fieldwork research, occasional observation and brief field notes of non-verbal communication, facts, events, names, were recorded. Documents such as reports of official elections results, official statistics and all other authentic and valid primary sources were reviewed for supplementary data.

### **1.8.6 Data analysis**

In qualitative research data analysis and interpretation can be done concurrently with data collection (Punch, 2006; Maundeni, 2000; Allan, 1991) and can go through various stages such as editing, segmenting, summarising, coding, memoing, finding themes or patterns, conceptualising and explaining (Babbie, 2005, Maundeni, 2000). The analysis in this study started from the time fieldwork research began, guided by the research questions. As the research progressed, some categories and themes were developed. Some of these categories and themes changed or collapsed along the way while others were consolidated. Continuous contacts with participants helped to refine the findings. At the end, data was transcribed and translated from Portuguese into English language and a manual coding of the data followed. Categories and themes were formed along the four research questions, each question aligned with the theoretical approach.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Because qualitative inquiry consists of gathering information from and about people (Creswell, 2009) and establishing close interaction between the researcher and participants (Thomas, 2011), ethical issues are likely to arise and compromise the validity, reliability and

quality of research (Merriam, 2009; Rule & John, 2011; Punch, 2000). Therefore, this study took ethical issues into consideration. Ethical principles included, but were not limited to, informed consent (Thomas, 2011; Punch, 2006), right to withdraw (Aspeling, 2006), protection of participants from harm (Creswell, 2009), right of participants to privacy (Merriam, 2009), anonymity and confidentiality (source), honesty of the researcher (Punch, 2006; Creswell, 2009) and trust between the researcher and informants (Creswell, 2009).

To adhere to the above stated ethical principles, participants were informed well in advance about the purpose and the voluntary nature of the study and how the information collected was going to be processed, used and kept. A considerable number of potential respondents declined to be interviewed immediately, mostly women. Those who accepted to participate in the study were given freedom to withdraw at any phase of the research. Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research through replacing the real names of respondents by codes during transcriptions and data reporting. Although Mozambique is enjoying democracy people are still reluctant to discuss politics openly, particularly with a “stranger” or outsider. Therefore, there was no way this study would have run smoothly without building trust with participants. This was possible through regular follow up visits and interviews.

## **1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, structured as follows: This chapter presented an overview of the study area, highlighting a brief history of voting behaviour studies. This was followed by the presentation of the rationale for the study, purpose, research questions and the working assumptions guiding the study. A brief theoretical framework on which the study is based, together with an indication of epistemological paradigm, an outline of the research design and methodology used were also highlighted. The chapter closed with a discussion of ethical aspects that were taken into consideration in the course of the study.

The second chapter outlines and discusses the theoretical framework on which this study is based. The four selected approaches on voting behaviour, namely; the sociological; socio-psychological, the rational choice and the cognitive awareness are explained in detail. The chapter closes with an overview of election studies in Africa and in Mozambique. The third chapter describes and explains in detail the research design and methodology and techniques

used in the data collection and analysis. It also explains the reasons for the selection of the study site and participants as well as the operationalisation of the research instruments in the field. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the challenges faced throughout the study and the various strategies adopted to overcome them.

The fourth chapter provides an overview of the political history, democracy and elections in Mozambique; that is, the different transitions that the country went through, from colonialism to post-independence socialism, civil war, peace and democratisation. With more focus on the democratisation process and on aspects believed to influence voting behaviour, the chapter explains the types of elections held in the country, the electoral system in use, the prevailing party system, the type and functions of electoral management bodies. The chapter closes with a brief highlight of the present challenges in the building of the democratic process in Mozambique. The fifth chapter presents the empirical findings (results) of the study, based on the themes aligned to each research question and theoretical approach. Opinions, feelings and perceptions of respondents about their participation and vote choice in electoral processes are detailed.

The sixth chapter analyses and discusses the empirical findings based on the theoretical framework discussed in chapter two and other existing literature in the field of election studies in Africa and in Mozambique, in order to arrive at plausible conclusions and to respond to research questions. The discussion also shows how the data validated or disputed the existing body of knowledge in the area of voting behaviour.

The last chapter of this thesis provides the main conclusions of the study, reflecting on the four secondary research questions linked to the four theoretical approaches. It reflects on the theoretical and methodological contribution of the study and closes with recommendations for further research, and practical recommendations for electoral management bodies, political parties and for legal framework reform.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

This introductory chapter provided a background to and rationale of, the purpose, research questions and working assumptions guiding this study. The topic of the study was introduced, setting out the research questions and core assumptions, together with an explication of the

research design, and methodology was discussed, as well as the ethical considerations that were adopted in the course of the study. The following chapter discusses the underlying theoretical framework that guided this study, together with an overview of election studies in Africa and in Mozambique.



## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

How do voters decide? Perspectives borrowed from different disciplines such as sociology, psychology and economics have been used in attempt to answer to this complex question. Therefore, the question has no single answer. Some look at voting as an act of affirmation and others as an act choice (Harrop & Miller, 1987). In its attempt to answer this question this study used four theoretical approaches, the sociological, the socio-psychological, the rational choice and the cognitive awareness. This chapter discusses the core assumptions and assesses the contributions and weaknesses of each approach in their explanation of voting behaviour. The chapter also provides a survey of election studies using the selected approaches in Africa and Mozambique in particular.

### **2.2 THE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The main assumption of the Sociological approach is that voting behaviour is greatly determined by the social structure; that is, voting behaviour is to a great extent influenced by individual membership to a particular social group (Thomassen, 1994; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Catt, 1996; Achen, 2002; Evans, 2004; Brooks *et al*, 2006; Andersen & Yaish, 2003). The traditional social groups include social class, religious, regional, and demographic aspects such as gender and age (Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007). People sharing the same identity tend to vote together; therefore, a cross on the ballot paper becomes an inherent statement of the social identity of the voter (Harrop & Miller, 1987; Evans 2004; Keulder, 2000).

Individuals belonging to the same social group occupy the same economic and social positions; therefore, they share similar concerns and are likely to share the same views on how their concerns should be addressed (Harrop & Miller, 1987; Andersen & Heath, 2003; Evans, 2004). Their common view will be reflected on their attitudes towards candidates and political parties in the polls (Andersen & Heath, 2000). A common social group will be encouraged to vote for a political party that best represents its economic and social interests or is likely to resolve its concerns and needs in case it wins elections. Voting becomes

instrumental (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944; Andersen & Heath, 2003; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Zielinski, 2002; Catt, 1996; Pereira, 2008).

A seminal publication by Lipset & Rokkan (1967) on the relationship between the development of party system and the social cleavage structure added significance to the sociological approach in explaining voting behaviour. They argued that political parties evolved in response to the cleavage structure of the society or in response to the concerns of the voters belonging to specific social groups (Andersen & Heath, 2000; Andersen & Yaish, 2003; Evans, 2004; Anderson & Heath, 2003; Zielinski, 2002; Basedau *et al.*, 2011; Kitschelt, 1995); therefore, the number of political parties will be determined by the type of social cleavages embraced by different social groups existing in the society (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Andersen & Yaish, 2003). For Lipset & Rokkan (1967) it is not the electoral system that influences the party system, but the social structure or the social groups.

The influential work of Lipset & Rokkan (1967) founded the sub-model of the sociological approach, known as the social cleavage model of voting behaviour (Norris and Mattes, 2003; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Colomer & Puglisi, 2005; Thomassen, 1994; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Harrop & Miller, 1987). The social cleavage model provides an analytical framework for party formation, party system, party competition and voting behaviour in a given democracy (Erdmann, 2007a; Evans, 2004; Anderson & Heath, 2003; Thomassen, 1994; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Zielinski, 2002). The model argues that it is not only the group or social identity that influences voting behaviour as stated in the original sociological approach, but also the cleavage structures embedded in a particular polity. Social cleavages refer to “political differences grounded in the social structure of a society” (Brooks *et al.*, 2006:91; Erdmann, 2007a; Brooks & Manza, 1997).

In an analysis of the Western European democracies and voter alignment, Lipset & Rokkan, (1967) found that party systems were shaped by social divisions and historical conflicts about state building, religion and class (Marks & Wilson, 2000; Pereira, 2008). Four important cleavages were crystallised at the time, namely the *centre versus periphery* (dominant versus subject cultures), *church versus state* (religious versus secular), *land versus industry* (primary versus secondary economies or rural versus urban) and *capitalists versus workers* (capital

versus labour) (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Colomer & Puglisi, 2005; Lipset, 2001; Norris & Mattes, 2003; Erdmann, 2007a; Evans, 2004; Himmelstrand, 1969; Zielinski, 2002).

Lipset & Rokkan (1967) also found that the intensity of these social conflicts varied from country to country (Brooks & Manza, 1997; Brooks *et al.*, 2006) and not all conflicts became automatically crystallised into a political cleavage (Marks & Wilson, 2000; Przeworski *et al.*, 1986). According to Lipset & Rokkan (1967) political party leaders, the so-called operators of the political system, are the ones adopting organisational and electoral strategies to give salience to an issue and take it to become a cleavage (Colomer & Puglisi, 2005; Evans, 2004) particularly when the issue is affected by government policies (Denver, 1994; Pereira, 2008). Party leaders are responsible for maintaining and reinforcing the material or symbolic differences (Denver, 1994; Berelson *et al.* 1954).

Assuming that democratic societies are generally characterised by multiple social conflicts, why do some democracies have fewer political parties compared to existing social conflicts? The answer, according to the social cleavage model, is that social cleavages are not automatically translated into political opposition. Therefore, we cannot establish any perfect analogy between political opposition and social cleavages (Zielinski, 2002). Furthermore, on one side not all political issues that political parties might choose to hold and defend in a given democratic society inevitably result in social cleavage (Colomer & Puglisi, 2005). On the other hand, not all social cleavages become politically relevant for mobilisation of voters to identify with it (Erdmann, 2007a; Himmelstrand, 1969). The political history of a country, together with the interests of political elites in linking the existing intergroup conflicts to party ideology/line under certain social, economic and cultural conditions play an important role in magnifying the social cleavages and converting them into party positions (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Evans, 2004; Andersen & Heath, 2003; Brooks *et al.*, 2006).

The most recent literature has pointed to a decline in the importance of social cleavages in explaining voting behaviour (Franklin *et al.* 1992; Brooks & Manza, 1997; Brooks *et al.*, 2006; De Graaf *et al.*, 2001; Thomassen, 1994; Rose & McAllister, 1996). This has been associated with the evolvment of traditional cleavages as lines of division (Evans, 2004; Andersen & Heath, 2003) such as the growing secularisation, the decay in importance of social class, the weakening of class solidarity and growth of individualism (De Graaf, 2001). Furthermore, with growing access to information and increasing levels of education, voters

become more sophisticated and make informed voting decisions, abandoning traditional social cues (Brooks & Manza, 1997; Thomassen, 1994; Marks & Wilson, 2000). The merit of the sociological approach is in its ability to explain why voters keep their identification with, and electoral support to, a particular political party unchanged over elections (Erdmann, 2007a; Evans, 2004). This approach, however, has limitations.

The first criticism falls on its social determinism. By focusing on the importance of social groups in determining voting behaviour, the approach dismisses the role and the self-interest of individual voter (Harrop & Miller, 1987) as well as the influence of political parties in mobilising voters (Denver, 1994; Evans, 2004). Secondly, the approach assumes that the voter can only belong to one social group, while in reality individuals belong to a multiple of groups (Denver, 1994; Rahn, 1993; Pereira, 2008). Thirdly, the approach fails to elucidate why some social cleavages strongly influence attitudes and voting behaviour in some countries, but not in others (Andersen & Heath, 2000; Denver, 1994; Pereira, 2008). Fourthly, because the approach stresses continuity and stability in electoral choices it fails to explain why some members deviate from their group voting tendency (Kitschelt, 1995; Pereira, 2008). Lastly, the approach also does not offer projections for new or other cleavages besides those identified by Lipset and Rokkan (Zielinski, 2002; Kitschelt, 1995) making it less useful to explain voting behaviour in democracies with a history that is different from that of Western Europe or in less polarised democracies (Pereira, 2008).

### **2.3 THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The core postulation of the socio-psychological approach is that voting behaviour is greatly shaped by a strong party loyalty (Harrop & Miller, 1987; Dalton, 2007) so that in elections a voter votes for a political party that he/she feels strongly committed to in a show of support (Catt, 1996; Keulder, 2010). Voting becomes an act of expressive support to a particular political party (Harrop & Miller, 1987).

The socio-psychological approach has been attributed to Angus Campbell and his team of researchers with the publication of their influential book *The American Voter* in 1960 (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Weinschenk, 2010; Thomassen, 1994; Pereira, 2008). Since the research team was based at Michigan University, the approach is also known as the Michigan approach. Furthermore, because this research marked the emergence of *party identification*,

an important concept in analysis of individual voting behaviour (Dalton, 2002; Dalton, 2007; Mackuen *et al.*, 1989; Rosema, 2006; Miller & Shanks, 1996; Green *et al.*, 2002; Thomassen, 1994; Achen, 1992), the approach is also known as party identification approach.

Party identification refers to an individual long-term or enduring psychological or emotional attachment to a political party (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Weinschenk, 2010; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Greene, 2002; Thomassen & Rosema, 2006; Marthaler, 2008). This concept worked as an important simplifying device or tool on election studies (Weinschenk, 2010; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Thomassen & Rosema, 2006; Frank & Jackson, 1983; Mackuen *et al.*, 1989; Rosema, 2006; Greene, 2002; Miller, 1991; Pereira, 2008), for being considered the top influencer of attitude, perceptions and voters choice (Erdmann, 2007a; Miller, 1991).

Party identification is transmitted from childhood through an early socialisation within family, particularly parents, or social ties and tends to increase with age (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Chandler, 1988; Pereira, 2008; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Achen, 2002; Erdmann, 2007a; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Weinschenk, 2010; Achen, 1992; Frank & Jackson, 1983). Like in a religion, it is through the socialisation process that people come to learn about the political party they belong to, its symbols and ideology (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Frank & Jackson, 1983; Thomassen & Rosema, 2006; Miller & Shanks, 1996).

It is the party identification that filters voters' views and evaluations of politics, particularly their evaluation of candidates and issues and finally guides voters to their electoral choice (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Erdmann, 2007a; Chandler, 1988; Evans, 2004; Harrop & Miller, 1987; Mackuen *et al.*, 1989; Weinschenk, 2010; Rosema, 2006 and also helps voters to be much more knowledgeable with the ideology and policy positions of their party (Evans, 2004; Frank & Jackson, 1983; Dalton, 2007) as well as to make sense of the political world (Mackuen *et al.*, 1989). In sum, party identification represents a short cut to all kinds of decisions voters make in elections (Thomassen & Rosema, 2006; Weinschenk, 2010; Mackuen *et al.*, 1989).

According to Campbell *et al.* (1960) the fact that party identification, once inherited becomes deeply ingrained in an individual voter's self-image makes it endure (see also Weinschenk, 2010; Chandler, 1988; Pereira, 2008; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Achen, 2002; Mackuen *et al.*,

1989; Frank & Jackson, 1983; Keulder, 2000) unless extreme and large-scale political events happen (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Weinschenk, 2010; Frank & Jackson, 1983; Mackuen *et al*, 1989). Rarely the candidate evaluation and issues are likely to influence major changes in party identification of an individual (Mackuen *et al*, 1989).

The idea of party identification being a determinant element in providing the views to the voters about the political world and cues that help in political choice and stability in voting behaviour was eroded by the modernisation of the society, particularly with the increase in level of political sophistication of the voters (Marthaler, 2008; Dalton, 2007; Dalton, 1984; Kuan & Lau, 2002). However, some scholars have downplayed arguments indicating the decline of partisan alignment (Green, Palmquist & Schickler, 1998; Dalton, 2007).

In the early 1980s, an alternative view of party identification emerged. This was pioneered by Fiorina (1981) with the theory of cumulative updating, challenging the stable identity view (Green *et al.*, 1998; Achen, 1992). The alternative perspective considers party identification as a ‘running tally’ of evaluations of party platforms and performance as well as of the political figures (Fiorina, 1981; Green *et al*, 1998; Weinschenk, 2010). Subscribers of this perspective defend that it is not the psychological attachment or early socialisation that guarantee stability in the individual attachment, but the accumulated evaluations of the past performance of the party, political leaders, (Fiorina, 1981; Frank & Jackson, 1983; Weinschenk, 2010; Mackuen *et al*, 1989).

The Fiorina model is also known as the retrospective model because it assumes that voters normally evaluate the past performance of the party. Voters are seen as actors with mental capacity to access information that is used to evaluate the past or current performance of political parties and candidates and then update their party identification accordingly (Green *et al*, 1998). If voters feel satisfied with the past or current performance they keep their identification with that particular party intact. Voters may tolerate some negative experiences of less satisfactory performance, but if this dissatisfaction becomes severe or strong enough voters are likely to convert or change their party affiliation (Fiorina, 1981; Frank & Jackson, 1983; Mackuen *et al*, 1989; Weinschenk, 2010; Green *et al*, 1998). Party identification can also adjust incrementally in response to the previous voting behaviour (Miller, 1991: 562)

The new perspective does not discard completely the idea of long term identification; what it adds is that this long term affiliation is not caused by emotional feelings, but by positive evaluation. In this line, stability in party attachment is possible not because of emotional or psychological ties, but only in circumstances where political parties or candidates keep their party platform satisfactory to the electorate (Franklin & Jackson 1983; Green *et al*, 1998).

Furthermore, it admits that if party attachment is also responsive to short-term and retrospective evaluations (Fiorina, 1981; MacKuen *et al*, 1989; Frank & Jackson, 1983), changes in party attachment can easily occur without a need for a miracle or political catastrophe (Mackuen *et al*, 1989; Fiorina, 1981; Weinschenk, 2010). So, it can be said that party identification has both a short-term and long-term component (Mackuen *et al*, 1989) or can be conceptualised in terms of identification as well as evaluation of the party's performance (Rosema, 2006).

The psychological approach remained a remarkable approach that earned great merit for such a long time, particularly with the introduction and use of its powerful concept of party identification as an important tool for simplification in explaining voting decision (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Green & Palmquist, 1994; Bartels, 2000; Miller, 1991). However, the approach was also criticised.

Firstly, by assuming that voting is an expression of support, the approach ignores other factors that are likely to influence the party choice. Some voters may choose to support one party tactically or strategically in the form of a protest, not necessarily as a sign of support (Keulder, 2000; Bratton, 2012). Secondly, the approach acknowledges the distinction between party identification (psychological and not time bound) and voter choice (behavioural and time bound) (Pereira, 2008); however, it is unable to establish a clear distinction between factors that are likely to affect one's identity (or long long-term factors) and those likely to affect one's vote choice only (short-term factors) (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002).

Thirdly, the approach fails to provide methodological tools to accurately measure party identification (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002), raising methodological errors and endless debates about the meaning of party identification, strength, stability and how party identification is likely to influence voters' attitude and voting behaviour (Achen 1975; Green & Palmquist 1988; Greene, 2002; Weisberg, 2002; Bartels, 2000). The party identification measurement

normally used such as ‘feeling thermometers’ and the ‘party closeness scales’ are a pure reflection of the voter’s party preference at a certain point in time than long-term support (Thomassen & Rosema, 2006; Greene, 2002).

Fourthly, the approach tends to over-emphasise the role of parents and socialisation in party identification. According to Dunleavy & Husbands (1985), interpersonal communication cannot be taken as source of party identification. On one side, the family hardly plays the role of source of partisanship because family members rarely discuss politics. On the other side, there is no need to invoke intergenerational socialisation as the reason why groups show continuity in their party support despite the turnover of their members because the continuity of voting patterns from generation to generation is only secured by the continuing interests of the group (Harrop & Miller, 1987).

Lastly, the party identification approach works better only in democracies with stable division of voters in terms of party loyalties than in multiparty systems where voters are unable to distinguish between vote choice and partisanship (Mackuen *et al*, 1989; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Thomassen & Rosema, 2006) or where voter choice does not always coincides with party preference (Thomassen & Rosema, 2006). Additionally, we cannot talk of party identification in countries with political parties strongly rooted in the social structure such as religion, class and region (Thomassen & Rosema, 2006). Despite these criticisms the socio-psychological approach is useful in enlightening the understanding of why some voters keep their vote unchanged across elections (Erdmann, 2007a; Rosema, 2006).

## **2.4 THE RATIONAL CHOICE APPROACH**

The rational choice approach represents a perfect blending of economics and political science (Fidrmuc, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000; Mackuen *et al*, 1989) and its chief assumption is that voting decision is influenced by individual evaluation of costs and benefits which result in voter matching individual preferences with party platforms (Downs, 1958; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011 Andersen & Heath, 2000; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Pereira, 2008; Macdonald, Rabinowitz, & Listhaug, 1995). Before deciding, voters assess party ideologies, party policies and programmes and party performance as well as the party leadership and candidates (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Luskin, 1990). In the end, voters vote for the party or candidate with a programme or performance that is likely to help in achieving individual



interests or priorities (Catt, 1996; Pereira, 2008; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Rosema, 2006). Because voters only vote for the party or candidate that best reflect their self-interests and affect policies, voting becomes instrumental (Downs, 1957; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Pereira, 2008; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Catt, 1996; Evans, 2004; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002).

With Downs (1958) and Fiorina (1981) considered as pillars (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Fidrmuc, 2000; Aidt, 2000), economic analysis of voting gained prominence with the decline of long-term factors and rising importance of short-term factors such as issue, opinions and candidate preferences in explaining voting behaviour (Thomassen, 1994).

For the rational choice approach voters are regarded as rational entities (Downs, 1958; Pereira, 2008; Andersen & Heath, 2000) that make their own electoral decisions regardless of their belonging to a particular social group or psychological attachment to a particular party. Using the logic of economic market, the approach takes voters as consumers of the products of political entrepreneurs (political parties) (Downs, 1957; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Fiorina, 1976; Weinschenk, 2010). In the political market, voters trade their vote in exchange for the political favours such as high standard of living conditions (Downs, 1957; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002).

Behaving as ‘homo economicus’ (Andersen & Heath, 2000), voters will try their best to maximise the benefits or achieve their goals at a minimum cost (Fiorina, 1976; Campbell *et al*, 1960; Weinschenk, 2010; Franklin & Jackson, 1983; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002). To choose the best party or candidate close to their views on issues, voters collect information about different political options offered and then make a non-emotive assessment (Downs, 1958; Keulder, 2000).

The rational choice approach regards voters as individualistic, in these sense that their choices are based on individual rational calculation and self-interest and what seems to be a collective decision represents the aggregation of individual incentives and interests (Olson, 1965). However, the approach does not ignore completely the influence of social context or social structure in individual decision making, since it acknowledges that the position the voter occupies in the social and economic structure will at least partially influence his or her

preferences (Andersen & Heath, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011). An individual decision is influenced by the behaviour of other actors within the polity (Thomassen, 1994).

According to rational choice approach, since all voters aspire for prosperity or good economy (Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011) they pay particular attention to the performance of the incumbent particularly on how the government handles the economy (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000; Fidrmuc, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011). Therefore, if the economy performs well voters feel encouraged voting for the governing party or coalition, as a way of rewarding the incumbent; but in bad economic times they punish the incumbent by voting for the opposition (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2008; Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000; Chandler, 1988; Rosema, 2006; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011). As Bratton *et al* (2012: 29) summarised, “elections are won or lost on the economy”. The question that remains, however, is why some governments are cast out even when the economy is booming? The answer is that voters tend to punish downturn but do not necessarily reward the upturn in the economy (Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000; Bratton *et al*, 2012).

There are three key aspects guiding voters to reward or punish the incumbent. Firstly, it is the institutional clarity of responsibility or understanding of who is in charge of economic management or performance and at what level. This understanding can be facilitated by mechanisms of accountability in place. Secondly, voters need to know the governing party target size, in other words, voters need to know whether the national government is formed by a single party or coalition; if it is a coalition what is the most important political party to be punished or rewarded. Lastly, voters need to have clarity of available alternatives or options likely to replace the incumbent and benefit them (De Graaf, 2001; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Anderson, 2000; Bratton *et al*, 2012).

The rational choice approach also establishes three dimensions to analyse the behaviour of rational voters: (1) the *target*, (2) the *time* and (3) the *context of evaluation*. Regarding the target of evaluation scholars suggest that there are two ways in which voters can judge government performance, that is, i) assessing the government based on individual/personal conditions or ii) assessment of collective conditions or performance of the government in the economy in general. Voters who evaluate the incumbent based on their personal or family well-being (economic/financial conditions) are named pocketbook or egotropic voters and

voters whose voting decisions are based on the evaluation of performance of the incumbent at macro or national levels economy are labelled sociotropic voters (Aidt, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2009; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2008; Keulder, 2000; Fidrmuc, 2000; Bratton *et al*, 2012). The last group of voters use indicators such as unemployment, GDP rates, or inflation to assess the economic performance (Pereira, 2008; Bratton *et al*, 2012).

Following the logic of the rational choice approach and the individualistic nature of the voters, it would be expected for the majority of the voters to behave egotropically (Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000). However, with a few exceptions, the voting behaviour literature shows the predominance of sociotropic voting (Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2009; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011; Lewis-Beck, 1988; Bratton *et al*, 2012).

The second dimension of analysis (time of evaluation) is related to whether voters hold the incumbency accountable for the past (retrospectively) or for the expected future (prospectively). The retrospective view regards voters as basing their voting decisions on retrospective judgment or appraisal of past performance and economic events while the prospective view defends that voters' choice is influenced by the evaluation of future economic expectations (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2009; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000; Campbell *et al*, 1960; Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000). Fiorina (1981) is the well-known scholar defending the retrospective economic voter hypothesis. For the retrospective view elections become a “referenda on the incumbent administration’s handling of the economy” (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000:191; see also Fiorina, 1977; Erdmann, 2007a; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008).

The issue of whether voters are more retrospective or more prospective in their evaluation has raised debate among scholars. Achen (1992) reacted negatively and strongly against the Fiorina’s model of retrospective voting, arguing that retrospective voting cannot be mistakenly considered part of the rational choice because “the rational chooser looks forward, not backward. The rational voter is a prospective voter, and the past is useful only for its clues about the future” (Achen, 1992: 199). If a rational voter votes to influence or change a certain situation in future, it is irrational for a voter to have his or her choice based on the past because no one is likely to influence or change the past (Achen, 1992). Other scholars decided to take a middle position by attributing equal importance or complementarity to both

retrospective and prospective views by arguing that at election time voters use their evaluation of the past performance or state of the economy and the expectations of how the party is likely to manage the economy for the satisfaction of their economic interests in case of winning elections; they use the past to imagine the future (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000; Fidrmuc, 2000; Fiorina, 1977; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008).

The last dimension in the analysis of voting behaviour is the role of the context. The central argument here is that voter decision is highly influenced by the perception of the political and economic context; meaning that voter preference can vary across different countries and time (Anderson, 2000; Andersen & Heath, 2000).

If voting decision, according to rational choice approach, is evaluative, voters need to be well informed and skilled do make economic analysis that will enable correct judgement, but the acquisition and processing of information is costly (Franklin & Jackson, 1983). In fact, research has shown that voters are ill-informed especially when it comes to technical data related to economic indicators such as levels of unemployment, inflation rate, economic growth, public debt and so on (Mackuen *et al*, 89; Aidt, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000). In this situation how can voters be able to hold the government accountable for economic performance? The answer is that lack of information does not prevent voters from acting rationally because they do not need to develop expertise or get elaborate and detailed information to make their decision. To overcome the problem of costly information, voters use cues or shortcuts to access summarised and well simplified information; these cues can range from party identification, lobby groups, opinion leaders, advice from their well-informed friends or social groups, technical experts or media. What is required from them is to make best use of the basic information they have (Achen, 1992; Mackuen *et al*, 89; Aidt, 2000).

Like the previous two approaches, the rational choice approach also has some weaknesses. The first criticism focuses on the approach's assumption that the voter always votes to influence the election outcome. In real terms, in an election where thousands or millions of voters cast their vote, the probability of one individual vote influencing the election result is tiny (Feddersen, 2004; Aidt, 2000; Karp & Banducci, 2007). If a voter knows that the likelihood of his or her vote influencing the election outcome is close to nil he or she would not bother with expending time in going to the polls, facing long queues and sometimes

getting exposed to violence or massive disobedience (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Feddersen, 2004; Aidt, 2000). Voting in these circumstances would become an irrational act. Voting becomes a paradox (Bartle & Griffiths, 2002). So, the rational choice model fails to explain what takes voters to the polls even when aware of this. The idea that voters can vote to fulfil their civic duty not individually but for the country as a whole is completely out of consideration.

The second criticism is related to the incumbent approval heuristic or the reward-punish paradigm (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000; Rosema, 2006). The approach does not examine how the prevailing political context in determined democracy mediates the relationship between the voter and the economy (Anderson, 2000). Because of this limitation, the approach cannot explain why a substantial number of voters keep their party support intact election after election, regardless of the changes in government and policy performance (Erdmann, 2007a).

Lastly, the approach is also criticised for overemphasising the instrumentality of the vote. Since the likelihood of one getting what he or she voted for depends on the decisions of others that are likely to have similar preferences, the instrumentality of vote is really small. By regarding voters as issue-based choosers, the approach ignores the fact that voters can evaluate parties using other factors based on intangible considerations, or choose a party as a sign of identity and expression of solidarity (Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002).

However, the approach gave an important step ahead of the socio-psychological approach in two aspects. Firstly, the approach shades light to explain how voters without or with weak party attachments make their mind in elections. Secondly, the approach explains why voters abandon their psychological attachment or group identity and vote for another political party (Erdmann, 2007a).

## **2.5 THE COGNITIVE AWARENESS APPROACH**

Pioneered by Lazarsfeld *et al.* (1944) and Downs (1957) the approach borrows its origins from the Columbia School. The main postulation of the Cognitive Awareness approach is that political attitudes and voting behaviour are greatly influenced by cognitive factors. That is,

the behaviour of citizens in elections will be determined by the degree of exposure to political communication/information and knowledge about parties and candidates (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944; Downs, 1957; Marthaler, 2008; Pereira, 2008; Zaller, 1989; Kuan & Lau, 2002; Hobolt, 2005). Different exposure to political information implies different levels of political awareness and different skills to reason about politics (Zaller, 1989; Kuan & Lau, 2002; Hobolt, 2005). So, voting becomes an aggregation of information dispersed in the electorate (Feddersen & Pesendorfer (1999).

According to Lau & Redlawsk (2001), the classic democratic theory always assumed that democracy can only work effectively when voters are well informed and attentive to public issues, because only well informed or sophisticated voters are aware of public issues and take them into consideration in their decision making (Macdonald, Rabinowitz, & Listhaug, 1995). Political knowledge is known for broadening the basis for political choice (Kuan & Lau, 2002).

The societal modernisation resulting from industrialisation, increased the levels of education and explosion of the media are important aspects that have been pointed out as having brought improvement not only in the citizens' access to political information, but also in abilities to process and analyse the information received, before being used in voting decisions (Downs, 1957; Marthaler, 2008; Dalton, 2007; Kuan & Lau, 2002). This process has been known as 'political awareness' (Zaller, 1989; Amer, 2009) 'cognitive mobilisation' (Kuan & Lau, 2002; Dalton, 2007) 'political sophistication' (Macdonald, Rabinowitz, & Listhaug, 1995; Marthaler, 2008; Luskin, 1990; Pierce, 1993; Kuan & Lau, 2002). Political sophistication is measured through the level of education, knowledge, and the level of conceptualisation of the voter (Weisberg & Nawara, 2010; Amer, 2009). It is the political awareness that increases citizens' skills for complex evaluation of issues, ideologies and party candidates as well as interpreting political institutions and systems and gain more interest in getting involved in politics (Pereira, 2008, Luskin, 1990; Kuan & Lau, 2002; Amer, 2009; Marthaler, 2008; Peirce, 1993; Kessel, 1965; Weisberg & Nawara, 2010; Hobolt, 2010).

Luskin (1990) associates political sophistication with the level of education, exposure to the media, interest in politics, and intelligence of the individual. In other words, more educated voters tend to be motivated to acquire large amounts of political information particularly

from the public media and are equipped with abilities to assimilate and organise this information. Political sophistication also influences interest in politics.

The literature on voting behaviour establishes that information plays an important role in shaping all types of electoral decisions (Keulder, 2000; Shenga, 2013). Only the type of information required by each type of voter may vary. While the sociological voter may need basic information about whether his party will participate in elections and when and where to vote, the socio-psychological may need to know the same, but with additional information about the level of threat his party is facing, in order to decide to participate or not in elections. Though the nature of information required by these types of the voters does not lead to party choice, it still plays an important role. Unlike the two types of voters, the rational voter may need information about party positions and performance of the economy to help in choosing which party to vote for (Keulder, 2000). All types of voters may need information about candidate nomination, candidates, election process, parties, policies, place and date of elections, which may be generated from different sources.

So, where do voters get the information? In their seminal work, Lazarsfeld and his team examined the flow of political information through three different means, namely the mass media, membership of secondary organisations or social groups and interpersonal communication and they found that inter-personal communication between family members, friends and colleagues was the most important source of transmission of political information mostly due to their wide coverage and psychological advantages (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944; Pereira, 2008). Later on, Downs (1957) found that conversations, verbal discussion and speeches remained the most important source of political information even in technologically advanced societies.

Following the Lazarsfeld and his associates' path, other research that followed examined the role of social networks in determining the behaviour of voters. They found that, varying from society to society, social networks were found to be the main source of information that shaped the public opinion of voters and by providing evaluative tools; they also helped voters to navigate through the complex world of politics and to make their electoral decisions (Downs, 1957; Huckfeldt *et al.*, 1987; Pereira, 2008).

Social networks form part of the free sources of information that save voters from accessing information through specialised and costly agencies such as the public media (Downs, 1957; Pereira, 2008; Kuan & Lau, 2002). Furthermore, voters can get information as a by-product, using their lived experience, endorsements and demographic information (Kuan & Lau, 2002).

Individuals living in a certain society can belong to a multiple of groups (Denver, 1994). These can be formal organisations or simply social groups, ranging from churches, trade unions, political parties, ethnic groups, and environmental organisations, interest groups, cultural groups to entertainment groups. These groups can work as important sources of information or prompts used by voters to assess contesting political parties and candidates (Pereira, 2008). Candidate appearance in an electoral period, the type of picture, colours used, the language or ethnic characteristics can provide important information that will guide the voter to make his or her decision, particularly for the less sophisticated voters (Pereira, 2008; Weisberg & Nawara, 2010).

## **2.6 AN OVERVIEW OF ELECTION STUDIES IN AFRICA**

How do African voters vote? Voting behaviour remains an under-researched topic in transitional democracies, particularly in Africa (Erdmann, 2007; Basedau *et al*, 2011; Horowitz, 1993; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Norris & Mattes, 2003; Morgenstern & Swindle, 2005; Basedau & Stroh, 2009, Keulder, 2000; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Erdmann, 2007a). This is, in part, justified by the novelty of democracy itself. Studies conducted after democracy transitions from the 1990s focused either on understanding the functioning of institutions, state structures and elite transitions (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008) or in electoral processes, structures and electoral outcomes than focusing on individual voting behaviour (Keulder, 2000).

Furthermore, the few election studies in African democracies are based on the traditional approaches developed in the consolidated democracies (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Basedau *et al*, 2011). Most of these studies analyse one particular election in one particular country based on one theory or combined approaches. With the introduction of Afrobarometer surveys cross-national analysis started to emerge (Bratton *et al*, 2012; Pereira, 2008).



How have traditional theoretical approaches been applied to Africa? Although with some limitations, the sociological approach, particularly in its version of social cleavage, has been widely applied to analyse voting behaviour in the Africa (Erdmann, 2007; Erdmann, 2007a; Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). The limitations are associated with the fact that the four classical cleavages that characterised Western Europe are not politically relevant in the context of Africa. One also has to consider the novelty of African political parties (Kuan & Lau, 2002) to reflect societal cleavages.

To suit the African context, psephologists have modified the social cleavage by putting ethnicity at the centre stage as the most important cleavage for formation of political parties and voting behaviour on the continent (Erdmann, 2007; Erdmann, 2007a; Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). Other variables considered as influencers of voting behaviour include clientelism, patronage, personal and family ties, tribal alignments and geographic factors (Horowitz, 1985; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Erdmann, 2007; Erdmann, 2007a; Basedau *et al*, 2011).

Horowitz (1985) concluded that in societies ethnically divided in elections, voters express their ethnic identity rather than party choice; vote becomes an ethnic census, meaning voters choose a candidate or political party according to their own common identity (Bratton *et al*, 2012). Following the Horowitz (1985) model, Mattes *et al* (1999) analysed the South Africa elections and reached the conclusion that the South African elections were mere ethnic-regional or racial censuses (see also Pereira, 2008). Using aggregated data from Afrobarometer, Norris & Mattes (2003) found that ethnicity was a significant predictor in voting behaviour in most of the countries. They, however, also found that evaluation of party performance contributed significantly to voting behaviour. Analysing Francophone countries, Basedau & Stroh (2011) found the impact of ethnicity in party formation and voting behaviour.

However, the prominence of ethnicity in explaining voting behaviour in Africa has been challenged in the recent studies, due to limited and sometimes contradictory empirical evidence. For example, Basedau *et al* (2011) found that ethnicity influenced, but was not the only factor determining voting preference. Bratton *et al* (2012) found that besides ethnicity, Africans also considered economic performance in their voting decisions. In a qualitative study conducted in Ghana, Lindberg & Morrison (2008) found that ethnicity was not the key

factor in explaining voting behaviour among Ghanaians. In Zambia, Erdmann (2007) found that ethnicity mattered but it was not the only factor determining party affiliation and voter alignment (Erdmann, 2007; Erdmann, 2007a). A similar conclusion was reached by Fridy (2007) in Ghana and Bratton & Kimenyi (2008) in Kenya. In a most recent study Bratton *et al* (2012) found that voters value economic issues and national identity rather than ethnicity in their voting.

Concerning party formation, studies based on aggregated data found that party formation in Africa was 'more pluralistic' than based on ethnic lines and the relevance of ethnicity varied considerably from country to country (Bratton *et al*, 2012; Basedau *et al*, 2011; Basedau & Stroh, 2011; Norris & Mattes, 2003). Besides ethnicity, few studies have indicated the prevalence of other types of cleavage such as class (García-Rivero, 2006), race (Mattes *et al*, 1999; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007) age, urban-rural divide, level of education and socio-economic status (Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007).

So, why do we find contradicting results about the same phenomenon? This ecological fallacy of considering ethnicity as determinant in explaining voter alignment is caused by methodological differences. The claims of salience of ethnicity come from studies based on aggregate data from national election results or surveys, but they do not provide empirical evidence. No doubt, ethnic identity defines how Africans live in society (Bratton *et al*, 2012), but because ethnic identities are not always politicised in societal cleavages, they do not necessarily lead to party formation or voter alignment (Erdmann, 2007; Erdmann, 2007a; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008).

The use of socio-psychological approach in studying voting behaviour in Africa is very limited, given the novelty of political parties, they have less durability and weaker institutionalisation (Pereira, 2008). However, there are few studies that have found the salience of party alignment in elections (Mattes, 1995; Norris & Mattes, 2003; Seekings, 2005; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Kuenzi & Lambright, 2007). In an analysis of South African elections, Mattes (1995) did not find the prevalence of party identification in the sense of long term attachment as it was found among the American voters. Instead, he found that the attachment to the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party was a situational. Schoeman & Puttergill (2007) argued instead that party identification was an important predictor of party choice but only if associated with other factors such as socio-economic

status, race and gender. Bratton *et al* (2012) admitted that partisan attachment was strategic in the sense that voters identified with a particular party to gain patronage or to avoid negative sanctions. In conclusion, it seems correct to assume that party identification as it was defined by Campbell *et al* (1960) seems to be non-existent in Africa (Pereira, 2008).

In terms of economic voting little is known in Africa. The few studies conducted on the continent focus on Ghana. These studies found that popular evaluations of government performance in terms of economy matter in voting choice (Jeffries, 1998; Youde, 2005; Fridy, 2007; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005). In another study looking at the influence of economic conditions in voting behaviour in Zambia, Posner & Simon (2002) found that the support to incumbent president decreased with the decline of economic conditions. Furthermore, the most striking finding is that rather than voting for the opposition, voters in Zambia preferred to abstain. Schoeman & Puttergill (2007) came to the same finding that voters showed dissatisfaction with the ruling ANC in terms of service delivery but did not turn to the opposition party. Bratton *et al* (2005) show some reservations in terms of instrumental rationality (see also Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Friedman, 1999). Bratton *et al* (2012) are the only ones who made a clear reference that economic conditions may play even a bigger role in determining voting in Africa than in the West. African voters are assumed to be more sociotropic in their evaluation (Young, 2009).

Like in other well established democracies, African voters use political information to make their political decisions. However, voters in Africa rely mostly on low cost sources of information, such as family members, co-workers, colleagues, church members, friends, neighbours and other social networks (Pereira, 2008). Ethnicity, linguistic group and region of origin are some of the shortcuts that guide voters to make electoral decision (Mattes, 1995).

From the above, it becomes clear that African democracies still do not have a clear demarcation of the factors influencing their electoral decisions. The claim that ethnicity is the factor determining voting behaviour is affected by ecological fallacy. Voters in Africa consider multiple and overlapping factors such as social identity and economic evaluation to make their electoral decisions (Bratton *et al*, 2012; Norris & Mattes, 2003).

## 2.7 AN OVERVIEW OF ELECTION STUDIES IN MOZAMBIQUE

Election studies in Mozambique are still at an incipient stage. Brito (1996) is considered the pioneer with his analysis of voting behaviour in the founding general elections of 1994. Based on the official national election results, Brito (1996) analysed the influence of one of the most visible cleavage since the colonial period, the ethnic-regional cleavage. The study found that there was a regional distribution of votes between the two main contestants, with Frelimo winning in the south and extreme north, and the opposition Renamo gaining more support from the centre and centre-north regions of the country (Brito, 1996).

Few other studies that followed, focusing on urbanisation, ethnic and regional identities (Shenga, 2008; Pereira *et al*, 2002; Pereira, 2007; Chichava, 2008; Serra, 1999; Mazula, 2006; Shenga, 2002; Shenga, 2013; Tollenaere, 2002; Brito, 2010; Brito, 2010a; Cahen, 1998; Brito *et al*, 2005) and surveys conducted by different institutions (CEP, CAP-UEM, CNEP and Afrobarometer), confirmed the existence of regional differences in party support. Frelimo is electorally stronger in the southern region where the party leadership originates from and in the extreme north, where the majority of former Frelimo freedom fighters were recruited, while Renamo dominates in the historically fertile anti-Frelimo central (the birthplace of Renamo's military leadership) and in the northern regions of the country (Carbone, 2005; Seibert, 2003; Ruigrok, 2005; Vines, 2013; Shenga, 2002).

Research has not yet provided empirical evidence claiming that the regional divide takes the form of ethnicity, particularly because regional boundaries do not always coincide with those of ethnic groups (Brito, 1996; Pereira *et al*, 2002; Brito *et al*, 2005). To explain the prevailing regional voting pattern, Brito (1996) argued that one has to look back at the country's recent history, especially at the relationship and patterns of interaction between the colonial regime and local populations and the impact of policies adopted by FRELIMO and the population in different regions of the country.

Election studies in Mozambique (see for example Brito, 1996; Pereira, 1997; Chichava, 2007) have also indicated the prevalence of rural-urban cleavage in voting behaviour. Renamo receives much more support from rural constituencies (Wood, 1999; Ruigrok, 2005; Carbone, 2005, Seibert, 2003) where, according to Carbone (2005), anti-Frelimo sentiments grew up due to some measures put in place by the first Marxist government for revolutionary

transformation of the rural areas after independence. These measures included the forced ‘modernisation’ for rural communities and an ideological attack against African traditional customs such as polygamy, *lobolo* or bride price, ancestral worship, traditional healers, and so on for being considered feudal and reactionary practices (Seibert, 2003; Carbone, 2005).

Renamo took advantage of the disillusionment of populations in rural areas that felt excluded from Frelimo’s socialist projects particularly in the central and northern regions of the country (Carbone, 2005; Pereira, 1997). Pereira (1997) found that traditional leaders played an important role in mobilising support for Renamo in rural areas to vote in the 1994 and 1999 general elections.

Using a historical micro-sociological analysis, Chichava (2007; 2008) and Rosário (2009) found that the current regional distribution of vote reflected socio-historical dimensions of social exclusion of people from central and northern regions of the country during the colonial period and even following the independence. FRELIMO has been perceived as marginalising people from central and northern region in leadership positions. During the struggle for independence most of the cadres from central Mozambique were expelled from the movement and others were executed under the accusations of betraying the national interest. Therefore, because of this, FRELIMO was never well supported in those regions (Brito, 1996; Chichava, 2008; Shenga, 2008).

Pereira (2008) was the first scholar to conduct a fully-fledged study to understand sources of party identification in Mozambique, based on Afrobarometer. Pereira (2008) found that partisan support to the historic ruling party Frelimo was influenced by positive evaluations of its performance. The satisfaction of Mozambicans confirmed by the Afrobarometer surveys in 2002, 2005 and 2008, where in an analysis of data, Shenga (2010) found that over 40 per cent of respondents reported improvement in their personal living conditions and were optimistic for a much better future. In a previous small study, also based on aggregated results, Mattes & Shenga (2007) had found opposite results, where Mozambicans tended to express attachment to Frelimo regardless of its performance, which led the two scholars to label Mozambicans as ‘*uncritical citizens*’.

The CNEP survey found that only 23 per cent of respondents were self-declared members of a political party and 91.5 per cent out of these self-identified with Frelimo, against only 7.6

per cent who identified with Renamo and the rest with other opposition parties (Brito *et al*, 2005). This represented a clear indication that Mozambicans still feel less free to express their identification with an opposition party, either to avoid exclusion from state benefits or to avoid punishment.

Studies and surveys that found that Mozambicans had a negative perception of government performance measured through high levels of poverty, high rates of unemployment, (Pereira, 2002; Pereira, 2008a) were intrigued by the fact that the same dissatisfied still voted for Frelimo, making it difficult for them to find the presence of rationality in their voting. To get alternative explanation, Pereira (2008a) suggested additional factors in order to understand the voting behaviour, such as “the type of political transition, local context, lack of a clear understanding of the difference between personal and economic assessments; control over resources, strategies for policy implementation and types of political party” (Pereira, 2008a: 419).

In terms of cognitive awareness, studies indicated that, like in most of the African democracies, Mozambicans, despite sharing a positive political attitude towards democracy (Pereira *et al*, 2002; Brito *et al*, 2005) still have very low political sophistication (Pereira, 2007; Pereira, 2008; Brito, 1996; Pereira, 2014). The CNEP project looked at the role of social networks and media in forming public opinion and voting behaviour (Brito *et al*, 2005). In another study of a limited scope Pereira (2007), tried to find out where voters get their political information. Family members, neighbours or friends, traditional or religious leadership and other informal means were found to be the main sources of political information (Brito *et al*, 2005; Pereira, 2007; Pereira, 2008; Pereira, 2008a). Proportional to the level of political knowledge, Mozambique still presents a low interest in politics and democracy (Brito, 1996; Brito *et al*, 2005; Pereira *et al*, 2002).

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

The sociological approach emphasises the role of social identity; the socio-psychological influence of party identification; the rational choice emphasised the role of economic evaluation; and the cognitive awareness emphasised the influence of cognitive factors or knowledge in voters' choice. Despite using different assumptions to explain voting behaviour these four theoretical approaches are not mutually exclusive (Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007;

Erdmann, 2007a; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Chandler, 1988; Harrop & Miller, 1987). They are intellectually linked and some originated from the others in the form of a complementary critique (Evans, 2004; Anderson & Heath, 2000). Some of the assumptions, visibly or not, are present throughout the four approaches. For example, the notion of rationality is present in the four approaches; that it, it is rational to vote according to your group identity (sociological approach); to use your party identification (socio-psychological approach) or information and knowledge (cognitive awareness) to filter voting decision. This complementarity will be taken into consideration when analysing data in this study.

This chapter also gave an overview of how far the theoretical frameworks developed in consolidated democracies have been used in electoral studies in Africa and the challenges faced while applying them in the African context. The chapter concludes with an overview of election studies that have been conducted in Mozambique. The next chapter explains in detail the research design, method and the process that was used to respond to the research question of the study. It also discusses the research process including data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains in detail the research design, method and the process followed in attempt to respond to the research question. The chapter starts with an explanation and justification of the selection of social constructivism as the epistemological paradigm to guide the study and why the qualitative research approach was preferred. It then proceeds to explain strategies used in the selection of, and access to the site and to respondents before explaining the methods and techniques used in data collection, capturing and analysis. The chapter also highlights the problems encountered during the course of the research and closes with a description of the ethical aspects taken into consideration to ensure integrity and quality of the research.

### **3.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL PARADIGM: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Epistemology and ontology are two important concepts in research. Epistemology refers to a set of beliefs about knowing or how we can know, while ontology refers to a set of beliefs about what exists or what is real (Kim, 2001; Risse, 2007; Willig, 2008). Paradigm refers to “a set of assumptions about the social world, and about what constitutes proper techniques and topics for inquiring into that world” (Punch, 2000: 154).

The social constructivism paradigm, also known as interpretivism (Maree, 2007) emphasises that knowledge is constructed through a better understanding of the culture and the context prevailing in the society in which research is being conducted (Kim, 2001; Creswell, 2013). This is even more important in a context where research entails interaction with human beings, like in this study. According to the social constructivism paradigm, for a better understanding of a phenomenon, a researcher has to focus on capturing participants’ views, ideas and beliefs as much as possible because these reflect their understanding of the world they live in and represent meanings given to their lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Willig, 2008). Given the nature of this research, where knowledge about voting behaviour can only be constructed through an understanding of voters’ views, social constructivism is the most appropriate epistemological



paradigm because the social fabric in which voters are integrated is an important element that determines the voting behaviour (Thomassen, 1994).

Social constructivism has been applied in different areas of knowledge including international relations (Jackson & Sørensen, 2007), learning and teaching (Kim, 2001) and also in study of globalisation (Risse, 2007). Each perspective formulates assumptions about the methods, reality, phenomena and product that suit it, but all are about how the knowledge is built. In qualitative inquiry, there are five underlying assumptions of social constructivism.

The first assumption states that a social phenomenon can only be understood from within, meaning that a researcher has to focus on people's intersubjective experiences of the world they live in and on the understanding of how they interact, communicate and how they share meanings and construct their social world (Maree, 2007; Mauki, 2014; Kim, 2001; Creswell, 2013; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). During this study it became clear that voting, although it is an individual decision, is highly influenced by societal factors because voters influence each other in their everyday social interactional process. The understanding of languages and culture of people living in Maxixe helped in the capturing and interpretation of the interaction of voters in their social activities. The use of open-ended interviews and focus group discussions in local languages made it possible for participants to feel comfortable to express themselves clearly and facilitated the capturing and understanding of subjective meanings in the communication and formulation of meanings by participants in their own environment.

The second assumption is that knowledge is a human construction (Kim, 2001; Maree, 2007; Jackson & Sørensen, 2007). Simply put, there is no meaning; we construct it (Kim, 2001). In the context of this research area, this is equivalent to saying that social, political and economic factors that are known to influence voting behaviour do not have objective existence. This study sought to understand how voters construct their ideas, conceptions, perceptions, discourses, signals and languages to make sense of social, political and economic contexts and to convert them into voting decisions.

The third assumption of the social constructivism paradigm is that "the human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning" (Maree, 2007: 59; see also Riegler, 2001; Kim, 2001). The richness and depth of a phenomenon is only acquired through an understanding of how people construct and share meaning about the phenomena in their social context (Maree,

2007; Mauki, 2014; Kim, 2001). This can be applied in complex phenomena like voting behaviour. During research, particular attention was paid to some linguistic expressions and metaphors embedded with deep cultural expressions. Expressions such as ‘father is always father’ to justify the endurance of support for a particular political party can only be understood and interpreted correctly if one is familiar with the context, particularly culture. The fact that the researcher had a good understanding of local culture helped significantly to capture the meaning of some linguistic and cultural expressions.

The fourth assumption asserts that “human behaviour is affected by the knowledge of the social world” (Maree, 2007: 60). That is, we can have one external world or phenomenon, but multifaceted realities or knowledge; to mean that the same phenomenon can be looked at differently by two subjects (Kim, 2001). This is caused mainly by the fact that researchers construct their versions of the same reality based on their experiences and knowledge. And knowledge about the same phenomenon can also differ across time and space (Kim, 2001; Maree, 2007). In this study, the explanations given by the voters about their voting decisions were linked to the history of the country.

The last assumption of social constructivism stresses that “the social world does not ‘exist’ independently of human knowledge” (Maree, 2007: 60; see also Riegler, 2001; Mauki; 2014; Kim, 2001). Therefore, this research was also guided to some extent by knowledge that had been accumulated by the researcher; specifically preliminary knowledge about electoral processes in Mozambique. Questions about causes of voters’ apathy and why the majority tends to vote for the ruling Frelimo party were informed by the researcher’s knowledge about low voter turnout and the fact that the Maxixe area is a pro-Frelimo constituency.

Like any other epistemological paradigm, social constructivism has its own strengths and weaknesses. However, the decision to apply it in this study was reached because it has more strengths than weaknesses. Firstly, it allowed for a rich and deep exploration and description of the phenomenon being researched (Maree, 2007). Secondly, it made it possible to get an understanding of a phenomenon through focusing on meanings given by the participants in the study. In this study there was no way one could decipher the voting behaviour of voters in Maxixe if not through the understanding of the thoughts, views, beliefs, feelings, ideas and concepts, opinions, discourses and signs of voters themselves. The only flaw that has been attributed to the social constructivism approach is that results from studies conducted through

this approach cannot be generalised. This study also had no intention of generalising its findings to other regions of the country because factors shaping voting behaviour can only be localised even though the methodology used can be applied in similar studies elsewhere if one needs to have a deeper understanding on how voters behave. The application of this paradigm made it possible to gather multiple views from informants on their electoral decisions through the medium of their local languages that they were comfortable with.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY**

Research design refers to a detailed plan, strategy or specific direction to be followed in research to generate data necessary to comprehend a phenomenon being studied (Clark & Causer, 1991; Barbie & Mouton, 2001; Maree, 2007; Creswell, 2012). It provides all practicalities to be followed in order to link the research question to data collection and data analysis (Yin, 2012; Yin, 1984; Barbie, 2005) in order to achieve the research objectives. Research design involves important decisions on the selection of participants, data collection techniques and data analysis (Maree, 2007; Willig, 2008).

Given the complex nature of the phenomenon studied and the fact that there is little known about voting behaviour in Mozambique, the case study design appeared to be the most appropriate. This is because a case study allows to focus on a particular unit of analysis or case (Maxixe) and use of different methods, techniques and sources to explore a phenomenon extensively and in-depth through interaction with participants in their site over a period of time (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Maree, 2007).

More particularly, given the ground-breaking nature of this study in Maxixe, the explanatory type of case study appeared to be the most appropriate for gathering new insights (Barbie, 2005) and generating explanations about a phenomenon (Willing, 2008). This was the objective of this study, that is, to generate information about how voters in Maxixe make their electoral decisions. Using the explanatory case study does not necessarily mean ignoring the use of descriptions. As Barbie (2005: 99) once argued, “reporting the voting intentions of an election is descriptive, but reporting why some people plan to vote for Candidate A and others for Candidate B is explanatory.” Moreover, it has been noticed that information about socio-political and socio-economical dynamics and voting behaviour in Maxixe is almost non-existent. Using the exploratory case study gave the possibility of helping to ascertain

possible events and behaviour patterns (Aspeling, 2006) that are likely to influence voting behaviour in Maxixe.

In a case study, a researcher focuses only on one specific instance and this allows for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Swanborn, 2010; Willig, 2008). The focus on Maxixe in this study allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how voters in Maxixe decide in elections. This, however, does not necessarily mean that Maxixe was looked at in complete isolation from the greater political system of Mozambique.

Another advantage of using a case study approach in this study is that it allowed the researcher to use different methods for gathering the data (Thomas, 2011; Creswell, 2014; Willig, 2008). Open-ended interviews were combined with focus group discussions. Though the number of respondents may be considered smaller, the amount of information gathered was vast and diverse, which allowed for a better understanding of how voters in Maxixe decide on elections.

Elections themselves are not an event, but a process or continuous cycle involving pre, during and post-electoral phases. The advantage of using a case study is that it gives a possibility to follow a phenomenon over time to monitor changes (Swanborn, 2010). More specifically, the case study allows for tracing of how voters decide in different elections and what factors they take into consideration in each election and how different factors change their influencing power over time. Finally, the fact that case study allows for the use of all available data, including the quantitative data, was an additional advantage. This allows the researcher to refer to available statistical data generated by different surveys conducted in the country and also for the use of official election results (local and general elections) from previous polling, to contextualise current findings.

The study used a deductive approach, meaning that only data theoretically relevant to the four approaches used in the study (namely sociological, socio-psychological, rational choice and cognitive awareness) were collected (Yin, 2012). The fact that only data applicable to selected approaches and concepts were collected also saved considerable amount of time. There are concerns over the lack of quality in research using case study approach allegedly because case studies do not allow for rigorous analysis of the phenomena, and they offer a

little basis for scientific generalisation of their results. However, as noted earlier, this study, never intended to generalise the findings from Maxixe to other areas of Mozambique.

Furthermore, arguments against case studies are that they take too long a time to be concluded and they end up with massive and unreadable results (Yin, 2009; Thomas, 2011). To guard against this, this study used triangulation. Triangulation has advantage of allowing the collection of “converging evidence from different sources” (Yin, 2012: 79 see also Swanborn, 2010) and viewing social phenomenon using different perspectives (Thomas, 2011) and different techniques.

### **3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE**

Historically, election studies used quantitative approach, with large amount of data (Swanborn, 2010) collected using surveys, panel studies and attitudinal scale (Campbell *et al*, 1960; Kornberg, Linder & Cooper, 1970) and analysed in aggregated form through complex statistical variables. However, most of these studies yielded less trustworthy results. One possible flaw of using the survey, for example, is lack of trustworthy data generated due to methodological, technical and logistical limitations; as “survey demand trained/skilled people in large numbers to cover a wide geographical area and an adequate sample, time and financial resources” (Brito, 1996: 455). In addition, surveys demand expertise formulating questionnaires and sampling (Brito *et al*, 2005). Furthermore, most questionnaires are designed based on western historic and socio-cultural traditions different from the African reality (Brito *et al*, 2005; Brito, 2007).

Other challenges include limited culture of surveying people: with the legacy of authoritarian colonial state and one-party state, people do not feel comfortable to express their political views. This is reflected in the number of refusals to participant in the sampling or refusal to answer or elaborate on certain questions. Poor infrastructure in African countries also makes it difficult to deploy interviewers to different areas of the country (See for example, Pereira *et al*, 2002).

Additionally, in African democracies characterised by low levels of democratic culture, citizens still lack a well elaborated political opinion to respond to questionnaires. Therefore, surveys’ results can give false image of the reality, particularly in countries still governed by

the liberator/dominant party, where citizens cannot easily believe in anonymity of the questionnaire (Brito, 1996). Moreover, most African democracies are functioning in deeply rooted cultural settings which often hamper proper data collection process through surveys. In an Afrobarometer survey conducted in Mozambique, for example, it was found that in some areas women were not allowed to speak and respond to questionnaire in absence of male family member (Pereira *et al*, 2002).

Based on the above mentioned experiences and flaws and bearing in mind that studying voters' behaviour is a complex task (Erdmann, 2007a: 5; Erdmann, 2007b; Erdmann 2004) and also that "influences that affect voters are multiple" (Rose & McAllister, 1986: 115) this study adopted the qualitative approach because it allows for use of multiple research methods and techniques. "Qualitative research is a systematic, interactive and subjective method to describe lived experiences" (Aspeling, 2006: 39). Adopting this approach also follows recommendations from previous studies in Mozambique. Brito (2007), for example, after observing methodological flaws registered in surveys conducted in Mozambique, argued that only a qualitative study was likely to deepen the understanding of how citizens' perception of politics, political parties and elections influence the political culture and voting behaviour.

The key characteristic of the qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to collect data in the field and interact with participants in their natural setting to understand how they behave, act, construct their meaning and interpret the social phenomenon being examined (Creswell, 2014; Maree, 2007; Merriam, 2002; Yin, 2012). This aligns with the social constructivism epistemological paradigm preferred in this study. One can find out how voters make their electoral decisions through face-to-face interactions where perceptions, opinions and feelings can be captured.

Secondly, qualitative research recognises the instrumentality of the researcher in collecting and giving meaning to the data through an interpretative process (Creswell, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Aspeling, 2006). In this study the researcher was involved in the entire research process from conceptualisation of the research, to data collection and analysis, meeting and interacting with respondents, conducting one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions personally.

In the context of new democracies characterised by a low level of political sophistication, voters do not always talk about their electoral preferences. It was the same in Maxixe. To understand whether the voter had voted or not and how they voted demanded more elaboration in interpretation. In the end, the researcher had to interpret the data based on the four theoretical approaches chosen (sociological, socio-psychological, rational choice and cognitive awareness). A research assistant only played supportive role during the identification of potential informants, interpretation of the local context meaning and transcriptions of some interviews from local languages into Portuguese.

Thirdly, the qualitative approach, in line with social constructivism, stresses the socially constructed nature of reality. The qualitative approach also seeks to understand the processes and contexts (social and cultural) that underlie certain behaviour (Creswell, 2014; Maree, 2007). Following this assumption, in this study, particular attention was paid to examining events, facts, actions, perceptions, feelings and interactions of participants to understand how their social experiences are created and given meaning, to perceive how this influences their political attitudes and voting behaviour. It is understood that political behaviour results from perceptions that voters have about the world and the meanings given to political, social and economic contexts.

Fourthly, the qualitative approach, by allowing the use of multiple methods and techniques and use of different sources of information, helps in the collection of rich and descriptive data about a social phenomenon, high quality data, which in turn allows for a deep understanding of the phenomenon. Because of this, it seemed to be the most appropriate approach in understanding the complexity of voting behaviour.

Another reason for adopting the qualitative approach is its flexibility. Unlike the quantitative research, the qualitative design is flexible. Firstly, it allows for the capturing of multiple data from different sources, using combined research methods and techniques (Maree, 2007; Mauki, 2014). Secondly, the qualitative design allows the researcher to make some adaptations in the methods along the process to suit the reality encountered in the field. And thirdly, it allows for the capture of unforeseen events and behaviour and gives meaning, in order to understand a particular social phenomenon.

Lastly, the qualitative research design is appropriate for this case study because it allows for the use of holistic and contextual approaches, extensive and in-depth description of a phenomenon in real-life context (Yin, 2009; Swanborn, 2010). It also allows for an analysis of various factors, contexts, practices and for an in-depth knowledge of the social, economic and political settings. The qualitative approach also has the advantage of allowing the researcher to attribute meaning to people's lived experiences (Aspeling, 2006), which leads to a better understanding of a social phenomenon like voting behaviour in its complexity.

### **3.5 RESEARCH METHODS**

Research methods consist of strategies used in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2014). The following sub-sections present strategies used in the selection of the case, access to the field, selection of participants, data collection techniques, data analysis and interpretation.

#### **3.5.1 Research context – selection of case study**

The study was conducted in Maxixe district. Maxixe is one of the fourteen districts in Inhambane Province in southern Mozambique. Being the economic hub of the province (Braa *et al*, 2001; Farré, 2008), since colonial period, Maxixe attracts people from all over the province, resulting in a social, cultural mosaic. The population increased during the 16-year civil war that ended in 1992 with people from neighbouring districts seeking refuge in Maxixe city. Official numbers from the latest population census conducted in 2001 that a population of 118.091, with the youth being the majority, was distributed across an area of 282 km<sup>2</sup> in rural and urban settings. 55 per cent of the inhabitants are women (INE, 2007). Most households in Maxixe city rely on urban agriculture, fishery, artisanal industry, petty or informal trade and social networks for their livelihood (Archambault, 2011). Inhambane province, together with Gaza and Maputo provinces and Maputo city form southern Mozambique, a region known as the safe haven constituency (Lindberg & Morrison (2008) for the ruling party, Frelimo.

Among other reasons, Maxixe was selected for case study due to the following. Firstly, official election results in almost all elections show that Frelimo has received the majority of



votes in both general and local government elections. This study therefore sought to explore what variables explain the persistence of such a voting pattern giving landslide victories to Frelimo since the establishment of multiparty democracy.

Secondly, given the assumed homogeneity in voting behaviour and less electoral competition, southern Mozambique has been less attractive to election studies. The few election studies that have been conducted in the country have focused in Northern and Central Mozambique (refer to Chapter two). It is a given that the majority of voters in the southern Mozambique favour the ruling party; but no study has been conducted to explain why Frelimo is preferred by most voters in the south, compared to other regions of Mozambique.

Fourthly, compared to other districts in southern Mozambique, Maxixe is multicultural and multilingual. Three ethnolinguistic groups (Gitonga, Xitswa and Cichope) inhabit the area. Portuguese is the fourth language spoken in the district. This multi ethnic population made Maxixe an interesting location for this study to test voting behaviour, particularly in a context where most African studies indicate that African voters vote according to their ethnicity. It is also interesting to understand how interactions between heterogeneous and multicultural groups influence the building of political images, concepts about politics and consequently the voting behaviour.

Fifthly, an additional advantage was that this researcher speaks fluently three of the four languages (Xitswa, Chope and Portuguese) and speaks fairly well the fourth one (Gitonga) spoken in Maxixe. Understanding the language and culture of the society under research is advantageous as it provides knowledge that takes long time to gain (Maundeni, 2000). Previous studies conducted in the country showed how challenging it is to get voters to express their opinions on electoral choice (Pereira, 2008; Brito *et al*, 2005). The knowledge of local languages, cultures and context helped this researcher to understand and interpret facts, symbols, attitudes, situations and the context, all conforming to the social constructivism paradigm chosen for this study.

In addition to the knowledge of language and context, this researcher had in past, also worked in the field of elections and democracy and so had some contacts and important networks with people living or working in Maxixe, including former students at the Eduardo Mondlane University. Lastly, Maxixe district is situated about 400kms north of Maputo, the capital city,

where this researcher is based and is easily accessible, which allowed for regular visits and contacts with participants even after the end of fieldwork research.

### **3.5.2 Access to the field**

Previous studies on voting behaviour have shown that access to the field and informants can pose challenges (Pereira, 2008). Qualitative studies like this, requiring intensive interaction with respondents for a long period of time, are only possible after permission from relevant authorities, the ‘gatekeepers’ (Rule & John, 2011) to access the site and build a rapport with different relevant authorities or entities and informants before data collection (see also Creswell, 2014; Creswell, 2013).

For this study, the issue of access to the field was taken seriously due to the following reasons: Firstly, in Mozambican political context is characterised by high levels of heightened surveillance of citizens by state authorities, low levels of democratic culture and high levels of secrecy (inherited from one-party state regime). Discussing about politics remains sensitive. Therefore, to minimise these limitations, the researcher followed all administrative procedures before entering the field, including requesting a letter of introduction from University of Pretoria and another from his home institution, the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, written in Portuguese. Both letters explained the purpose of the study, the duration of the researcher’s stay on the site and the expected outcomes of the research. These letters were also presented to relevant local authorities in Maxixe. The researcher carried the introductory letters along every day for the duration of the fieldwork and showed them to respondents.

Secondly, the fact the fieldwork coincided with electoral time (between the 2013 local government elections and 2014 general elections) forced the researcher to be more cautious in accessing the field and in interacting with respondents. Conducting fieldwork in election year can be a disadvantage given the misunderstanding and suspicions that can be raised by the presence of ‘strangers’ (researchers) during the summit of political events. To minimise these limitations, the researcher relied on their experience and extensive networks that they had already established in Maxixe.

### 3.5.3 Selection of participants

It is important to note that although the focus of this study is to describe, explore and explain factors influencing voting behaviour in Maxixe district, the unit of analysis was individuals, not groups or the population of the Maxixe. This is because attitude and behaviour can only be attributed to an individual, not to a group. As Barbie (2005: 104) clearly states “there is no one group ‘mind’ that can have an attitude” or behaviour, besides individuals. The conclusion of the research ends with a generalisation of individual attitudes and voting behaviour of selected voters in Maxixe as individuals. In this case, Maxixe is what Yin (2012) called broader level of data collection and individuals/voters/citizens are what he called narrower level of data collection.

Who and how many respondents will the study involve are two important decisions a researcher has to make before embarking on a study (Creswell, 2013). Given the fact that the interest in the study was acquiring rich data that could help in understanding how voters decide rather than acquiring large amounts of data (Maree, 2007) the focus was on who should be part of the study and not on the quantity of respondents.

This study consisted of 40 individual interviews and three focus group discussions. The selection of respondents was purposeful and took into consideration multiple social categories or variables known for influencing behaviour (Barbie, 2005). These variables included mostly age (eligible voters of 18 years or older), place of residence (rural and urban), gender (male and female). It is also believed that the diversification of respondents, including those with contrary views, is an important aspect in testing different approaches on political attitudes and voting behaviour. The selection of respondents in these categories was more random. More male than female were interviewed due to high refusals by women. Efforts to get more females involved in the study were put in place including visits to markets, where most of self-employed women spend most of their time. This situation was not completely surprising; Lindberg & Morrison (2008) reported high levels of refusals by females.

### **3.5.4 Data collection techniques**

Besides the documental research, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted. These two techniques have been praised for widening the possibility of explaining and understanding a social phenomenon in its complexity (Swanborn, 2010; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Maree, 2007), something that is difficult to get when using questionnaires or experiments. Pereira (2008) indicated that during surveys, respondents tended to give answers that were politically correct or what they believed the researcher wanted to know.

#### ***3.5.4.1 Semi-structured interviews***

Qualitative research requires qualitative methods and interviewing is one of the most common methods for the collection of non-numerical or textual data (Punch, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Mauki, 2014). Because they take place in one-to-one situations, interviews are more personalised and private (Maundeni, 2000). This allowed interviewees in Maxixe to express their opinions, experiences, beliefs and feelings about their electoral decisions more openly. In a similar study, Lindberg & Morrison (2008) highlighted how face to face interviews helped to easily determine the type of rationale of the voters in Ghana.

This study used open-ended type of interview, which allowed participants to respond using their own words and examples. This also minimised the fears of surveillance. Each interview was preceded by a clear explanation of the aim of the study, the importance of participation in the study and how data generated was going to be used. Permission was sought to record the conversation by explaining that the only purpose of recording was to enable the researcher to transcribe with accuracy the information collected. However, some respondents were not comfortable with being recorded, particularly those working in the public sector and those with more critical of the government who wanted to express their views without fear. All interview questions were prepared in English and then translated into Portuguese. Respondents were free to choose where and when to be interviewed as well as to respond in a language of their choice. Most respondents chose to speak in Xitswa and Portuguese. For those who preferred to respond in Xitswa questions were also asked in that language.

In order to acquire a deeper understanding of the aspects that shaped voters behaviour at individual level, interviews were conducted in a form of friendly conversations in a plain language and respondents were free to answer in their own words. This allowed participants to express their decisions using local context, examples and metaphors such as “I cannot forsake my father, regardless of wrongdoing” “father is always a father” in reference to their political preference to the former liberation movement Frelimo party. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

A considerable amount of time was spent in the field with participants to allow for the capturing of information that may have been missed during the initial interviews. To maintain a sound rapport with participants and their families when possible, regular contacts and visit to respondents’ homes or place of work were maintained. This created a more conducive environment and trust for participants to openly discuss issues that they initially considered sensitive. Participants were not limited in explaining their own experiences, but also talked about what they observed and believed to be the most common factors influencing voting behaviour in district.

#### ***3.5.4.2 Focus group discussions***

Focus group discussion is a type of interview with a group to explore participants’ opinions and experiences about certain topic (Kelly, 2006; Cronin, 2008; Cronin, 2008: 228). In the focus group discussion participants interact amongst themselves about the topic in study, with the researcher only using his knowledge and skills to moderate and guide the discussion in order to allow participants to express their views and manage differences in order to reach a common conclusion (Thomas, 2011; Mauki, 2014). The number of participants in each focus group can vary, but it is recommended to have a small number that can easily be manageable. This technique has the advantage of allowing the exchange of different ideas, which results in rich textual data.

Three focus group discussions were held, two with youth males and females separately and one with a mixed group of adults and youth (female and male). The composition of each group ranged from five to eight participants, which allowed better control of the conversation and participants had sufficient time to engage and express their views or perspectives. Most of the participants in group discussions were drawn from individual interviews. The aim was

to identify and discuss the most common factors believed to shape the electoral choice. With the permission of the participants, all focus group discussions were recorded.

Each focus group discussion was preceded by a briefing of participants on the topics to be discussed and the duration of the discussion. Rules were agreed upon before the opening of the discussion to create an enabling environment for interaction and to allow each participant to air their views without any fear, and with mutual respect of each other's views. No participant was allowed to selfishly dominate the discussion. The issue of confidentiality of all information discussed in each group was emphasised, as part of ethical considerations. Participants were asked to speak in their preferred language. This resulted in three languages (Gitonga, Xitswa and Portuguese) being used in the mixed group discussions. Each discussion took between 40 and 60 minutes.

Focus group interviews helped to complement, confirm or clarify the data gathered during the individual semi-structured interviews. With the assumption that the level of understanding of democracy and politics concepts is still low in Maxixe, the researcher used a simple language and vocabulary and explained those concepts that respondents seemed to have difficulties in understanding.

#### ***3.5.4.3 Desk research***

In addition to individual and group interviews important data was also gathered from written documents. This consisted of analysis of primary sources written about Maxixe or Inhambane to find out information that could provide historical context, be it social, economic or political, that would likely influence voting behaviour trends. Other documental sources examined included the national and local official statistics, local reports on economic, social or administrative issues, national election results reports, media reports and all other authentic and valid documents. The Afrobarometer and CNEP surveys data helped in the interpretation and understanding of some of the findings of this study, particularly in theme one about the sources of information, knowledge and interest of voters in politics and on the influence of performance assessment in voting.

The strength of documents as sources of data lies in the fact that they already exist in a situation; they do not intrude upon or alter the setting in ways that the presence of a

researcher in the field might (Merriam, 2002). Besides that, documents help to describe the retrospective social processes (Allan, 1991; Yin, 2009) and track the changes in order to understand the current situation. This is a crucial advantage taken into consideration for this particular study because they helped in the understanding of long-standing as well as transitional factors or events likely to influence voting behaviour in Maxixe.

### **3.5.5 Data capturing**

Qualitative research is known for generating a large volume of data that can pose a challenge in capturing. In this study audio-recording and notes taking were the strategies used to capture data to preserve the accuracy. Individual and group interviews were audio-recorded. Audio-recording has the advantage of giving one space to focus and be engaged in the conversation with the interviewee without breaks and silences that are likely to be caused by the taking down of notes. It allows one to be more attentive to what is being said and to seek immediate clarification for information that seemed unclear or incomplete (Mauki, 2014).

Special attention and care was exercised in the audio-recording process, particularly during the focus group discussions, to avoid disturbing or distracting respondents while roving the recorder. This made participants to feel in a natural setting and without fear of having their voices misused (Kelly, 2006). Following the Tharenou, Donohue & Cooper (2007) recommendations, the audio recorder batteries were checked before the start of each interview. In the course of conversation, without disturbing the recording process and the concentration of interviewees, the recording machine was regularly checked to ensure it is recording properly. All the data recorded from interviews were transcribed verbatim (Tharenou, Donohue & Cooper, 2007). Interviews conducted in local language were translated into Portuguese during the transcriptions. For easy referencing and to ensure anonymity each interview was coded in substitution of the real identity of the respondent.

During interviews a systematic observation of the non-verbal communication, actions, behaviour, body language, and gestures of the interviewees (Allan, 1991) were recorded through notes taking. Memory distortion, confusion in interpretation or disagreements in interpretations of certain events of phenomena were also recorded (Fielding, 2008). Field notes were also important to describe facts, sites and events observed that were likely to

provide further details and meaning about voting behaviour. Names and contacts of participants were also recorded in field notes for possible follow up (Walliman, 2006).

### **3.6 DATA REDUCTION AND ANALYSIS**

In qualitative studies data generated from interviews and observation need to be described and summarised (Lacey & Luff, 2001) into clusters, patterns, categories or themes (Maundeni, 2000) to allow easy interpretation and to draw conclusions. Data analysis and interpretation can be concurrent to data collection (Punch, 2006; Maundeni, 2000; Babbie, 2005).

For this study data analysis started immediately from the time fieldwork research was begun after the first contacts with respondents. As the research progressed, more ideas were developed. By the time the fieldwork was concluded there was already a clear indication of emerging themes, and how data were going to be analysed, interpreted and presented in this thesis.

At the end of the fieldwork the first step towards data reduction was revisiting the audio-records and field notes and checking them against transcriptions. Possible errors or omissions were fixed. This also helped the researcher to refamiliarise himself with the content before the analysis. From the four theoretical approaches, four secondary research questions and four main themes of the study were developed.

### **3.7 ENCOUNTERS DURING THE RESEARCH**

The first challenge that was faced by this researcher in Maxixe was that of high level of refusals, particular among adult female voters. The most common justification for refusal was that ‘I know nothing about elections and politics’ ‘I don’t want to talk’ ‘who are you to ask me about my voting?’ ‘I don’t want to be involved in confusion’. People in Maxixe considered politics a sensitive issue that they did not want to talk about, particularly with somebody whom they do not know. Some felt so uncomfortable that from the time the researcher introduced themselves as a student of political science doing research on voting behaviour in Maxixe they turned back and walked away or literally chased them away. Others pretended that they had no problem in participating in the study but failed to show up



for the interview after agreeing to be interviewed and did not give any reason. Street vendors that agreed to be interviewed next to the vending station absented themselves and deserted their stalls on the day for the interview.

The fact that the first phase of the fieldwork was conducted in an election year might have exacerbated the rate of refusals as some people feared reprisals. At the time of the study the level of surveillance was very high. The ruling Frelimo party's political cells were created all over Maxixe, including in public markets and neighbourhoods. To overcome this, the researcher had to frequent research areas and be in regular contacts with prospective interviewees before they eventually agreed to be interviewed. This was time consuming, but it worked out at the end of the day.

At times during interviews some respondents initially provided false information pretending to be 'good patriots' who vote in all elections, and voted for Frelimo. Because they tried to use politically correct language to answer questions, their responses were incoherent at times, particularly public workers. The researcher later learnt that during the previous voter registration exercise the ruling party had sent forms to all public and private entities to be filled by workers with indication of their Frelimo membership card number. Those who were not Frelimo members had to justify why they were not. Some respondents therefore rightfully suspected that the interviews were a follow up to this party census. Trust was only built after a long rapport. This situation confirmed Bratton's (2012) doubt of whether people can give honest responses about their vote choice, as they fear that "people might censor their stated choices according to misperceptions about who is asking politically sensitive questions" (Bratton, 2012: 38).

Another challenge was the refusals to be tape-recorded. Respondents who were more critical of the ruling party in their approach initially refused to have interviews recorded. This was a clear indication of the fear of local authorities, which could result in sanctions. Others refused to sign the informed consent letter. A further challenge was associated with the time-consuming, bulky and dispersed nature of the information. Qualitative studies are known for taking a long time in collecting, reducing and analysing the bulky data collected (Mouton, 2011; Maree, 2007; Mauki, 2014). In this study this was exacerbated by the fact that the fieldwork was conducted in another language; therefore multiple translations from English into Portuguese and vice-versa had to be done.

Lastly, during the course of research one challenge that the researcher can face is the problematic access to some relevant documents, as some may have disappeared (Clark & Causer, 1991). This also happened during this study. In the preliminary contacts with a Mozambican historian and other relevant researchers it was discovered that the entire archive with historical documents about the Inhambane province written during colonial period disappeared immediately after independence when they were in process of being transferred to the national archive in Maputo, the capital of the country. Only small pieces of information with a historical background of Maxixe were obtained from the municipality library and other individual researchers.

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Because qualitative inquiry involves collecting data from people and about people (Creswell, 2009), during the close interaction between the researcher and participants ethical issues are likely to arise which if not dealt with carefully can compromise the validity, reliability, quality and trustworthiness of the research (Merriam, 2009; Rule & John, 2011; Punch, 2000). Furthermore, researchers are required to strive to work with an intellectual rigor, professional integrity and honesty and show competence in methodology (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2006). Therefore, this study was also designed and conducted in adherence to ethical principles.

The first ethical principle was to obtain informed consent. “Consent is about people agreeing to take part in the study” (Thomas, 2011: 69). Before engaging participants the purpose and relevance of the study was explained to them, as well as how information collected was going to be used. It was also highlighted to them that their participation in the study was voluntary and that there was no expected harm from their participation. As noted earlier, a considerable number of adult females declined the invite immediately. Those who indicated interest to participate were asked to sign a letter of consent. A verbal consent was sufficient for those who could not write and those who although willing to participate in the study were not willing to sign the form.

The second ethical principle was the freedom to withdraw. Those who accepted to participate in the study were free to withdraw at any phase of the research. Thirdly, participants were

protected from any harm. Taking into consideration that the topic studied is purely political and politics remain a sensitive issue in Mozambique, particularly the sensitivity of asking people how they voted or are willing to vote, it became crucial for the researcher to observe confidentiality to make sure that participants were protected from any psychological, emotional or any kind of harm (Creswell, 2009). For example, at the beginning of each interview each participant was encouraged to be free not to respond to questions that they did not feel comfortable to answer. Taking into account the recent history of a horrendous civil war in the country, care was taken to avoid asking questions that would kindle expressions of anger, frustration, or recall debilitating memories of suffering, pain and emotions.

The fourth principle observed included the right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality: all data collected were treated with integrity and confidentiality and were used for academic purposes only. This was emphasised before each interview, to make sure that respondents did not feel that their privacy was being invaded. Participants were free to choose where and when to be interviewed. Participants' contributions were kept anonymous during analysis and report writing. Where there was a need to use individual information the real names and other personal details of respondents were replaced by codes; for example, P1 identifies the first interviewed individually. All contact details of respondents were kept safely for possible follow-up.

It was important that this researcher developed trust with participants throughout the research because this enabled respondents to disclose relevant information in answering research questions. This was particularly relevant in Maxixe, where people are still reluctant to discuss politics openly, particularly with a "stranger". To establish trust with respondents, preliminary visits to the field were taken before fieldwork. During the fieldwork period a considerable amount of time was spent in the field with participants to allow for the capturing of information that may have been missed during the initial interviews.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter explained the methodology employed in the study to respond to the research questions, starting with the explanation of the epistemological paradigm, the research approach and design and the research methods. It detailed techniques used in data collection, capturing and analysis. The chapter also highlights the problems encountered during the

course of the research and closes with a description of the ethical aspects taken into consideration to ensure integrity and quality of the research. The following chapter gives an overview of the political history of the country, different transitions that the country went through; from colonialism to post-independence socialism, civil war, peace and the current democratisation era.

## **CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL HISTORY, DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

A number of factors can direct or indirectly influence voters' decisions. These are related to the historical trajectory, politics as well as the institutional set up in the country. The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the political trajectory in Mozambique, from the pre-independence period to the current post-civil war, peace and democratisation one. An explanation of the democratic electoral system and party system in the country is also done in this chapter. The chapter reviews all elections that have been held since the establishment of democracy. The challenges in the building of democratic institutions in the country are also highlighted. Aspects discussed in the chapter played a role in voting behaviour in Maxixe and in Mozambique in general.

### **4.2 POLITICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **4.2.1 Pre-independence politics**

For nearly five centuries Mozambique was colonised by Portugal under a quasi-fascist authoritarian dictatorship (Sumich & Honwana, 2007) without any tradition of political pluralism or electoral competition (Carrilho, 1996; Costa, 1987) or any kind of system of representation for Africans in the elected bodies of the colonial master, unlike in British and French colonies (Cowen & Laakso, 1997). Political activities by black Mozambicans were completely banned (Guilengue, 2015). Mozambique became independent in June 1975, following ten years (1964-1974) of an anti-colonial liberation struggle led by FRELIMO<sup>1</sup> (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Carbone, 2005; Guilengue, 2015). However, Mozambicans inherited a total vacuum in terms of experience in participating in political life.

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<sup>1</sup> FRELIMO refers to the acronym of the movement that led the armed liberation struggle (Front for Liberation of Mozambique, formed in 1962 as a result of the merge of three movements), while Frelimo refers to the political party.

#### 4.2.2 The independence and revolutionary project of FRELIMO

After independence, FRELIMO transformed itself into a Marxist-Leninist vanguard political party and established the primacy of the party over the state (Vines, 2013; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Carbone, 2005). The party-state banned all forms of rival political activities (Pereira, 2009; Sumich & Honwana, 2007; Pereira, 2008; Farré, 2008) and became the sole legal representative of the people. With the FRELIMO party machinery taking a leading role in society and controlling all spheres of life, mass political participation was strictly guided by the party leadership through the so called people's assemblies at district, provincial and national levels. Candidates to those collective bodies were proposed by the party leadership and presented to the public to be voted for by a show of hands. These elections were a façade because they involved selected voters, neither without power to elect their leadership nor to influence policy directions (Basedau & Morrison, 2008). No opposition groups or independent candidates were allowed to contest (Hanlon, 2009). Furthermore, the so called mass organisations (see Adalima, 2009; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013 for a list of some) formed another platform created and controlled by the party-state for political participation of citizens. These were considered satellite institutions of the party (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013).

The Frelimo's project was to build a revolutionary and socialist state through a nationalism that cut across tribe, race and region of origin (LeFanu, 2012; Matsimbe, 2013; Chichava, 2007). 'Kill the tribe to build the nation' (Chichava, 2007; LeFanu, 2012) was the revolutionary slogan. Therefore, all citizens were forced to abandon all forms of tribal, ethnic or regional identity to embrace the Mozambican identity. Furthermore, the Frelimo philosophy focused on creating the so called 'New Man' (Brito, 1996; Pereira, 2009; Chichava, 2007; Rosário, 2009), a new Mozambican citizen free from false egalitarianism, indiscipline, laziness, *laissez-faire* attitude, meaningless bureaucracy, corruption, opportunism, and criminality (LeFanu, 2012; Matsimbe, 2013; Chichava, 2007). Social organisations, traditional practices or culture and power structures were destroyed as they were considered subsidiaries of colonialism.

The new state had the same *modus operandi* as the colonial regime; it worked in a top-down fashion (Carbone, 2005). It became authoritarian, highly centralised and repressive, and presided over limited civil and political freedoms. Under a mono-party regime, no form of

multiparty democracy or electoral culture was allowed in the country. A strong system of political surveillance was implanted throughout the country. This partly explains the fears of citizens to express their political views, especially those critical to the ruling party in Maxixe.

### **4.2.3 The founding of RENAMO and the civil war in Mozambique**

The euphoria of independence did not last long. Two years into independence, Mozambique faced a violent civil war led by RENAMO<sup>2</sup> (Mozambican National Resistance) against the Frelimo socialist government (Seibert, 2003). RENAMO was founded in 1977 by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Office (CIO) under the white minority (Vines, 2013; Carbone, 2005). The movement (RENAMO) was supported by two white minority regimes of the time in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa (Sumich & Honwana, 2007; Pereira, 2009) in retaliation against FRELIMO's backing-up of the liberation movements that were fighting apartheid in South Africa and those fighting for majority rule in Southern Rhodesia; namely the African National Congress (ANC), Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) under Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) under Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) (Seibert, 2003; Vines, 2013; Sumich & Honwana, 2007; Pereira, 2009; LeFanu, 2012; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Carbone, 2005; Guilengue, 2015). RENAMO was used as a tool for destabilising Mozambique to force Frelimo to abandon socialism which was seen as a threat to the two reactionary and aggressive white minority regimes in the two countries (Seibert, 2003; Sumich & Honwana, 2007; Pereira, 2009; Guilengue, 2015).

On the ground, RENAMO went on to gain a large social acceptance by large portions of society, particularly in central and northern regions of Mozambique (Carbone, 2005; Pereira, 2006), where Frelimo dissidents and those discontent with the socialist project like the forced settlement in rural areas turned to Renamo (Seibert, 2003; Vines, 2013; Carbone, 2005; Guilengue, 2015). Populations from these two regions also supported Renamo as a way of countering ethnic and regional domination by the pro-FRELIMO southerners (Guilengue, 2015). The two regions remained strong supporters of Renamo even after the civil war. On the contrary, RENAMO did not have the same level of support in the southern Mozambique. Therefore, in this region RENAMO used coercive tactics to recruit members (Vines, 2013;

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<sup>2</sup> RENAMO refers to the acronym of the movement that led the civil war (Mozambican National Resistance) while Renamo refers to the political party.

Carbone, 2005; Seibert, 2003) and the war was much more violent. These regional cleavages were later reproduced in electoral competition after the end of the civil war in 1992 and the founding of democratic elections as will be demonstrated later in this chapter.

The war between RENAMO and the Frelimo government was very brutal, destructive, and violent and bloody (Sumich & Honwana, 2007; Vines, 2013; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Carrilho, 1996; Seibert, 2003; Guilengue, 2015). Projects associated with Frelimo's socialist policies were the main targets for destruction by RENAMO. These projects included the so-called *lojas do povo* (people's shops), *aldeias comunais* (communal villages), agricultural cooperatives and means of transport (Seibert, 2003). Schools, health centres, transport links, government buildings and all economic infrastructures that were considered as symbols of the Frelimo socialist state were also targeted (Manning, 2001; Vines, 2013; Ruigrok, 2005; Seibert, 2003; Guilengue, 2015). The economic sabotage, estimated at USD 18 billion, caused a near collapse of the state, forcing the country to join the Bretton Woods Institutions for assistance in the mid-80s (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Seibert, 2003).

Defenceless populations were also targeted, particularly in rural areas or ambushed in the roads while traveling. As a result, over one million people died, about two million took refuge in the neighbouring countries and 4.3 million were internally displaced (Seibert, 2003; Pereira, 2009; Guilengue, 2015). The war lasted for 16 years (1977 – 1992) and ended with the General Peace Accord (GPA) signed in Rome between the government then led by President Joaquim Chissano and RENAMO's leader Afonso Dhlakama after two years of negotiations mediated by the Sant' Egidio Catholic Community (Seibert, 2003; Vines, 2013).

### **4.3 THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY: PACIFICATION AND DEMOCRATISATION**

In the early 1990s Mozambique underwent a dual political transition: from *war to peace* (pacification) and from *one-party regime to multiparty democracy* (democratisation). The two transitions were interrelated. In the last years of the war, in the beginning of peace negotiations Renamo called for the installation of multiparty democracy, freedom of organisation, regular elections, individual basic rights and direct vote for the president as conditions for peace (Guilengue, 2015). In response to this demand the then one-party national assembly (People's Assembly) approved a new multiparty democratic constitution in



1990 (Seibert, 2003) with guarantees of fundamental civic and political rights that allowed for a broad political participation of citizens through political pluralism and democratic elections (Brito *et al*, 2005; Brito, 2014; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013). So, in Mozambique political reforms were not only a response to the global pressure for liberal democratisation following the end of the Cold War, but also as a condition to end the civil war (Cowen & Laakso, 1997; Guilengue, 2015). The whole process of democratisation was brought about by the peace process (Harrison, 1999) or the so called war termination through democratisation (Lyons, 2004; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013).

The process of pacification and democratisation was highly supported by the international community from funding, mediation to the supervision of its implementation (Manning, 2001; Lyons, 2004; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Wood, 1999). The United Nations (UN) established one of the largest peace operation missions for Mozambique (ONUMOZ) with a budget of US\$331 million and more than 8,000 peacekeeping troops (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Vines, 2013). The total cost of democratisation and pacification reached one billion USD (Harrison, 1995).

Following the end of the civil war, with the assistance of UN in the tune of more than \$15 million, RENAMO was successfully demobilised and transformed from a guerrilla movement into national opposition political party in the run up to the founding elections of 1994 (Carbone, 2005; Vines, 2013; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013) in an effort to demilitarise politics.

Mozambique became a world reference in dealing successfully with dual transition, (Ruigrok, 2005; Sumich & Honwana, 2007; Manning, 2001; Vines, 2013, Carbone, 2003; Carbone, 2005; Lyons, 2004; Wood, 1999; Harrison, 1999; Ruigrok, 2005) amid the obvious challenge of promoting simultaneously both political competition and reconciliation between Frelimo and Renamo (Manning, 2001; Lyons, 2004). This was, however, complicated by high levels of distrust between the two former warring foes and the weakness of the newly established democratic institutions (Manning, 2001; Ruigrok, 2005; Guilengue, 2015).

The successful transition lifted the country to impressive rates of economic growth, one of the fastest growing economies on the continent, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between seven and ten per cent per annum (NKC, 2015; Manning, 2001; Carbone, 2003; Carbone, 2005; Pereira *et al*, 2003; Harrison, 1999; Vines, 2013; Guilengue, 2015; Pereira &

Nhanale, 2014). The successful transition also attracted foreign investment. In 2013 only, the country received 5.9 billion of foreign investment, becoming the African country receiving the largest amount of foreign investment (NKC, 2015). The NKC (2015) projections indicate an economic growth of 7.3 per cent in 2015 and 7.5 for 2016.

#### **4.4 THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN MOZAMBIKAN DEMOCRACY**

Besides determining how votes cast in a particular election are converted into seats or determining government position, the electoral system is an influential factor of voting behaviour (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Lindberg, 2005; Bogaards, 2004). An electoral system shapes both the degree of political representation as well as the party system in a given political system (Carrilho, 1996).

Mozambique uses the absolute majoritarian system for electing the President of the republic and mayors. The president of the republic is elected in a single nation-wide constituency, including the diaspora. If no candidate secures an absolute majority of the votes cast (50 per cent+ one vote) a runoff is held between the two candidates with the large number of votes within 30 days, following the validation of the first round results. Since the founding elections in 1994 no second round has been necessary as Frelimo always win with absolute majority (Matsimbe, 2009). The president of the republic can only be re-elected once for another five year term. Independent candidates are allowed to run for both presidential and mayoral elections.

Proportional representation (PR) system based on closed party list is used for election of the 250 members of the single chamber of national parliament (Carrilho, 1996; Matsimbe, 2009; Hanlon, 2009; Hanlon & Fox, 2006) and also of representatives of local government assemblies. For parliamentary elections Mozambique is divided into thirteen constituencies, namely the ten administrative provinces, the capital city and the diaspora in Africa and Rest of the World. The number of seats allocated to each of the national constituency is proportional to the number of voters registered and the diaspora elects two (one for each region). The table below shows the distribution of seats per constituency for the latest general elections in 2014.

**Table 1: Distribution of seats per constituency (2014 elections)**

#	Constituency	Registered Voters	No. of Seats
1	Niassa	615,065	14
2	Cabo Delgado	964,071	22
3	Nampula	2,079,129	47
4	Zambézia	1,948,859	45
5	Tete	971,644	22
6	Manica	712,938	16
7	Sofala	926,746	21
8	Inhambane	598,276	14
9	Gaza	591,194	14
10	Maputo Province	757,594	17
11	City of Maputo	708,812	16
12	Africa	88,622	1
13	Rest of the World	1,835	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10,964,785</b>	<b>250</b>

Source: EUEOM (2014)

Only officially registered political parties can contest for parliamentary elections, individually or in coalition. They can decide to field candidates in all or in selected or preferred constituencies. No independent candidates are allowed, but non-affiliated candidates can contest on a registered party ticket. Only citizens aged 18 years or older are eligible to vote. The d'Hondt method is used for converting votes into seats in the parliament and municipal assemblies. Members of parliament are elected for a five year term.

The PR system has been considered the most appropriate for Africa democracies for promoting broader representation and party development (Harrison, 1995). In Mozambique, the initial rationale for adopting PR was to allow wide representation of multiple interests and identities through different political parties in order to foster post-war reconciliation (Matsimbe, 2009; Bratton *et al*, 2012). However, after over 20 years of democracy, the system continues to produce a parliament dominated by the two former warring foes; Frelimo and Renamo (Carbone, 2005; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Ruigrok, 2005; Carbone, 2003). The system has had a reverse effect. Like Carbone (2005) said, Frelimo and Renamo simply

changed the strategy from bullets to ballots (see also Harrison, 1999), but continued to be the only two main contestants for power. This has implications on how voters align their electoral decisions as it reduces the options available to the voters.

The party lists for the PR system has been criticised for not allowing for proper accountability by the elected bodies to the public. MPs in Mozambique tend to respect their party leadership which decides their inclusion or exclusion in the list for the following elections instead of the electorate. This aspect came quiet clearly in the results of this study, as it will be demonstrated in chapter five. Secondly, the system does not enable voters to freely express their choices and to effectively participate in policy formulation (Brito, 2009). In this situation voters see the expectations of having their issues and grievances aired in parliament and municipality assemblies falling apart (Pantie, 2014). Thirdly, the PR system allows for unknown people (nominated by the good will of the party leadership) to be elected; and finally it promotes corruption within political parties when party members bribe the party leadership to be positioned on top of the list to ensure election or re-election.

#### **4.5 PARTY SYSTEM AND POLITICAL PARTIES IN MOZAMBIQUE**

The prevailing party system of a particular polity has implications on how voters structure their political decisions. In other words, the behaviour of voters is highly influenced by the behaviour of other actors that operate within the political system, particularly political parties (Thomassen, 1994). For example, voters will behave differently in a democracy with multiple choices represented by a large number of political parties than in one dominated by a single or fewer political parties (Bratton *et al*, 2012). The passage below expresses the influence of party system in the voting behaviour:

“...as multiparty competition increases, so voters are better able to express their identities and interests when choosing who will rule them. In these situations, we can expect to see a wide and diverse range of voting intentions. By contrast, where single parties remain dominant, voters have fewer choices and often end up, by default, endorsing incumbents.” (Bratton *et al*, 2012: 44)

Conventionally, party system refers to the number of political parties existing in a given democracy as well as their ideological differences (Carbone, 2005; Carbone, 2003).

However, in less consolidated democracies, assessing the party system based on ideological distance becomes a challenge because most of them have no ideological distance. In Mozambique political parties have similar but very diffuse policy orientation and some do not have any clear policy of orientation at all (Wood, 1999). Because of this limitation, the analysis of party system here will be basic, focusing on the number of political parties existing in the country and their working mechanisms.

Following the approval of the multiparty constitution in 1990, a number of new parties emerged. These were called ‘unarmed’ (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Carbone, 2005) or ‘smaller’ (Matsimbe, 2009) political parties, as a way of distinguishing them from Renamo, known as armed party. Some of the newly formed parties were short lived. Currently the total number of registered political parties is sixty, in a democracy of around ten million voters. However, only three political parties are represented in the parliament.

In fact, a two-party system seems to be the main characteristic of the Mozambican polity (Carbone, 2005; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Ruigrok, 2005; Carbone, 2003). Frelimo and Renamo are the only well-established political parties throughout the country, owing to their past as a state party and as a former guerrilla movement respectively (Carbone, 2005). The third political party that seems to gain significant social bases is the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), formed just months before the 2009 elections as a break away from RENAMO. Pulling along important intellectuals with mobilisation capacity (Vines, 2013), MDM managed to secure eight seats in the 2009 and seventeen in the 2014 elections, breaking the historic bipolarity in the parliament (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014).

Mozambique is not an exception to the African trends characterised by lack of alternation of power and long-lasting dominance by the same party, typically the liberating parties (Carbone, 2005; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013). Despite the significance of RENAMO, election results show that FRELIMO has more supporters; therefore, it has been winning all competitive pluralistic elections held in the country since 1994 (Ruigrok, 2005; Carbone, 2003). Carbone (2005) attributes the Frelimo consecutive electoral victories to organisational strength built during the two decades of monopolistic rule and uninterrupted control over the state apparatus.

The weak institutionalisation of opposition parties makes the Mozambican multiparty system fragile (Cowen & Laakso, 1997). Despite significant results in parliamentary elections, Renamo still suffers from notable disorganisation and excessive centralisation of power in the person of its leader Afonso Dhlakama, making it unable to work effectively as an opposition political party in Mozambique (Harrison, 1999). Smaller parties lack the basic structural and organisational capacity, resources and leadership, thereby inhibiting the operation of a well-functioning democracy, including their durability, strong social roots, country-wide representation, effectiveness and recognition as legitimate organisations (Carbone, 2005; Carbone, 2003; Ruigrok, 2005; Pereira, 2008). MDM seems to be the only one with a possibility of breaking the prevailing bi-partisan party system, but it still has its support concentrated mostly in urban areas and attracts mostly the youth (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014).

#### **4.6 CHALLENGES IN THE MOZAMBICAN DEMOCRACY**

This section briefly discusses the most salient challenges to democratisation in Mozambique. The first challenge is associated with the legal framework. An effective democracy must be governed by clear norms and rules that allow free competition and free choice by the voter (Manning, 2001). However, sometimes the legal framework can produce the averse. Various and repeated recommendations have been aired by different entities, including election observer missions (see for example European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), 2014) for Mozambique to have a consolidated and consistent single act governing all key aspects of the electoral processes; however, elections in Mozambique are still governed by a multiplicity of laws, from the Constitution of the Republic, which establishes the basic principles of civic and political rights to the so called electoral package.

The electoral package consists of five laws, namely; the law regulating the voter registration process (Law 5/2013), the law governing the formation, composition and functioning of electoral management bodies (Law 6/2013); the law regulating the election of the president of the republic and members of the parliament (Law 8/2013); the law defining the rules for election of members of provincial assemblies (Law 4/2013) and election of local government bodies (Law 7/2013).

Despite these laws being considered complementary (Carrilho, 1996) their implementation has been imbued with contradictions, ambiguities and misinterpretations. The problematic

interpretation and application of these laws resulted in unclear exclusion of political parties and coalitions that wanted to contest the 2009 general elections (Electoral Observatory, 2009; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013) and prohibition of presence of observers during the results tabulation process of the 2014 general elections (EUEOM, 2014). The exclusion of political parties from contesting left a considerable number of voters with limited electoral choices.

The second problem is the instability or frequent change of electoral legislation (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). Electoral laws change in each and every electoral cycle and the changes are made shortly before elections, making it difficult for most of the stakeholders to familiarise themselves with them before the elections. For example, the amendment to the law regulating the internal organisation of the National Electoral Commission (CNE) was approved three weeks before the 2014 elections (EUEOM, 2014). This is in part because the discussion of laws takes place in a tense environment of rivalry and lack of trust between the two main political parties in parliament. Furthermore, these changes do not go in line with international electoral norms and standards (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014).

The third challenge is linked to electoral governance. In electoral processes the voters' perception about the composition and functioning of an electoral management body (EMB) has implications on their behaviour. The CNE, with a six year term, is the body in charge of supervising voter registration and electoral processes. It is an independent and permanent body consisting of seventeen commissioners; ten nominated by the three political parties represented in parliament (Frelimo five, Renamo four and MDM one) based on proportional representation in parliament and seven nominated by the civil society. The CNE is supported by a technical and implementing body, the Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (STAE), a quasi-civil service permanent body responsible for electoral administration and operations. The CNE and STAE are centralised bodies, but non-permanent branches are established at provincial, district and city levels during electoral periods. The Constitutional Council (CC) is the supreme jurisdictional constitutional body responsible for overseeing the entire electoral process, approving the presidential candidates, validating and proclaiming electoral results and dealing with electoral litigation (Ruigrok, 2005; Hanlon & Fox, 2006). This body consists of seven judges, one nominated by the President of the Republic, five nominated by the parliament based on the criteria of proportionality, and one nominated by the Supreme Judicial Magistrate of the Country. The CC has a five-year mandate.

The challenge resides in the partisan composition of these bodies. The politicisation of Mozambican EMBs reached its high when the new electoral legislation approved in 2014 opened space for representatives of political parties seating in national parliament to nominate members of the electoral administration machinery from the national, provincial district levels up to the polling station (EUEOM, 2014; Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). The fact that CNE and STAE have been highly politicised makes them vulnerable to political disputes, particularly between the two bigger rivals, rather than becoming a space for arbitration of electoral disputes and legitimisation of electoral process (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013). This is a bizarre situation where players also become referees of the same game (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). Parties in the CNE and STAE tend to defend and accommodate their partisan interests than working independently to enforce the law and ensure more transparency, fairness, impartiality, credibility and integrity in the management of electoral processes. Renamo see in CNE a suitable space to win power while Frelimo find controlling the CNE as the only way to retain power.

The CNE has been criticised for making important decisions or bending the laws in favour of the two major parties, neglecting the interests of those parties without representation in it (Hanlon, 2009; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). The public outcry caused by the exclusion of some political parties from running in all constituencies in 2009 was interpreted on this ground. Quite often these decisions are taken in total secrecy, like, for example, the decision on requalification of votes, in almost all elections.

Furthermore, the politicisation of EMBs jeopardises the development of competence, professionalism and institutional memory. In almost all elections, the CNE has been criticised for disorganisation, inefficient public communication strategy, bad institutional management, lack of accountability and for failing to meet the legal deadlines (Hanlon, 2009; EUEOM, 2014). EMB staff's misconduct and arrogance have gone unpunished and they keep their jobs allegedly because they are protected by their parties (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013). During the deliberation of the 2004 elections the Constitutional Council strongly criticised the CNE and considered the unlawfulness as a real threat to the entire fundamental principles of the democratic state (Hanlon & Fox, 2006).

Quite often, Renamo has observed Frelimo using its power and control over state and electoral governance institutions to manipulate results. Scholars have also raised their voice



with the argument that Frelimo's successive electoral successes are partly due to its control of the electoral governance institutions (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013). In most cases, even the commissioners nominated by the CSOs are left with no options but to align with Frelimo because that is the only way to prosper or ascend in their social mobility. Renamo has insistently rejected the election outcomes with allegations of fraud and irregularities.

The third challenge is that the Mozambican democracy operates within an environment of political intolerance and distrust particularly between the two former warring foes, with inflamed discourses, accusations of fraud, electoral violence, and political intolerance (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). During the democratic transition and pacification, important measures were put in place to help all stakeholders to build trust and confidence (Manning, 2001; Ruigrok, 2005), but antagonism and lack of mutual recognition between the two remain unresolved (Carbone, 2005; Ruigrok, 2005). The two still work within the logic of conflict that ended in 1992 (Ruigrok, 2005; Harrison, 1999; Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). Their rivalry is poorly contained; therefore, they treat each other not as political adversaries, but as enemies, trading hateful accusations (Carbone, 2005) rather than debating constructively on important issues facing the country. Frelimo and Renamo are unable to build consensual rules for democratic co-existence and to manage their political disagreements and differences pacifically and democratically (Brito, 2014). In parliament, contacts between MPs from the two parties are limited (Carbone, 2005). Quite often Frelimo uses the so called dictatorship of the vote to repel all law proposals from Renamo (Harrison, 1999) the latest proposal rejected in 2015 was the creation of autonomous regions in the central and Northern provinces, where Renamo gained the majority in the last general elections of 2014. In reaction to this dominance Renamo has at times boycotted parliamentary sessions.

Violence involving supporters of the two main parties has been frequent during electoral campaigns and election times. Quite often Renamo has threatened to return to war (Carbone, 2005) or tried to make the country ungovernable. These threats have kept the country in a permanent precarious political instability (Brito, 2014). The climax of instability was reached in 2013 when the two former belligerents were involved in new military confrontations triggered by lack of consensus over electoral laws (electoral package). With the open violent conflict Renamo declared an end of democracy. Central Mozambique, the stronghold of Renamo (Vines, 2013; Ruigrok, 2005) became the epicentre of battlefields, but at times, military confrontations extended to Inhambane province, in southern Mozambique, affecting

districts around Maxixe and the northern province of Nampula. Road traffic along EN1, the central highway linking the capital city (Maputo) to the rest of the country, has been severely affected. Important Renamo figures accused of inciting violence have been arrested, the Secretary General of Renamo was injured in an attempted murder allegedly masterminded by Frelimo. At the time of writing this thesis Renamo's leader, Afonso Dhlakama remains in hiding for several months. So far the fighting has claimed the life of dozens of people and thousands have been internally displaced again and some fled the country into Malawi.

Despite the tense situation, the destruction of goods and property, and the obvious threat to social, political and economic stability, the government never accepted that the country was at war again. The government talked of political tension or political instability caused by 'Renamo bandits'. The public and some private media houses were silenced if they talked about war (Brito, 2014) or were instructed to report in favour of the government. Dhlakama and President Armando Guebuza signed a peace agreement in September 2014, but the politico-military crisis re-emerged (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014)

The fourth challenge is related to the weakening of opposition parties. The strength or weakness of political parties has implications on the quality of choices provided to voters. Generally, opposition political parties in Mozambique, Renamo included, are characterised by centralisation of power, elite-based, without internal democracy, rotation of leadership or accountability (Carbone, 2005; Vines, 2013; Harrison, 1999; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Wood, 1999; Ruigrok, 2005; Pereira, 2008). Because of these and other weaknesses, scholars raise doubt whether these parties represent sincere political motives or are driven by financial gains from electoral funding provided by the state (Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin, 10, 7.1994; see also Harrison, 1999; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Wood, 1999).

Despite being the main opposition, with strong presence in parliament, Renamo has serious limitations and tactical mistakes by its leadership, particularly of Dhlakama (Vines, 2013; Wood, 1999; Carbone, 2005) that hinder its functioning in a democratic system and work to effectively challenge Frelimo (Harrison, 1999). Renamo is too much disorganised (Carbone, 2005; Wood, 1999), characterised by lack of enforcement of internal discipline, poor internal communication and coordination. It has no mechanisms for collecting party members' fees to boost the party and its mobilisation structure is ineffective (Ruigrok, 2005; Wood, 1999). Because it still operates like a military organisation, it is administratively and politically less

developed (Carbone, 2005). The EUEOM (2014) associated the decline of performance of Renamo in 2009 not only to emerging of MDM and abstention, but also to lack of trust by the electorate. Vines (2013) argued that Dhlakama's decision to resort to the armed violence in 2013 was a manifestation of RENAMO's political desperation to operate in democratic environment (Vines, 2013; Ruigrok, 2005).

Despite calling himself as the 'father of democracy', Dhlakama fails to promote internal democracy within the party. Like most opposition parties in Africa, Renamo is strongly personalistic, with hyper-concentration of powers on the unchallenged Dhlakama (Carbone, 2005; Wood, 1999; Ruigrok, 2005; Vines, 2013). Dhlakama's leadership has been unchallenged since 1979 after the death of the first leader of the movement, André Matsangaíssa in a battlefield with government forces (Vines, 2013; Guilengue, 2015). Dhlakama he has been the only presidential candidate for the party since the first democratic elections in 1994.

Other smaller parties have been affected by fragmentation due to permanent internal conflicts over leadership (Wood, 1999; Carbone, 2005). Those which formed small coalitions broke away after short periods of existence due to internal contentions between the leaderships reluctant to sacrifice personal ambitions (Wood, 1999). Unstable and with limited capacity of mobilisation (Wood, 1999; Carbone, 2005) some of the smaller parties disappeared with the death or retirement of their founders, and others were directly or indirectly co-opted by Frelimo in attempts to make the opposition institutionally fragile, particularly during former President Guebuza's term of office (Cowen & Laakso, 1997; Guilengue, 2015).

Urban based and without solid social bases, these political parties only become visible in election periods. They have been called 'briefcase political parties' because they have no physical addresses, no database of their members. Structural and organisational shortfalls explain why these parties fail to operate within the Mozambican polity and become electorally successful. It was only in the 1999 elections that some entered parliament through a temporary coalition with Renamo (Carbone, 2005).

Fifthly, increasing levels of abstention pose a serious challenge to the democracy in Mozambique. The levels of abstention have been rising from election to election (Carbone, 2005). If the abstention was only 13 per cent in 1994, this figure increased to 31.9 per cent in

1999, 63.66 per cent in 2004, declining to 55.55 per cent, 55.27 per cent in 2009 and 2014 general elections respectively (Mozambique Political Process Bulletin 56 - 28 November 2014). A number of factors have been advanced as reasons for this, including organisational failure by CNE and STAE (Hanlon & Fox, 2006) or voters simply deciding to stay at home to show their disaffection with the system, a rejection to all political parties (Carbone, 2005; Ruigrok, 2005). The general perception of the ordinary citizens is that the state has been absent in their lives or if present it has been perceived as a repressive entity (Ruigrok, 2005).

The sixth challenge is the historical blatant lack of separation of powers between the state and the party. Given the recent past of one-party state, the political system of the country is “still characterised by an ambiguous relationship between ruling party and state apparatus” (Carbone, 2005: 421). Following the introduction of democracy, new legislation was approved establishing a clear separation between state apparatus and party. For example, the use of state-owned or state-controlled companies, vehicles, facilities, goods or property by any political party is prohibited (Ruigrok, 2005). However, given the fact that Frelimo continues to dominate the government, the state apparatus and the entire social system; in practice the party and the state remain one entity. Frelimo victories and hegemony have been attributed to neo-patrimonialism and financial strength resulting from the control of state institutions (Guilengue, 2015).

The importance of Frelimo over the state apparatus grew significantly after 2002 when the new party leadership led by Guebuza worked hard to revitalise party cells throughout the country, including workplaces (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Ruigrok, 2005; Guilengue, 2015). Since then, the state bureaucracy has been increasingly at the service of the ruling party and the majority of state workers are compelled to affiliate to Frelimo and vote for it. Those who try to openly show support to the opposition are demoted or charged with disciplinary actions. Some end up losing their jobs, as it happened with a famous TV presenter in a private broadcaster (STV) owned by a businessman associated to Frelimo. The parallel existence of state and party will likely end only if another party different from Frelimo wins power.

By virtue of controlling the state apparatus, Frelimo cadres have controlled the national wealth since the introduction of a market-based economy when they took control of privatised companies in the early 1990s (Guilengue, 2015). Party members are the

frontrunners in capturing almost all opportunities for exploitation of a new boom of natural resources such as natural gas, coal and other minerals that have been discovered in the country (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). Therefore, Frelimo scores the greatest advantages in the social, economic and cultural spheres of Mozambique (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014; Guilengue, 2015).

With weak opposition parties, the oversight of the use of state resources by the incumbent has been limited (Guilengue, 2015). The public press does not play its role of being a watchdog because it has been dominated by the ruling party (Wood, 1999). Frelimo's dominance over the state apparatus has conditioned the electoral choice of many citizens in the country.

Finally, the high levels of poverty and illiteracy among the population and the increasing gap between rich and poor constitute a challenge to the functioning of Mozambican democracy. Research shows that a relationship exists between prosperity and democracy. Poor countries can barely have sustainable democracy. The majority of 25 million Mozambicans live in extreme poverty, particularly in rural areas (EUEOM, 2014; NKC, 2015; Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world (Carbone, 2005; Carbone, 2003; Hanlon & Fox, 2006; Pereira *et al*, 2002) with more than 70 per cent of the population living in rural areas in an absolute poverty (Harrison, 1999), heavily dependent on foreign donations for almost 60 per cent of state budget (Wood, 1999; NKC, 2015).

The control of wealth by a political minority has widened the gap between those few who by virtue of their political power concentrate wealth and privilege. Implications from these go beyond the economic, political and social tensions and instability (Harrison, 1999; Wood, 1999). Citizens feeling marginalised look at the democratisation process as meaningless. This is another possible explanation for high levels of abstentions. Two big acts of popular unrest over food and high transport prices took place in 2008 and 2010 (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). From 2012 the country has also been living in insecurity because of systematic kidnappings of affluent businessmen and wealth people. These kidnappings have been interpreted as a mechanisms adopted by the less wealthy citizens to demand redistribution of wealth.

A high levels of illiteracy (95 per cent of the population of 11 million in 1975) inherited from the colonial education system characterised by poor infrastructure and shortages of qualified staff remain a huge burden to Mozambique today (Guilengue, 2015; Hanlon & Fox, 2006).

The UN estimates Mozambican adults' mean years of schooling at only 3.25 (NKC, 2015). Research shows that the understanding of how a democratic process works is directly influenced by levels of education (see chapter two). For a vibrant democracy, voters need to be able to access and interpret political messages and governance alternatives to be able to make informed choices. The low level of education affects not only voters but the way EMBs operate. For example, register books always appear with many errors and mistakes because temporary staffs are not sufficiently educated (Ruigrok, 2005). During election periods, a number of errors on the results sheets caused by low levels of literacy among polling station agents (Hanlon, 2009; Ruigrok, 2005) have resulted in some results sheets being excluded from the final counting (see also Hanlon & Fox, 2006) which has caused conflicts and hindered the flourishing of democracy. These problems end up disenfranchising some voters. The sections below provide brief overviews of all the elections that have been conducted in the country since 1994.

## **4.7 AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE SINCE 1994**

Since the launching of democratisation, Mozambique has conducted five general elections (presidential and parliamentary) in 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 and four local government elections in 1998, 2003, 2008 and 2013. Frelimo has won all the presidential and parliamentary elections (Joaquim Chissano in 1994 and 1999; Armando Guebuza in 2004 and 2009; and Filipe Nyusi in 2014). In 2009, a new type of elections was introduced to elect members of provincial assembly to relate to the provincial governments (Ruigrok, 2005). All types of elections take place every five years. Presidential, parliamentary and provincial assembly elections take place on the same day, while local government elections are held in a different year. The polling in all elections takes place just one day. Results of almost all elections have been contested by the main opposition party with the allegations of fraud.

### **4.7.1 The 1994 general elections**

The first multiparty elections were held in 1994. In any context of post-conflict, the first elections served the dual purpose of war termination and democratisation (Lyons, 2004; Harrison, 1995). However, in Mozambique particularly, these elections served more the

purpose of ending the war more than establishing a formally competitive democratic system (Manning, 2001; Lyons, 2004; Carbone, 2003; Ruigrok, 2005). The electoral choice was also driven by the interest of preserving peace. In the polls voters strategically chose either Renamo or Frelimo with the objective of keeping Mozambique peaceful (Ruigrok, 2005). This led some scholars to talk about strategic vote (Vines, 2013).

Twelve presidential candidates and fourteen political parties and coalitions contested. Joaquim Chissano and his Frelimo party won with 53.31 per cent and 44.33 per cent (129 out of 250 seats in parliament), respectively. Afonso Dhlakama was endorsed by 33.73 per cent of the voters while his party Renamo collected 37.78 per cent of the total vote, equivalent to 112 seats in parliament (Ruigrok, 2005; Carbone, 2003). For a political party that had just been transformed from a guerrilla movement, with all the blame for its brutality and violence during the war, the Renamo's performance in the first elections can be considered impressive (Carbone, 2003; Carbone, 2005; Vines, 2013). From the first elections it became clear that Renamo was an important and respected second political force in Mozambican politics, with more popularity amongst considerable sections of the country, particularly in central and northern Mozambique (Hanlon, 2009; Ruigrok, 2005). During the electoral campaigning, amongst other issues, Renamo explored the issue of regional imbalance in the redistribution of resources, with the south benefiting more than the central and northern regions (Ruigrok, 2005).

Besides the two former warring foes only a small coalition Democratic Union (UD) managed to go beyond the then existing five per cent threshold by winning 5.15 per cent corresponding to nine seats in the parliament (Mazula, 1996; Matsimbe, 2009; STAE, 1998, Hanlon, 2009; Ruigrok, 2005; Carbone, 2005).

In a context of post-conflict transition the first elections are held in an atmosphere of fear, tension and insecurity of general disorder (Lyons, 2004). The same applied in Mozambique. Fear for possible return to civil war and uncertainty about the behaviour of the two warring parties in reaction to the election outcomes were visible among voters. Tension heightened when Renamo announced its withdrawal from elections on the first day of polling<sup>3</sup>, accusing the Frelimo government of organising a massive fraud (Harrison, 1995; Ruigrok, 2005;

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<sup>3</sup> The polling took place in two days.

Wood, 1999). However, this incident did not affect the turnout, probably because citizens were aware of the importance of their vote to guarantee peace and stability. Voters decided to vote in their numbers. 88 per cent of registered voters voted effectively, despite limited and difficult voter and election education conducted by UN in a country with high rates of illiteracy and poor communication infrastructures (Harrison, 1995; Ruigrok, 2005; Vines, 2013).

The polling went peacefully after Renamo lifted its boycott, on the second day, following guarantees provided by the Western powers to investigate the irregularities (Ruigrok, 2005). The over 2,200 local and international observers on the ground (Harrison, 1995; Ruigrok, 2005) endorsed these elections as free and fair (Harrison, 1999; Harrison, 1995). They were considered one of the best ever elections in Africa. For the first and last time, Renamo conceded defeat (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013).

Given the fact that these elections were part of conflict resolution (Harrison, 1995; Lyons, 2004) and of high interest in making sure that the last leg towards full implementation of peace agreement, stability and democratic consolidation is not compromised, the international community marked its heavy and highly profiled presence to monitor and supervise the polling with an representation of the UN, European Union (EU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) and Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

#### **4.7.2 The 1999 general elections**

In the 1999 elections, only two presidential candidates contested the second general elections because the opposition came together and agreed to have Afonso Dhlakama of RENAMO as their candidate to face Joaquim Chissano, who was seeking re-election. The results between the two presidential candidates were very close (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013), most probably because Dhlakama attracted the non-Renamo opposition votes (Carbone, 2005; Vines, 2013). Chissano was re-elected with 52.29 per cent while Dhlakama got 48.54 per cent of the total vote.



With 48.55 per cent of the total vote, Frelimo increased its number of seats in parliament to 133 MPs. Renamo, this time round contesting in coalition with other ten smaller parties under the name Renamo Electoral Union (RUE), won 38.79 per cent of the total votes, equivalent to 117 seats in parliament (Hanlon, 2009; Matsimbe, 2009; Ruigrok, 2005).

The 1999 elections were marred by serious technical glitches, lack of transparency in the tabulation of votes (Manning, 2001). Most votes in favour of opposition parties were inexplicably invalidated, the re-classification of votes was flawed, and ballot box stuffing was registered in some constituencies (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Ruigrok, 2005). The tabulation software used was also contested mainly by the opposition (Ruigrok, 2005). Technical problems and irregularities during the counting left people convinced that Dhlakama had won the election (Brito, 2014; Guilengue, 2015) while others estimated that Chissano only won with a tiny margin of 0.5 per cent (Ruigrok, 2005). Delays in the final public announcing of the results created anxiety and confusion in the country. Renamo rejected the final election results and formally appealed to the Supreme Court for the nullification of results with the allegations of fraud, irregularities and misconduct of the ruling party, but the Supreme Court rejected all the allegations (Ruigrok, 2005; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013).

In Africa, every second elections are generally characterised by low voter turnout, boycotts perpetrated by opposition parties, leaving the incumbents to have landslide victories (Manning, 2001; Bratton, 1998). Mozambican elections were different from this trend. The turnout only dropped slightly from the 88 per cent in 1994 to 70 per cent in 1999 (Matsimbe, 2009). There was no boycott of elections by the opposition, but Renamo rejected the outcomes and refused to take seats in parliament (Pereira *et al*, 2002). Dhlakama threatened to form a separate government in the six provinces where Renamo had won the majority, and also threatened to make the country ungovernable (Ruigrok, 2005; Vines, 2013; Guilengue, 2015) and to return to bush (Carbone, 2005). Following the unsuccessful negotiations with the Frelimo government to resolve the deadlock, Renamo mobilised its supporters for demonstrations throughout the country. As a result, hundreds of demonstrators died in Montepuez district in the northern province of Cabo Delgado (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Carbone, 2005; Pereira *et al*, 2002; Vines, 2013).

### 4.7.3 The 2004 general elections

In the 2004 elections, Frelimo and Renamo continued to dominate political competition, confirming the tendency of Mozambique becoming a two-party democracy (Ruigrok, 2005). Frelimo gained 62.0 per cent equivalent to 160 seats and Renamo took 28.7 per cent of the total votes, corresponding to 90 seats. For the first time, the external vote was introduced. Frelimo won the two seats allocated to both constituencies (Africa and the rest of the world). Besides the two political giants none of the twenty other smaller political parties that contested for parliament managed to gain a single seat.

With almost two-thirds of the seats in the parliament, Frelimo clearly received an even stronger mandate from the electorate to rule the country (Carbone, 2005; Ruigrok, 2005). Under a new party leadership and candidate Armando Guebuza, Frelimo demonstrated its hegemony in the political competition. Guebuza won with 63.7 per cent of the total vote, almost twice of the vote of Dhlakama who got only 31.7 per cent (Carbone, 2005; Ruigrok, 2005). These elections were marked by the unexpected poor results for Renamo and its candidate (Hanlon & Fox, 2006; Vines, 2013), with 27 fewer parliamentary seats than in the 1999 elections (Ruigrok, 2005).

Furthermore, these elections were characterised by a low turnout; only 36 per cent of the registered voters voted (Matsimbe, 2009; Ruigrok, 2005) with indications that Renamo was the most hit by the low turnout (Carbone, 2005; Hanlon & Fox, 2006). Renamo voters decided to abstain allegedly in response to constant claims by the party leadership that it did not win the 1994 and 1999 elections because of fraud. This created the impression among Renamo supporters that voting was useless as Frelimo will always win, no matter what (Ruigrok, 2005). Using regression analysis, Hanlon & Fox (2006) concluded that this was the reason that demotivated the Renamo electorate to go to the polls (Hanlon & Fox, 2006). Furthermore, the Renamo failure was attributed to the internal conflicts and divisions or total confusion within the party around this period (Carbone, 2005; Wood, 1999). This coincided with the period when Dhlakama dismissed party cadres like Raul Domingos purportedly for fear of being challenged (Ruigrok, 2005; Carbone, 2000). Other prominent Renamo members resigned and others were suspended.

These elections were tainted by a number of irregularities reported by election observers and the independent media. Irregularities included falsification of results sheets, ballot box stuffing, problems with the tabulation software, mismatched numbers of polling stations and results sheets (Ruigrok, 2005; Hanlon & Fox 2006). Some of the organisational failures were intentional (Hanlon & Fox, 2006). For example, the real number of potential voters and of polling stations was never disclosed and CNE and STAE had contradicting numbers (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013; Ruigrok, 2005; Hanlon & Fox, 2006). The exclusion of some results sheets in the final counting was done secretly (Hanlon & Fox, 2006). Nearly 700 results sheets were excluded from the final counting (Hanlon & Fox, 2006; Ruigrok, 2005). The voting register was chaotic, the book had errors, in some cases there was double registration of voters while some registered voters were not in the book at all; some register books disappeared or were dispatched to wrong places (Ruigrok, 2005; Hanlon & Fox, 2006; Vines, 2013).

Because of this alleged intentional organisational failure, in some rural areas some of the polling stations did not open or opened late, some polling stations moved without notice; some opposition voters were prevented from voting, party delegates were barred from accessing polling stations, opposition votes were unduly declared invalid or spoiled. Because of all these problems the final results were announced after four days delay.

Renamo challenged the final results claiming that they had been rigged from voter registration to results tallying. The fraud was confirmed by Hanlon & Fox (2006) in their statistical analysis, but the CNE rejected almost all allegations. Renamo appealed to the Constitutional Council, but the appeal was rejected on the grounds of technical problems in the submission. It was also believed that the irregularities did not influence the final results (Hanlon & Fox, 2006). Initially Renamo refused to take the seats they had won in the parliament, but later reconsidered its position to maintain peace and stability in the country (Ruigrok, 2005; Hanlon & Fox, 2006).

#### **4.7.4 The 2009 general elections**

In the fourth general elections, again Frelimo and its Presidential candidate, Guebuza, secured a political hegemony with a landslide victory (Vines, 2013). Guebuza was re-elected

with an even larger margin of 75.1 per cent of the total votes, against 16.41 per cent of his main political adversary Dhlakama of Renamo. According to Brito (2009), the Renamo drawback resulted from its inability to transform and become an effective opposition party. Daviz Simango, a leader of MDM, managed to get 8.59 per cent of the total votes (Osório, 2010). The Simango result was historic since none of the presidential candidates other than from Frelimo or Renamo had ever managed to attain this high result.

Again, the CNE was severely criticised for lacking transparency, impartiality, independence and objectivity in its operations and interpretation of the law (Brito, 2009; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013), misconduct by polling station staff (Hanlon, 2009). Because of lack of clarity in the application of the law, the CNE excluded partially or totally, candidate lists of some opposition parties and presidential candidates on the grounds of irregularities in the submissions (Hanlon, 2009; Brito, 2009; Nuvunga & Salih, 2013). Only three out of ten potential presidential candidates were accepted. Out of nineteen potential contesting political parties, only two (Frelimo and Renamo) succeeded in running in all constituencies.

Frelimo consolidated its strong presence in parliament with a new majority of 191 seats. Renamo dropped to 51 seats. The once considered the biggest opposition political party on the continent, RENAMO, (Vines, 2013) started to become a residual force in the parliament (Nuvunga & Salih, 2013). The newly formed MDM managed to get eight seats in parliament. Despite the removal of the electoral threshold of five per cent, no other smaller parties managed to secure seats in parliament. The turnout was low, only 45 per cent of electorate voted. There were reports of ballot stuffing in some Frelimo stronghold constituencies and voter hindering in some constituencies dominated by the opposition and problems with voters register, insufficient voting stations which obliged voters to walk long distances to vote.

#### **4.7.5 The 2014 general elections**

The 2014 general elections were conducted under a new electoral legislation approved to cease the politico-military hostilities. The dominant point in the revision was the stronger politicisation of the EMBs, purportedly to enhance inclusiveness and transparency of the electoral processes. However, the partisan composition of CNE and STAE did not resolve or even eliminate the problems of distrust, allegations of irregularities and fraud, and electoral

disputes (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014). Most irregularities and allegations of fraud were reported in regions known as strongholds for the opposition.

While there was sporadic violence, mainly caused by political intolerance, electoral campaigning was considered peaceful (EUEOM, 2014). According to the EUEOM, the unduly use of state resources (human and material) by Frelimo resulted in an uneven playing field. Frelimo, for example, used state forces to restrict the movement and the campaign of opposition parties' representatives, particularly in regions where Frelimo had performed poorly in the past. Arbitrary detentions of opposition members accused of electoral offenses were also reported. Electoral Observatory, an umbrella of local civil society organisations, neither classified these elections as free nor fair (Guilengue, 2015).

Again, more than a half of registered voters (55.27 per cent) abstained. The polling took place orderly. However, later on, a number of irregularities and problems occurred during the tabulation of the partial results at district and provincial levels, with reports of attempts of manipulation of the results. This process was also considered less transparent. As a result, Renamo and MDM rejected the results, even before they were officially announced, and formally lodged a series of complaints at district, provincial and national levels, but they were not successful. Renamo threatened to forcefully form its government in provinces where it gained a majority (Guilengue, 2015; NKC, 2015).

The final results confirmed the victory of the new Frelimo candidate Filipe Nyusi by 57.03 per cent, followed by Renamo candidate Afonso Dhlakama with 36.61 per cent and then Daviz Simango who dropped from the 8.59 in the 2009 elections to 6.36 per cent of the total votes. Frelimo dropped from 191 seats gained in 2009 to 144, while Renamo and MDM increased their shares from 51 to 89 seats and from eight to 17 respectively. The rest of the 30 parties that contested did not gain any seat. The table below shows the distribution of seats in the parliament since 1994.

**Table 2: Distribution of seats (MPs) in the parliament since 1994**

	<b>1994</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Frelimo</b>	129	133	160	191	144
<b>Renamo</b>	112	117	90	51	89
MDM	-	-	-	8	17
UD (Coalition)	9	-	-	-	-

*Source: Mozambique Political Process Bulletin 56 - 28 November 2014*

#### **4.7.6 Local government elections**

The Constitution approved in the 1990s also established a decentralised system of government and devolution of powers through a gradual creation of urban municipalities to bring state institutions closer to the people. After several postponements, the first local government elections were held in 1998 in 33 cities and towns. Renamo and other smaller parties boycotted the election on the bases of major irregularities observed during voter registration (Harrison, 1999; Ruigrok, 2005; Carbone, 2005; Wood, 1999; Vines, 2013) and disagreement on the composition and functioning of the CNE (Wood, 1999). Only 14.48 per cent of the registered voters voted effectively. The boycott call was blamed for the low voter turnout.

One particularity concerning the local government elections is that, besides political parties, civic groups or citizens residing within the municipal territory can organise themselves to contest for seats in the local government assemblies or even field a mayoral candidate. Few smaller parties and civic groups that contested could not perform well. Inevitably, Frelimo won overwhelmingly (Ruigrok, 2005; Wood, 1999).

The second local government elections took place in 2003. Renamo contested in all the 33 municipalities but only managed to win five mayorships. Frelimo took control of the rest of municipalities and no other smaller party and civic group recorded any electoral success. Renamo rejected the results in most of the municipalities where it lost and called for nullification of election results (Ruigrok, 2005) which again was rejected by Frelimo. These elections were stained by what Ruigrok (2005) called the *chaotic state of the register* and

many other irregularities. The elections were also characterised by a low voter turnout in most municipalities.

In the third local government elections in 2008 ten new municipalities were added to the existing 33 under the principle of gradual formation of new municipalities established by law. Frelimo only lost a mayorship in Beira to an independent candidate, Daviz Simango, a former Renamo mayor in the same city, but now expelled from the party. Renamo lost in all municipalities, including the ones it controlled in the previous local government elections (CPGD Newsletter, issue 2; Vines, 2013). Renamo again rejected the results and Dhlakama threatened to install parallel municipal administrations in the lost municipalities (Vines, 2013).

The number of municipalities rose to 53 for the fourth local government elections in 2013. Renamo again boycotted over the dispute about the parity with Frelimo in the composition of the EMBs. The splinter party (MDM) benefited largely from Renamo's absence in the competition and managed to win mayorship in four important municipalities, that is, the second, the third and the fourth largest and most important cities in the country. Frelimo nearly lost in the capital city Maputo and in the satellite and industrial city of Matola to MDM. Public comments stated clearly that the 2013 elections were a yellow card to Frelimo, given the high level of popular disillusionment. It is still unclear whether the vote for MDM is a pure show of support or of punishment to Frelimo due to its poor performance.

#### **4.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a historical trajectory of Mozambican politics right from colonial period, through independence, implementation of socialism and the democratisation process. In each period a number of factors that are likely to influence the electorate minds of those who experienced the period are described. With focus on the transition to democracy, the chapter highlights the aspects and challenges faced in dealing with a dual transition, pacification and democratisation.

The chapter also explains the electoral system and party systems prevailing in the country and possible implications of voters' choice. This is followed by a description of the main challenges affecting electoral processes and democracy in the country, challenges believed to

direct or indirectly, affect political decisions of the citizens, particularly their electoral choices. These include the problematic legal framework; contested electoral governance; political intolerance and distrust, particularly between the two main parties; the weakening of opposition parties; increasing levels of abstention; the blatant lack of separation between state and party; and the high levels poverty and illiteracy. The chapter closes with an overview of all general elections that have been held in the country since 1994. The next chapter presents the results of the study, organised in four themes, following the four secondary research questions and the four theoretical approaches guiding this study.



## CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the empirical results of the study. The data is grouped in four themes. Each theme is related to one of the four theoretical approaches and four secondary research questions. The same process will be followed in the data analysis (chapter six) where the themes are integrated and interpreted according to the four theoretical approaches guiding this study. The table below highlights the theoretical approaches and a corresponding research question guiding the study.

**Table 3: Research theme and equivalent research question**

APPROACH/THEME	RESEARCH QUESTION
<b>Sociological</b>	To what extent do social factors such as ethnicity, language, place of origin, religion and age influence electoral choices? What other social factors determine voting decisions in Maxixe?
<b>Socio-psychological</b>	To what degree does party identification play a role in voters' choice in Maxixe?
<b>Rational Choice</b>	Does economy matter in electoral decisions? If yes, what economic factors have the most influence? Are voters concerned with the collective well-being or about improving individual living conditions? Do voters assess the incumbent based on what they have done or failed to do or on what they promise to do? How do voters punish or reward government performance?
<b>Cognitive Awareness</b>	Does political knowledge and information help voters in determining their voting decisions? If yes, what are the most important sources of information? How do voters select and use the information in their voting decisions?

Excerpts from transcribed interviews as well as from focus group discussions are used to augment the explanation of the themes.

### 5.2 DATA RELATED TO THE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

The main assumption of the Sociological approach is that voting is an expression of identity to a particular social group or a reflection of social cleavage existing in the social structure. With regard to this theme the question asked is whether factors such ethnicity, language, religion, age, family and community influence and rural-urban cleavage, known as important predictors of voters choice in African democracies, exert any influence in voting decisions in Maxixe.

With reference to ethnicity: Being an economic centre of the province Maxixe attracts people from different regions, resulting in a cultural and linguistic mosaic. However, two linguistic groups are predominant, the Xitswa and Gitonga. The majority of respondents interviewed chose to respond either in one of the two languages or in Portuguese, the official language of the country. Respondents affirmed having Gitonga or Xitswa as their home-language, but it was found that language does not constitute an element of identity. Locals accept they might speak different languages, but identification such as 'I'm Gitonga, he's Matswa' does not exist. The two linguistic groups are not assumed to form distinct ethnic-groups. The language does assume the position of ethnicity. In general, the notion of ethnicity is non-existent in Maxixe.

The inexistence of Gitonga or Matswa ethnic identity does not necessarily signify the absence of perception of differences between the two. One factor that triggers the perception of difference stems from the access and control of natural resources, principally land. It was reported that minor conflicts over land led to conflicts between these two groups. The Gitonga claim that they are the natives of Maxixe and view the Matswa as outsiders. The citation below from one respondent testifies this:

*Yes, there is common sense that Maxixe is land of good people, the Gitonga group. Matswa are originally from districts such as Homoíne, Massinga, Funhalouro, Panda, Mabote and Vilankulo, in interior of the province. They came here seeking refuge during the civil war, but they never returned to their place of origin, even after the war had ended. (P13)*

Most respondents shared the view that Xitswa speaking people were not originally from Maxixe. A local journalist with a good knowledge of the history of the district, who also came to settle in Maxixe city during the civil war, added that with the increasing urbanisation, people from surrounding districts, who initially came in as refugees during the 16-year civil war, later brought their relatives who had remained in the countryside to look for better living conditions. This created pressure over resources, leading the Gitonga to accuse the Matswa of taking their land and fruit trees (particular coconut trees). No official statistics were found, but respondents are of the view that in urban Maxixe the number of

Matswa has surpassed that of Gitonga; therefore Xitswa is now more widely spoken compared to Gitonga.

Animosities between the two ethno-linguistic groups date far before the civil war. Historically, the two ethno-linguistic groups occupied different social positions in the province, with the Gitonga considered as the more civilised and superior to the Matswa. This is because the Gitonga speaking people were the first to be in contact with European civilisation since the arrival of the first Portuguese explorer (Vasco da Gama) in 1498, while the Matswa are originally from the interior. The name Inhambane and Maxixe were given by Portuguese settlers but are originated from Gitonga language. The Gitonga always viewed the Matswa as ‘uncivilised’, uneducated, dependent on migration to South African mines, small scale agriculture and domestic work. The Matswa always worked for Gitonga as housemaids.

The anti-Matswa sentiment has not been publicly manifested, but according to a local reporter interviewed, a group of conservative Gitonga people requested the expulsion of the Matswa from the city, with the allegations of lack of civilisation, as the excerpt below confirm:

*In 1999 Mr X<sup>4</sup>, together with other Gitonga, wrote a public letter in a newspaper urging for Matswa to go back to their places of origin because they were the ones making the city dirty with informal commerce in the streets. They were less civilised, without toilets, farming pigs in their homesteads in urban areas. They are living in the margins of the bay, without toilets and destroying the coastline. They are the ones creating disorder and house breaking in Maxixe. (Extra 1).*

The perception of difference between the two was reported to have manifested in the political sphere. The internal election of a new Frelimo mayoral candidate for the 2013 local elections was tangled in a controversy which divided the party supporters into two factions formed along the two ethno-linguistic lines. The group composed of Gitonga party members, close to the outgoing mayor Narciso Pedro, a Gitonga, opposed the nomination of a Matswa candidate on the grounds that Maxixe belonged to Gitonga; therefore, it should not be governed by an outsider, a Matswa. The outgoing mayor was quoted by most respondents as having said that

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<sup>4</sup> Identity protected.

‘he couldn’t build a house to be occupied by a Matswa’ in a reference to the just officially opened new city hall built under his three terms of office. This was a clear indication that the Gitonga still looked at the Matswa as inferior, subjects of the Gitonga. The problem was only resolved with the intervention of party structures at provincial and central levels. The Matswa candidate ran and was elected mayor of Maxixe. This aspect was never of public domain because Frelimo has always portrayed itself as a party for all Mozambicans.

Still in the run-up for the 2013 local elections the MDM candidate tried to take advantage of the disputes within Frelimo cadres, claiming that, unlike the Frelimo Matswa candidate, he was the real ‘son of the land’ who therefore deserved to be elected. He even accused the Frelimo candidate of misusing his clan name to confound voters, but he did not succeed in mobilising the electorate to vote for him; and eventually lost the election. The call for Gitonga identity in elections fell in arid land.

The findings of this study do not suggest any indication of voters making their electoral choice based on ethnicity or belonging to a particular linguistic group. The landslide victories of Frelimo in all of elections since 1994 suggest that the existing or perceived differences between the two groups are not sufficient to form a cleavage likely to divide their vote. Studies conducted in Africa indicate that the place of origin of the candidate is an important predictor of voting behaviour. Voters tend to vote for the ‘son of their land’, with whom they share the same language and culture. There is also an expectation that in case he or she wins the election the region will become better off.

The study looked at the place of the origin of the two municipal candidates for the 2013 elections. The opposition MDM leader, Mr José Siniquinha, claimed to be originally from Maxixe, the son of the land, and belonging to the family known holding traditional leadership in Maxixe, the Ngoca family, while the other candidate did not hide that he was originally from another area, the Massinga district, an outsider. In a rally event ahead of the local elections, while the other members of the Frelimo party sang and addressed the gathering in Gitonga, Mr Simão Rafael sang and addressed the gathering in Xitswa.

In interviews, respondents clearly indicated that one of the candidates was not originally from Maxixe. But the ‘outsider’ Frelimo candidate was voted for and won the 2013 elections. In

response to the researcher's about the relevance of the place of origin in voting decision one of the respondents answered in the following terms:

*The place of origin does not count. As long as the candidate goes along with people from other regions, to avoid stigmatisation... also the party is responsible for modelling the behaviour of its candidate. (P13).*

The extract above reveals one important element that seems to be common in Mozambican politics. Political party structure seems to be much more relevant over individual characteristics of the candidate, particularly in Frelimo. This element buffers the influence of place of origin of the candidate.

In the run up for the 2014 general elections, the internal election of Frelimo presidential candidate was also problematic. For the first time in the history of Mozambique independent Frelimo nominated a candidate from northern Mozambique, from Makonde ethno-linguistic group, Mr. Filipe Nyusi. The first three presidents in independent Mozambique were originally from Southern Mozambique, from Tsonga ethnic group. The nomination of a candidate from Northern Mozambique represented a response to the long standing claims that the Frelimo leadership is predominantly composed of southerners.

President Filipe Nyusi won the 2014 elections with 57.03 per cent of the total votes. This result was lower if compared to the 63.7 per cent won by Guebuza in his first term, but higher than 53.31 per cent of votes gained by Chissano in the founding elections. As usual, the south voted in large numbers for Frelimo and Nyusi. This suggested that neither the place of origin nor the ethnicity has influence in voters' choice.

In fact, for the 2014 general elections none of the candidates was a southerner. When asked about the electoral implications of this difference, respondents in Maxixe clearly indicated that having a candidate originally from the other regions was not a problem, as long as he is nominated by Frelimo. Election results show that Nyusi and Frelimo won landslide majority in Maxixe as in the rest of the southern Mozambique.

Without pre-empting the interpretation of the results in the following chapter six, two important aspects are worth mentioning here. The first is that historically and particularly in

the last decades, the Frelimo government has been vocal about national unity, in discourse and initiatives such as the ‘National Unity Torch’ crossing the whole country to promote national unity. Responses such as ‘I voted for President Nyusi simply because he is Mozambican’ were common in Maxixe. Secondly, the law has no incentives for regionalisation.

Religion has been one of social cleavages believed to determine voters’ choice in elections. Lipset & Rokkan (1967) established that social divisions and historical conflicts between religion and secularism was one of the important cleavages influencing voter alignment. In chapter two it was highlighted that not all the traditional cleavages established in the Social Cleavage model could be found outside Europe. This study looks at religion with focus on whether belonging to a different denomination has any impact in electoral choice.

Maxixe is predominantly Christian, with Catholic and United Methodist Church (UMC) followers being the majority. Before independence the two denominations were allied to two different opposing ideologies, with the Catholic in service of the colonial state and the Protestants led by non-Portuguese missionaries. Protestants churches became a fertile soil for the development of black consciousness. The difference between the two denominations was quite strong in Maxixe because somehow Inhambane became the cradle of the UMC in Mozambique. In fact, most of Frelimo cadres, including the founder Eduardo Mondlane, were educated by the UMC in Inhambane. Because the UMC was first established in a Matswa region, outside Maxixe, Xitswa became the language of worship, while Catholics used mostly Gitonga and Portuguese as languages of worship. For being colonial alias Catholics were considered citizens of higher status compared to non-Catholics.

How does the difference of denominations and historical animosities between Catholics and non-Catholics influence voters’ choice today in Maxixe? The findings of this study show that religion does not form any cleavage likely to divide the electorate in Maxixe. Catholics and non-Catholics tended to favour Frelimo. As one respondent noted: *“I don’t think so. Here any candidate from any linguistic group can become a candidate. Religion as well has no impact in voting. Catholic and United Methodist Church have no problem.”* (P8)

There is one important element that needs to be referred to here to offer a better understanding of the situation. Following independence the Marxist Frelimo banned all forms

of religious practices and confiscated church infrastructures, including church buildings. So, Catholics lost the hegemony they had enjoyed during colonial period, but Protestants despite the fact that they had contributed significantly to the liberation of the country they were also banned. One intriguing element is that none of them showed grief. As a result, respondents from both denominations tend to favour Frelimo in elections.

Age has been an important variable for analysis in voting behaviour together with other variables such as gender, occupation, income and level of education. The findings of this study confirm the influence of age in voters' choice. Differences in social and political experiences between the youth (voters aged between 18 and 35) mostly born after independence and those older, those who experienced the difficult time during the colonial period, and during the one-party regime are reflected in the way the two age groups express their voting preferences.

Adults tended to be more conservative and the youth much more progressive and open to change. The vote of adults is much predictable in favour of Frelimo than that of youngsters who can attempt to try new waters. Adult voting choices were much more associated with Frelimo because it liberated them from the oppression of Portuguese colonial rule. Voting for Frelimo has always been a way of returning the favour.

The ties with Frelimo among adult respondents appear very strong that they looked at Frelimo as their saviour, provider, and father. The 'fatherhood' relationship was well entrenched in adults that they admitted never to vote for anyone else other than Frelimo, regardless of good conditions that others are likely to offer. The strong ties with Frelimo make adult voters easily ignore Frelimo wrongdoings, as the extract below show:

*You only have one father until you die. You can't choose a strange father only because he is rich. Once your mother shows you who your father is you can't change... I chose that candidate for being our father. We can't choose a father based on his appearance... He can be a blind or mentally challenged, but father is always father... Even if your father is blind you do not feel ashamed to hold and walk with him in public. Even if people talk nonsense he is your father. He raised and supported you with his blindness. It is a natural bond... Your father may be an irremediable*

*drunker, he will still be your father, you do not envy others for having a better father; you have to learn to like your father as he is. (P22)*

Being the ‘saviour’, ‘provider’, and ‘father’, voting for any other party than Frelimo would be an unforgivable betrayal that adults are not ready to be subjected to, as the two extracts below show.

*... Voting for a different party would be like betraying my parents that have been taking care of me since my childhood. (P13)*

*... Father is always father... Leaving a party that fought a lot for me now because of step-fathers would be a betrayal. I cannot do that. (P47)*

The sentiment of fatherhood sometimes is transmitted from others, as reported by a woman from Chicuque neighbourhood:

*I heard others saying who our father is. It is like a child born without knowing the father; others will show him or her who his or her father is. The same applies to me. Others told me who our father was and I believed. (P22)*

Adults have experienced hardships and different political transitions from colonial period, one-party regime, liberalisation of the economy and democratisation. They look up to Frelimo as being the one that uplifts them throughout all phases. In an interview, one young respondent confirmed that the majority of the adults in Maxixe look at Frelimo as their saviour in different historical phases of the history of the country. He stated the following:

*What I have observed is that adults from southern Mozambique, including Maxixe, tend to vote for Frelimo. These are the people who experienced the colonialism, the transition to independence and then the civil war and peace. They praise Frelimo for all these. That is why it has been difficult for them to join any other political party. Frelimo is considered the saviour. (P16)*

In contrary, youngsters lack reference of Frelimo’s liberation credentials. Furthermore, being age group mostly affected by current economic hardships, particularly unemployment, they



feel marginalised by Frelimo; they are therefore predisposed to search for another ‘father’ likely to take care of them. In the run up to the 2013 local elections, the MDM exploited the dissatisfaction among the youth to mobilise them against Frelimo. The youth responded positively. The majority of voters in MDM rallies in Maxixe were youngsters. MDM succeeded in some areas (see chapter four), but not in Maxixe. However, this epic moment did not repeat itself in the 2014 general elections; no apparent reason for the change.

The predictability of adult vote for Frelimo is also linked to the fear of the unknown. These are the voters who have experienced difficult times in the past fear moving backwards in terms of development. They are suspicious of the real intentions of opposition party leaders, who are regarded as poor, led by personal interests and incompetent and likely to be corrupted by the power. This uncertainty makes adult voters fear to take risks, as the following extract clearly shows: *“I’m afraid of changing and then things go wrong. Therefore, I prefer to continue with the same all the time.” (P19).*

A change for most voters comes with the fear of losing what they have accrued in life over time. Voting for any party other than Frelimo is viewed as taking the country backwards, back to ground zero, to hunger and starvation. The fear of the unknown is affecting even those with an average level of education as it was reported about a woman who had decided to vote differently, but ended up voting for Frelimo in the last minute:

*In my workplace my colleague told me that when she left home she had decided to vote for a party different from Frelimo because she is tired of Frelimo, but when she was handed the ballot papers she changed the mind, and voted for Frelimo. She said she wanted to try changes to see what will happen, but she got scared, fearing that the newcomer maybe even worse than the current one. (P7)*

However, some youth showed strong adherence to Frelimo that they inherited from their parents, as the extract below illustrates:

*I looked at what Frelimo did to my father. It liberated my father from forced labour and from corporal punishment. The freedom of my father meant my freedom as well. That is why Frelimo is in my heart. (P46)*

In reference to Frelimo being the one that brought peace, another respondent said:

*I voted for Frelimo because it brought peace... My mother used to tell me that they used to sleep in the bush because of war. That is why all the time I voted for Frelimo and I'm not thinking of changing. (P5)*

Adults indicated that voting for Frelimo was a way of recognising its efforts in bringing peace and democracy, following the 16 years of civil war. This goes in total contradiction to the fact that the peace agreement was signed by both Frelimo and Renamo. Adult voters prefer to assume that only Frelimo worked to bring peace in the country.

Another important aspect that reflected the difference of ages is the preference between party and candidates. Adult voters tended to vote for the party and its respective candidate, while youngsters showed a tendency of splitting their vote. Again, adults found it unconceivable to vote for Frelimo and a candidate from another party or the way round. Some adult respondents did not even know or never had imagined about that possibility. Therefore, since the beginning of democracy they always voted for the same party and its respective candidate; and they are used to do so, naturally and spontaneously: *"I voted for the party and its respective candidate... That is what always comes to my mind at the voting time."* (P32)

The chief argument for the majority of adults to vote the party and its candidate is to avoid confusion and chaos in the government. The quote below shows this:

*I voted for the candidate and his party... I didn't want to create confusion. Having one president from one party and the parliament dominated by another party creates chaos. To allow better organisation it is good to vote for the party and its candidate. (P27)*

Another adult respondent added:

*I voted for the party and its candidate. For me it does not make sense to swap, I didn't want to create confusion. Having a President from one party and then the parliament dominated by different party can create enormous confusion. I think it's*

*much easier and most correct to vote for the candidate and his party to make the governance easier. (P9)*

In reference to local elections another respondent said: *“I didn’t want to create confusion. It’s not easy to have good collaboration if the mayor is from a different party that forms the majority in the assembly.” (P20)*

Adult voters also avoid detaching the candidate from his or her party, in name of perfection. The metaphor below shows how deep the conception that party and candidate should go hand in hand is:

*Hmmm... No! Because I believe that a political party is always in line with its candidate. I wouldn’t vote for a political party and leave its candidate aside. It is like somebody who is interested in a suit but only buys the jacket and leaves the trousers. For one interested in suit he has to buy both pieces! (P21)*

The indivisible nature of party and candidate was also echoed by a prominent member of Frelimo, when in February 2015, a former cabinet member was quoted in the social and public media saying that Filipe Nyusi, the recently elected president of the republic, was insignificant without Frelimo.

On the contrary, young respondents, on the other side, did not see any problem in splitting their vote. The need for balanced power and to ensure accountability was highlighted as some factors taken into consideration. During interviews, some voters displayed a good level of political sophistication or knowledge. In a short answer a respondent justified its strategy with the following words: *“I wanted to balance power and ensure more accountability.” (P1)*

The last national parliament (2009-2014) was famous for lack of constructive debate, with Frelimo using its majority advantage to dominate parliament in what was known as dictatorship of vote. This is what young voters wanted to put an end to. They wanted to curb the dominance of the incumbent, as one respondent put it:

*My principle is that a strong opposition is needed to avoid dictatorship of the ruling party and benefit the entire nation. Personally I wouldn't like to see the change of government, but changes should be in the parliament. (P10)*

Adult voters praise Frelimo for 'saving' southern Mozambique from the violence of the armed struggle for independence. In fact, Mozambique became independent before the Frelimo guerrilla had reached the south. The armed struggle was only fought in the northern and central parts of the country. This reference does not exist among voters who did not experience the ten-year armed struggle for independence.

The Sociological approach postulates that voting decision is influenced by the social contexts in which voters live in. In this study, it was found that neighbours, friends, co-workers, school mates, local leaders, church mates, family members were most of the time referred to as having exercised a degree of influence in voting. In the domestic sphere family members can influence each other's decision, based on the position each one holds in the family. In African context a husband or a male member is likely to influence a wife or female member. This was confirmed in Maxixe, as the following statement reflects: *"I did talk to my family about how to vote. I asked her [the wife] to vote for my candidate and she accepted and I'm very sure she really voted for him."* (P34)

In some cases this influence assumes the form of an imposition as the statement below testifies:

*In my household we can't have two political parties. We all live under one party, which is Frelimo. When election time comes I tell them [members of his family] to vote for Frelimo and they accept. That vote is individual and secret doesn't work in my household, here we all have to live under Frelimo... My entire family vote for Frelimo. Our parents educated us to vote for Frelimo. (P17)*

Adults in Maxixe tended to be more involved in religious groups and other forms of social organisations; therefore, they were highly influenced by the social context they live in. For example, a woman respondent from Rumbane 3 neighbourhood revealed the followed:

*We are so many people with the same feeling; people from my church, neighbours, etc. therefore, most of my neighbours here we all voted for Frelimo. We all talked and decided that we should vote for Frelimo. (P11)*

In local government elections, the fact that candidates are locally based makes the voting decision much easier. Quite often, candidates have multiple personal relations with different voters or they are well known locally. The relationship with voters, be it family or friendship, plays a role on voting decision, as this respondent explained:

*For me it was easy because one of the candidates was of my relations. From the time it was announced that he was candidate I decided to vote for him. And I voted for his party as well. (P2)*

What can be said about the influence of age in Maxixe? The findings show that age forms an important cleavage in voting. Adults vote tends to be much more predictable in favour of Frelimo, while the youth vote tends to be more unpredictable. Adults tend to be much more conservative, voting for the same party from election to election and voting for the party and its candidate, while the youth, progressive, more independent, are more open to changing the party or splitting their vote. With close identification with the liberator, and more tolerant, adults fear changes, while youth show less affinity with the liberator, are less tolerant, and have a high sense of political efficacy; meaning that they believe in positive change, where they can play a part. Youth believe that political forces other than Frelimo are likely to deliver; therefore, they consider giving a chance to the opposition.

Lastly, the Sociological approach has considered the urban versus rural settings as forming one of the most important predictors of voting behaviour. Brito (1996) analysed this variable in the initial study of voting behaviour in Mozambique. This study covered both rural and urban areas of Maxixe. Respondents in rural areas complained of lack of basic services like water and electricity, while the urban respondents complained more about inflation and high cost of living. However, these differences did not seem to form a cleavage that could be reflected in the polls. Voters from both areas tended to vote for Frelimo. This might be caused by the smaller size of Maxixe district, in terms of territory, lack of a clear frontier between rural and urban areas, and lack of industrialisation. Factors explained in the original theory of social cleavage find no resonance here.

It is also important to acknowledge that the municipal government efforts towards expanding the provision of services such as water, electricity, health and education to rural communities. During fieldwork this researcher witnessed the opening of a new small water distribution system and electricity in Mônguè as well as a new police station, tarred road and the building of a secondary school in Agostinho Neto. This reduced the feeling that those living in Maxixe city benefited the most from the municipality services.

### **5.3 DATA RELATED TO THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**

For the Socio-psychological approach, voting decision is determined by emotional attachment to a political party. Is there voting decision influenced by affective ties to a particular political party in Maxixe? It is a fact that elections results of both local government and general elections give a large advantage to Frelimo party. Does this suggest evidence of strong attachment or party identification with Frelimo as defined by Campbell and his team in the “American Voter”?

The results show the following: firstly, the number of respondents who affirmed holding a formal affiliation to a political party in Maxixe is very low. Formal affiliation refers to citizens who hold party card member, pay membership fees and attend political party events regularly, including electoral campaign activities. The most intriguing aspect is that even respondents who reported voting for the same party in every election did not have formal membership with that particular party. Secondly, almost all those who affirmed being members of a political party identify with Frelimo, the ruling party.

A thorough analysis of data shows no evidence of party identification, as defined in the traditional literature. It must be emphasised here that it is the partisanship resembling that defined in the American Voter that lacks in Maxixe, but respondents indicated various forms of attachment, some with a kind of durability, as it will be detailed in the next paragraphs. One of the possible reasons for lack of party identification is the novelty of multiparty democracy in the country. With the exception of Frelimo, other parties are only two decades old, with no sufficient time for a crystallisation of party identification. Furthermore, with the exception of Frelimo and Renamo, most of the so-called smaller political parties have been

operating in difficult financial and material conditions that prevented them from functioning efficiently (refer to chapter four).

A number of factors were reported as determining to certain degree their vote choice. Some have long-term effects (vote for the party used to; voting influenced by the position of the parents), while others are of short-term effects (vote for the party with good performance or for the party which best responds to interests of the group).

The most common argument for closeness with Frelimo was the simple fact of being used to Frelimo, particularly among adults who have crossed different historic phases with Frelimo. A number of metaphors were used to express the closeness with Frelimo such as comparing the relationship with Frelimo to that of a couple: ‘husband and wife who have been living together for some time they hardly think of parting’. Another metaphor is that of cell phone number: ‘people owning a cell phone number for long time hardly change it, regardless of the advantages that another service provider might be promising’.

Voters who have been voting repeatedly for Frelimo since the founding elections have developed a habit element, most probably encouraged by the comfortable victories of Frelimo and its candidate in previous elections. One respondent justified his closeness and vote for Frelimo with the following words: *“In all elections I vote for the same political party. As I said, I have been with this party for a long time.”* (P13)

For some respondents, the force of habit makes them to develop a strong attachment with Frelimo, making it difficult for them to think of change, as put by one respondent here:

*I have been with this party since 1977... It will be difficult for me to change because that can destroy my life. I have been voting for this party since the beginning of democracy.* (P26)

The long-term co-existence with Frelimo and the repeated choice in the previous elections turns voters blind to other political issues that would impact in their choice. Voting for Frelimo becomes a kind of affirmation rather than choice.

The notion of ‘parental relationship’ with Frelimo is well entrenched, particularly among adult voters in Maxixe. This is linked to the fact that Frelimo is looked at as the liberator from repressive colonialism, the peacemaker that ended the 16 years of brutal civil war, the historic and only party that can lead the destiny of the country. The level of loyalty is such that voters do admit not to vote for any other party in the near future. Furthermore, the parenthood linking Frelimo to voters makes them forgive its faults, as the following quotation exemplifies: “Have you seen a child forsaking the father simply because is ugly or disabled?” (P3)

Some respondents reported that their strong loyalty to Frelimo has been learnt and inherited from their parents since their childhood, though they are not necessarily formally party members. The following passage clarifies this: “*Our grand-parents, our parents are part of this father. I’m part of this party because my parents were also part of it.*” (P22)

Some respondents exhibited a kind of situational rather than pre-dispositional identification or loyalty to Frelimo. Based on a kind of evaluation, some respondents’ strong loyalty was attracted by the solid structure, organisation, and nationwide coverage and mobilisation, as the extract below shows:

*Frelimo is well structured from top down, with people at all levels. They are present in their neighbourhood, schools, and state entities; therefore, they are able to mobilise people. Frelimo used schools all over the country and directors were responsible for disseminating the information to their pupils to convince their parents to vote Frelimo. The same with the secretaries of the neighbourhoods.* (P8)

Although the place of origins of the historic Frelimo leadership did not come up clearly as influencing the strong attachment with Frelimo, is an important element to consider. Party interests attuned to the needs of a particular group can develop a kind of party attachment, though not fixed. Historically the south has been considered privileged by Frelimo leaders, compared to other regions, making the voters less threatened. The strong alliance with Frelimo works as buffer to other factors that would influence the choice of candidate. The presidential candidate of Frelimo in 2014, Filipe Nyusi, despite being from the north, and another ethno-linguistic group, was easily elected in Maxixe. As a respondent said:



*The change of candidate does not mean necessarily the change of party activities. The continuity is guaranteed because the new candidate will not work alone, he will work with a team of people who have been there. They will be guided by a working plan. He will simply lead the team. It is not the individual who counts, but the party leadership. Those already in the team will guide him and transmit their experience.*  
(P46)

Another respondent said: “Whether the candidate was from Centre or North, whether he was Matswa or Gitonga didn’t matter to me as long as he is nominated by Frelimo.” (P34)

Partisanship weight seems to surpass the quality of candidate. In other words, the quality of candidate counts lesser than the party, as the following quotation illustrates: “*I didn’t know Simão Rafael [now elected mayor] that much, but because he was Frelimo candidate I voted for him.*” (P11).

Another responded said:

*Frelimo is big machinery likely to promote anyone. Even if one day they decided to field me as candidate I can win elections. It is the party that promotes the person or candidate, differently from Renamo that is attached to its candidate. The year that Dhlakama will decide not to contest will mark the end of Renamo. I observed the Renamo campaign and I could notice that it was focused on the figure of its candidate. Renamo members, including MPs, are always attached to their candidate.* (P8)

One important remark that came up in the data is that respondents with close ties with Frelimo tended to decide their voting choice earlier since they did not need to do any evaluation, neither of party programme nor of candidate qualities. For example, one respondent identified as P6 told this researcher that he decides even before knowing who the local candidates were, guided by his strong connection to Frelimo.

So, what explains low identification with the opposition? Although the affirmation of closeness of the majority with Frelimo is consistent with election results, the lower to almost non-existing identification with opposition parties does not necessarily mean that voters in

Maxixe do not support opposition parties, particularly Renamo and MDM. The key factor highlighted was the growing political intolerance by the ruling party. As one of the respondents clearly put it:

*If you identify yourself as Renamo member you will be ostracised, if you are a public worker you will be transferred to a remote area, your family will be humiliated. Here you must always wear the jacket of Frelimo... you will never be promoted at work. You must always say that you are Frelimo. Teachers are the main target. (P2)*

In fact, Frelimo has been exercising surveillance both at local and national levels making people less comfortable to identify with the opposition. The large control of the state apparatus put Frelimo in position to reward and punish citizens; and citizens are not willing to suffer exclusion from the state benefits. The affirmation of identification with Frelimo may be strategic to avoid being hurt.

Another argument that came out strongly against voting for Renamo is the stigma of war. The memory of atrocities of the civil war is still fresh in Maxixe and Renamo is blamed for this. The successive defeats and elections boycotts with allegations of fraud were also mentioned as reasons that make voters stay away from Renamo. As one respondent said, people want to support a party that goes into competition and not one that boycotts elections.

Without any clear reference to ethnicity, the fact that Frelimo is known for historically being founded by people from the south, it is believed that the geographical proximity of Maxixe to the leadership based in the capital city Maputo ensures close political ties, as the extract below attests:

*Maxixe is closer to the capital, therefore easily influenced by the decisions taken at high level by elected presidents... We voted for Frelimo because we are close to Frelimo leadership. Those close to the opposition leaders (Centre and North) they voted for the opposition. (P9)*

## 5.4 DATA RELATED TO THE RATIONAL CHOICE APPROACH

The Rational Choice approach advocates that voters are rational actors whose voting decisions relate to the evaluation of the contesting political party's programmes, government performance or qualities of the candidates. Voters only vote for the party or candidate whose programme is closer to their personal interests.

The first aspect that looked at in this study was whether evaluation of party programmes and quality of candidates was used as criteria in the decision. The findings indicate that party manifestos or candidate profile are not a determinant in voting decision. One of the possible reasons is the limited accessibility. In Maxixe it was found that electoral programmes or manifestos are less accessible to voters for scrutiny, except in small pieces of canvassing information that is disseminated in rallies or through media and pamphlets.

The number of respondents who affirmed having their decision based on party programme was quite small and mostly educated youth. However, even those youngsters who affirmed that their vote was based on party programmes confirmed to the researcher that they did not get access to party manifestos as such, except small extracts of what the party intended to disseminate through the public media and rallies. The extracts below highlight this:

*When the campaign started it is when I started to think about who to vote for. I listened to what candidates were saying and then decided whom to vote. (P33)*

*My decision was taken in the last two days reserved for reflection, but I collected a lot of information from electoral campaigning. (P14)*

It was also found that besides electoral campaigning, the information used to assess parties and candidates originated from other sources such as the background history of the party and social networks, as indicated in the extract below:

*... I looked at the manifesto [through electoral campaign] and historical background of each political party. I also heard from other people, including my work colleagues. (P16)*

Voters whose decisions are based on party or candidate evaluation tend to have their mind set before the polling;

*I decide well in advance, after analysing the profile of the candidates and of the contesting parties. I only go to the voting station to mark who the best is. The best for me is someone who promises to deliver visible things and not false promises. (P19)*

However, there are some voters who despite having access to information via electoral campaigning still have limitations in making their decisions. These are the voters who decide in the last minute, as indicated below:

*My decision came right on the booth. But I had a minimum idea before leaving home to the polling station... I observed the discourse during the electoral campaigning. (P32)*

The 2014 general elections were remarkable in the way voters affirmed having used candidate evaluation and electoral campaign to make their decisions. These elections were highly competitive, particularly between the three presidential candidates. Some voters who initially seemed to have a consolidated position on their choice changed their mind, based on the observations from the electoral campaigning. One respondent explained me in the following terms:

*For these elections particularly I took quite a long time to decide whom to vote because the other candidate [Dhlakama] started his campaign later because he was still in hiding. But when the man appeared I listened to his discourse and I ended up changing from the youngster candidate [Daviz Simango] to him [Dhlakama]. (P23)*

One aspect that the study detected is that respondents who affirmed having been influenced by the electoral campaign were mostly influenced by the images of the number of people behind each candidate in rallies, not necessarily by the content of the message.

Do voters in Maxixe use assessment of government performance to make their mind in elections? The research shows that to some extent voters are sensitive to government

performance. In general, the assessment of government performance is negative. Issues such as unemployment, high prices, high cost of living, poor service delivery, corruption, the widening gap between rich and poor, low wages, wages gap between government officials and ordinary citizens, crime and dysfunctional justice, use of state resources for political or personal benefit, poor living conditions, nepotism in public institutions, political intolerance against opposition parties, political instability and outbreak of fresh fighting between government forces and Renamo residual forces, dysfunctional parliament dominated by the historic party (Frelimo) and regional imbalances between urban and rural areas, were highlighted as some negatives. One respondent expressed their anger through the following statement:

*... The ruling party for example, it talks about continuity. We ask ourselves: continuity of what? Of corruption, of unemployment and all other bad things? ... It is clear for everybody that the government is not delivering. (P15)*

This is in reference to the political slogan of Frelimo which says *Renovação na Continuidade* (renewal within a context of continuity).

Respondents were too vocal in expressing their dissatisfaction, particularly in the early phase of the research, before the 2013 local government elections. Younger voters were particularly dissatisfied with the levels of unemployment, corruption, nepotism and bribery for one to get a job in public institutions. They affirmed in a strong note that the government, both at local and central levels, would be punished in the polls.

In most cases the dissatisfaction was based on the sentiment of unfulfilled promises, as expressed in the two extracts below:

*... in the first elections I voted for one party, but later on I saw that I was wrong because the electoral promises didn't come through. If they had kept at least 50 per cent of the promises I would have continued voting for that party to be able to complete the rest (50 per cent) in the next term, but I lost hope. (P21)*

*We are tired of Frelimo; we are tired of its false promises! (P28)*

If the level of dissatisfaction with the incumbent is remarkable then why is it that Frelimo still wins both local and general elections with landslide victories in Maxixe? During the fieldwork respondents reported a number of aspects that work as buffer to their dissatisfaction and therefore contribute to more tolerance of Frelimo. These are related to the 1) evaluation of some achievements; 2) existence of scape goat for the other failures. 3) high level of tolerance linked to the historic past of Frelimo ('father', saviour, peacemaker, etc.); and 4) lack of reliable alternatives to Frelimo.

The excerpts below summarise the feelings of most respondents as to why they still trusted voting for Frelimo despite their dissatisfaction, particularly adult voters:

*I looked at the previous performance and I liked what they have done. It is true that they didn't do everything perfect, but it's understandable. Even in a household no one is likely to meet all the needs of the entire family... I have been living here since 1982. We had neither electricity nor water, but today we have it. Honestly I can't complain that this is little. The government has done something. (P25)*

*The party has done the minimum to ensure acceptable development and standards of living conditions and democratic tolerance. (P13)*

*I'm not happy with them, but at least some time they used to do something good for me. They are like mouse, they eat your skin and they blow so that you don't feel the pain. (P5)*

Voters in Maxixe do not have a clear distinction of the differences between the responsibilities of the central and local governments. This is probably due to the fact that both spheres of government are occupied by the same party. However, in some cases voters had a clear indication of the work done by the local government. One positive evaluation that most respondents highlighted was the positive performance of the local municipal government. Narciso Pedro, the former mayor who served Maxixe for three terms, was praised for expanding residential areas, distribution of water and electricity. One respondent put it this way:

*Looking at Maxixe, before having running water people could not live in this neighbourhood, but because now we have water, electricity, people have now access to internet, watch international TV... that means development to me. (P8)*

In another interview, a young voter explained his voting context in this way:

*In 2009, for example, we had serious problems of water shortage in our neighbourhood. When the municipality started piping water all the residents got excited. Popular emotion influenced my decision. People were saying it is better to vote for this because he has brought water, he has shown that he can deliver and we are sure he will deliver more in future. (P14)*

For some voters, Frelimo deserved to be rewarded not only from what it has done after the introduction of democracy, but mostly because of how it governed the country throughout the troubled moments in its history.

Frelimo will continue enjoying the advantage of being liberator for some years to come. This is still fresh in the minds of some voters in Maxixe. The other contributing element for Frelimo to be seen as the ‘messiah’ has to do with policy implications of the measures adopted in the past. The first years of independence in Mozambique were not smooth. Besides the civil war that erupted in the second year of the independence (see chapter four), the massive exodus of Portuguese settlers left a vacuum in the public sector, but also in the production sector, associated with the cyclical drought resulted in a deep food crisis which hit mostly of southern Mozambique. In addition to that, under the communist regime, Frelimo government adopted policies and measures for egalitarian redistribution of resources, including food. *Lojas do povo* (people’s shops) were created, but due to scarcity of food, including bread, citizens had to go through long queues to purchase some food. These measures had negative implications and still in the memory of the people in Maxixe. This situation ended with the introduction of economic reforms and opening up of the market in the mid-80s.

The most intriguing part is that the food crisis, long queues and all consequences were not perceived to be created or at least associated with the performance of Frelimo. It seems that

voters attribute this suffering to external factors, but they did not mention them. Frelimo only ‘appears’ as the one that uplifts the country out of hunger, as the following citation illustrates:

*Frelimo lifted us from suffering. We used to queue for food and other goods, but Frelimo worked hard to change the situation. Nowadays you can get whatever you want, as long as you have money. It is Frelimo that took care of me from my childhood up to now... Frelimo is the only party that should govern the country in order to improve the living conditions in the country. I don't want to go back to the past of suffering in the queues due to food shortage. I would prefer to have this party in power until I die. I recommend to the rest of the people to keep Frelimo in power. We are living better within our families thanks to Frelimo. (P17)*

These respondents prefer to leave Frelimo in power to carry on with the projects of development that it has started. Interrupting the good progress may halt development.

The gratitude to Frelimo in this regard is again shared by some younger generations who have been informed about the good deeds of the party. In an interview one young voter who reported having voted for Frelimo explained his reasons in the following way:

*My mother used to tell me that during the Samora Machel period there was scarcity of food and other products. Frelimo changed this situation. Nowadays if you have money you can buy whatever you like... This is what makes me like Frelimo. I will never change. (P5)*

The level of tolerance to Frelimo is also associated with the perception of existence of scape goats for other failures. Voters attribute most of the misfortunes to external factors such as the problems facing the global economy and devastation caused by the 16-year war. In her attempt to minimise the problem a woman asked the researcher to point one single country without unemployment in the world, to justify that what is happening in Mozambique can or is happening somewhere. So, she did not see a reason for punishing Frelimo because of economic problems like unemployment.

One particular aspect that this study brings up is that voters referred to use the punish-reward model to assess parties that have a direct influence in Maxixe. This is the case of the MDM,



the third important political force in Mozambique. At the time of the local government elections in 2013, MDM was controlling two important municipalities, Beira and Quelimane in central Mozambique. Soon after winning these municipalities MDM gained the sympathy of the majority of Mozambicans, particularly youngsters, due to the positive changes occurring in these municipalities to improve living conditions. The ‘fever’ of good performance in municipalities under the control of MDM in Beira and Quelimane influenced the voting in Maxixe. A young shopkeeper, who revealed that he had voted for MDM in the local elections said: “I looked at the performance of the party [MDM] in municipality under its control in Beira and Quelimane and I was hoping that the same would happen here.” (P23)

Another young man, a street vendor, said: *“In Beira for example, we now have good roads, hospitals, ambulances. I vote for MDM because of what it has done there. And I’m sure MDM will continue doing better.”* (P28)

In an interview, a young woman told me that the youth in Maxixe had voted for “traffic lights”, meaning that with MDM in power Maxixe would be modernised, with traffic lights, good sanitation, good roads and other services like those introduced in Beira and Quelimane municipalities.

The Rational Choice model says that voters can assess the incumbent based on what they have done or failed to do or based on what they promise to do in case they get re-elected. In Maxixe, what counts the most in voting decisions? The study found no clear cut answer; in other words, it cannot be assumed that voting in Maxixe is retrospective and prospectively based. The two forms of evaluation co-exist.

A number of respondents, particularly those with a positive assessment of the government performance, seemed to take into consideration what the government has done. Issues such as expansion of residential areas, distribution of water and electricity, new schools and health centres were taken as good achievements that encouraged rewarding the ruling party for. One respondent put it this way: *“I like to base my decision on what I see, not in promises that are still coming...”* (P25)

People rely on what they already have than on promises. One common justification for that was the lack of trust in politicians. Politics is not a fair game, they said. Experiences of un-

accomplished promises in the past resulted in the distrust of politicians. One respondent used the following metaphor to express his disbelief: *“Politics is like a man proposing a woman; he will never say I’m bad or violent person; he will always promise good things.”* (P25)

Another respondent added: *“Most of the candidates come up with a lot of promises because they want to get the post, but at the end they are likely to fail to deliver.”* (P24)

Because of these bad experiences of empty promises voters only believe in what they see.

The general mistrust in politicians does not necessarily mean the existence of prospective vote. In Maxixe, this study found that there are a number of respondents with strong belief of a better future. This is in most cases influenced by a kind of party identification. Frelimo supporters strongly believe that Frelimo is likely to deliver in future. The common argument was that people simply need to be patient and wait for their turn, because it is impossible for Frelimo to satisfy the needs of everybody at the same time. These voters bear a strong hope that Frelimo is likely to perform well in future; and therefore deserves another chance.

For the latest local government and general elections there are also voters who were dragged by the expectations that contentious internal nominations of candidates within Frelimo would trigger a better performance by their candidates. The argument was that both candidates (mayoral and presidential) after elections would need to work hard to convince not only the general electorate, but also the party membership, particularly the leadership, that they deserved the internal election; that they are capable of or are equipped with managerial competence.

Some of the good expectations for a better future were fuelled by positive experiences. This suggests that they looked back to move forward, for example, the positive evaluation of the performance of the outgoing mayorship in Maxixe. With clear reference to what they called the ‘job well done’ by the outgoing mayor, Narciso Pedro, they believed that the next mayor would follow the path or even do better than the previous one, as the statements below suggests:

*I voted for continuity. I considered the positive performance of the previous mayor. I knew that Simão Rafael was going to take off from where Narciso Pedro [former mayor] had left. (P8)*

Another respondent added:

*I voted for the one I trusted. My trust came from the fact that the candidate promised to continue with what the previous one had started. I preferred continuity from what I have seen than voting for a new person in whom I am not sure whether he will deliver or not. (P19)*

The Rational Choice approach also stipulates that voters can assess the incumbent based on their personal or family well-being or on the evaluation of performance of the incumbent in the economy in general. For this study, without downplaying the importance of improving personal conditions, respondents generally, showed interest in having public services rather than individual living conditions improved. Citizens want to see improved access to tertiary education, health facilities, expanding electricity and water supplies, as well as other infrastructures such as roads and transport facilities. The general perception is that once public services are in place, it will be reflected in the living conditions.

In theory, for voters to vote rationally they need to have clarity of available alternatives or options likely to replace the incumbent and benefit them. Does the persistent voting in Frelimo, despite dissatisfaction, signal the perception of unavailability of alternatives? This study established that this is one of the reasons, together with the issue of party attachment. The following excerpt reflects the double feeling: “*Voting for another party would look like abandoning your own home without knowing where to go.*” (P13)

This means that people vote persistently for Frelimo to manifest their gratitude for being their ‘saviour’, but at the same time they do so because they have not seen any better offer or other credible alternative.

Furthermore, voters in Maxixe find themselves in a dilemma caused by two uncertainties: the first and the most important factor is associated with the control of the economy. In Maxixe region the general belief or perception is that the economy of the country is in the hands of

Frelimo leadership or businessmen associated with it. Therefore, removing Frelimo from power is seen as likely to create an economic havoc likely to drive the country backwards to hardship times. Secondly, Frelimo is not good party, but unlike others, it has given them the little they already have at the moment, something they are not sure of if any other party takes over power. So, they prefer to keep what they have already gained. Voters prefer the devil they know than the angel that they do not know.

Voters fear to take risks, as the following extracts clearly shows: *“I’m afraid of changing and then things go wrong. Therefore, I prefer to continue with the same party all the time.”* (P19).

The fear for change is also associated with the perception of the fragility of the state apparatus and fear of a troubled political transition due to the likelihood of Frelimo sabotaging the process, as well elaborated by one of the respondents in the following excerpt:

*We have been with Frelimo since 1975. There is a lot or MoU that have been signed [national and internationally] since then... My fear is that, given that our state is not yet consolidated, when a different government takes over power will find no archive to start from. If we had consolidated state change wouldn’t be a problem because the new government would find all the necessary documentations to start from. I can surely say that Frelimo as a party is well structured than the Mozambican state itself.* (P4).

Obviously this perception is based on what has been reported somewhere on the continent, the experience of transition from colonialism into independence and even the change of government within the same party.

Does the justification of lack of alternative hold in a democracy of around sixty registered political parties? The study found that in part, yes. In general, opposition parties in Maxixe are perceived to be weak, hungry and poor, disorganised, without serious electoral programmes, no convincing promises or even logical promises. The perception of weakness and unlikelihood of electorally challenging the main contender in the region (Frelimo) make voters refrain from looking at them as available alternatives.

Despite the fact that Renamo is considered one of the biggest opposition parties in Africa, voters in Maxixe think that it is a poor political party, without financial resources. Voting for Renamo would mean taking the country backwards, taking people back to ground zero, to hunger and starvation, as stated below by one of the respondents:

*... Then I started imagining the same in case Renamo wins elections, because Dhlakama has nothing to give to us. That is why I decided to vote for Frelimo to avoid changes. Frelimo has its own issues, but better to keep it in power than going back to the stage of hunger. (P7)*

Another argument that came out strongly for not considering Renamo is linked to the stigma of war. The atrocities attributed to Renamo during the civil war are still fresh in memory of most people in Maxixe. Most respondents interviewed had a relative or somebody known killed in the Homoine massacre (attributed to Renamo). Like in most parts of southern Mozambique (refer to chapter four), unarmed civilians had their organs amputated, kidnapped, raped, recruitment forcibly, homes raided, small farms and livestock raided and stolen, particularly in rural areas and surroundings of Maxixe. In fact, the majority of citizens fled their rural areas to settle in urban Maxixe. People in Maxixe do not trust Renamo because they think it was the cause of their disgrace, as the extract below indicates:

*We lost most of our beloved ones due to war, even in the last armed conflict; that is why we don't love Dhlakama. Even when one day turns to do good things I will never want him because he killed a lot of my beloved ones. (P17)*

The perception that Renamo is a violent and unreliable movement is not only associated with the past, but there are perpetual fears that Renamo could draw the country back into war, in case it wins elections:

*Others say they suffered a lot because of Renamo. Some say they don't vote for Dhlakama for fear of losing jobs, access to food, as he is likely to go back to war and the country will go down to ground zero. (P29)*

The other perception is that Renamo is a terrorist organisation and a source of conflicts, as the extract below testifies:

*My grandmother says she doesn't see any reason to vote for Renamo or MDM... she looks at Renamo as terrorist and MDM as a party of youth without enough experience to rule the country. This makes it difficult for elders to vote for other parties. People look at Renamo as a political party that always create conflict and political tension with the unique purpose of going back to war to destroy all what has been achieved. They do not look at it as a party that seeks to build democracy. Renamo is blamed for all bad things happening in the country. (P16)*

Renamo does not constitute a viable alternative allegedly because voters in Maxixe do not sufficiently know what its future plans are, in case it wins elections, as it is stated below by one of the respondents:

*I don't think of voting for Renamo because don't know what their plan to govern the country is...I prefer Frelimo to somebody who I don't even know what he thinks in his mind. Maybe after winning elections Renamo is going to give a gun and order me to go to the bush; I don't know. (P5)*

The perception of managerial incompetence is also contributing to a low perception of Renamo as an alternative party to vote for. Even the youngsters who indicated availability to 'taste new waters' they preferred to have Renamo well represented in the parliament than to conquer administrative power, as the quote below indicates:

*Renamo is still not ready to govern the country. Therefore I never wanted Renamo to win the presidency, but for it to get equal number of MPs with Frelimo in parliament to improve governance in the country. (P16)*

If Renamo is out of consideration as a viable alternative due to the bloodshed, what about the other political parties that are not associated with war? One common argument is that these political parties have nothing to offer in case they win elections. Secondly, they are not known in Maxixe. Being electoralist parties, without a local representation, these parties only appear on the eve of elections:

*The problem is that the smaller parties don't do anything to make themselves known. They don't conduct any electoral campaigning. In a country with high levels of illiteracy it is important for political parties to come out to be known. I know about these political parties because I am educated, but I can't vote for them because they never come out to tell me what their political agenda is. They don't work to be voted, meaning that even when I vote for them they will not do anything for my satisfaction.*  
(P14)

Thirdly, they are taken as less serious and are considered a threat for the development of the country, as the citation below:

*Others only appear during electoral periods; therefore they have difficulties to score votes because they come from nowhere and no one trust that they can rule a municipality. How can they find out what are the local problems? That is why the electorate does not vote for those coming from nowhere.* (P41)

The MDM particularly is not completely out of the picture of being considered as an alternative at least for parliament; however, the party loses some ground for putting more emphasis on youth. Voters in Maxixe do not buy the idea of handing the country over to immature citizens.

In general, almost all smaller parties fail to mobilise the majority of voters who reside in rural areas because they focus their mobilising efforts in urban areas. Some show up a few times in the area just to justify the use of public funds allocated for the electoral campaigning. In Maxixe these parties are considered to be without any intention of winning an election, at least at local level in Maxixe.

## **5.5 DATA RELATED TO THE EVIDENCE OF THE COGNITIVE AWARENESS APPROACH**

According to the cognitive awareness approach, political participation and electoral choices are highly influenced by the level of political knowledge that voters bear. And political awareness is proportional do the level of media exposure, level of education and interest in politics. Four sub-themes emerged from the data analysis. These are: sources of information;

political knowledge; interest in politics and electoral processes; and participation in politics/electoral processes.

### 5.5.1 Sources of information

The information collected was based on the following sample question: *how do you know about what is going on in Maxixe and outside?* While answering, respondents were also directed to reflect about political knowledge or public affairs, and most particularly about electoral processes in Maxixe and in Mozambique.

Despite its limited penetration, the public media (TV and Radio) was highlighted as the most important source of political information. Among the public media, television was widely mentioned as the most important through news, televised debates, and political advertisements. Three TV stations are openly accessible (open signal) in Maxixe, namely the state owned Mozambique Television (TVM) and the private owned SOICO Television (STV) and Miramar Television. All the three stations broadcast from the capital city, Maputo, in Portuguese. TVM has time slots to broadcast provincial contents daily from local studios delegation in Inhambane city, using local languages. Most respondents affirmed that they came to know of the candidates and their respective contesting parties through TV news or political advertisements.

During first phase of the fieldwork, TVM and STV were pointed out as the most preferred. However, the study found that the distribution of preferences between the two channels varied with age. Youth tended to lean towards STV, for considering it more informative, balanced, progressive, and free from censorship. As one respondent put it:

*Independent TV (STV) is the most preferred source of information... because issues and news are discussed openly, without censorship... Public debates are very well structured and the talk show guests are much more impartial than in the official channel TVM. (P23)*

In the contrary, youth looked at TVM as biased towards the government, less critical, striving to be politically correct, serving as propaganda machinery for the ruling party to manipulate the public opinion. However, this sentiment was not shared by adults, mostly pro-Frelimo, who preferred TVM for being the oldest, and therefore much more serious and informative,



and more patriotic than other stations. It was considered patriotic in the sense that it broadcasts news and information in line with the incumbent and defended continuity in name of national unity.

Interestingly, during the second phase of the fieldwork, in October 2014, the trust on STV had reduced dramatically among youth. This was after the former president's daughter (Valentina Guebuza) became shareholder at SOICO Media Group (owner of STV station) and Frelimo party shareholder at Miramar TV. Most important investments are controlled by businessmen close to the ruling party.

The finding that television is the most important source of political information may be surprising for two reasons. Firstly, despite the visible effort of the local government to expand the electricity grip, a considerable number of households do not have electricity. Secondly, not all households have TV sets at home. What takes the television to become the most important source is that households without TV sets at home always approach the neighbours to access the information. Furthermore, the information received from TV is easily disseminated within the community through mouth to mouth.

The radio was another source of political information mentioned. The government owned radio station (RM - Rádio Moçambique) is the most listened to in Maxixe. RM has a nationwide coverage through its provincial sub-stations broadcasting in local languages. This radio broadcast most of information of public interest like elections and other political events. Besides RM, there are three local community radio stations, one broadcasting from Maxixe town (Rádio Progresso) and the other two broadcasting from neighbouring districts of Homoíne (Rádio Arco) and Morrumbene (Rádio Milénio), but these are more dedicated to entertainment than news and public affairs.

Newspapers were regarded as the least important as a source of information, mostly due to less accessibility. All newspapers (daily and weekly) are published from the capital city, Maputo, 500km away from Maxixe and are sold in few small outlets, in town, at a price relatively high for an ordinary citizen. To overcome the problem of accessibility some use their cellular phones to access internet (Facebook), as reported by a recent university graduate in the following quotation:

*Newspaper is costly and it is only available in town. To access journal and look for job advertisements I normally buy a 50 Metica's airtime and convert it into data bundle which allows me to access internet and get wider access to news for a couple of days. This costs me lesser than going to town to buy only one paper. (P37).*

Youth tended to have more access to newspapers, with the interest to get informed and follow analysis or view point on important political affairs, and also to look for job offers. Nevertheless, the few respondents with newspaper reading habits favoured private newspapers for their impartiality and neutrality.

Civic education programmes and electoral campaigns have also contributed a part in informing citizens. Most respondents admitted that they came to know about elections through civic education campaigns on TV, radio, rallies and door-to-door campaigns. The same strategy is used by electoral parties and candidates, which allows voters to acquire more information at very low cost. During electoral campaigning political parties and candidates are allocated free airtime in public media to publicise their political manifestos. Other than that, news and debates about political activities of candidates and their parties tend to dominate the media during electoral campaigning.

Findings in this study also show that interpersonal communication is a powerful source of political socialisation in Maxixe. A considerable amount of information is shared and exchanged within the community, neighbourhood, family members, church, friends and co-workers. As shown in the previous paragraphs, the information generated from other sources such as television and radio is channelled or disseminated through interpersonal communication.

Workplaces, markets and streets became privileged spaces of exchange of information of any kind. Being the economic hub of the province and situated along the “vertebral spine” of the country, the EN1, Maxixe is dominated by informal commerce, with different types of merchandises sold every corner. Vendors spend considerable amount of their day time in in the market and streets than at home, with limited access to television or radio or less interaction with other family members. In these spaces interpersonal communication is a privileged source of information, as one woman noted: *“Unfortunately I don't have much time to interact with neighbours because I spend most of my time here in the market.”* (P42)

During the day they interact with each other about different issues, including public issues. These places also become an extension of public media, as illustrated below:

*All what I see on TV I always comment on with neighbours or friends in the market. I collect the information from TV news to those without TV sets at home; it is a way of helping them. (P20)*

Another important finding in relation to sources of information is the existence and popularity of ‘xitike’ a kind of community financial saving scheme very common in southern Mozambique, where members of the same family, neighbours, co-workers, church goers, friends, and so on, come together periodically. This becomes an important space not only for financial and bonding purposes, but also for the sharing of information about what is going on in the country or in the world. The interpersonal communication also occurs in schools between teachers and pupils, churches and community/local leaders. People living in urban and rural establish a strong bond of communication through different means and at the same time exchange information.

### **5.5.2 Political knowledge in Maxixe**

How much do voters know about politics in general, and about democracy and electoral processes in particular? Given the qualitative nature of this study, the intention was not to come up with sophisticated knowledge indexes or statistical measurements of political knowledge, but to determine the general level of knowledge participants hold about politics. Simple questions probed knowledge about politics, factual political knowledge about political parties, public figures (at local, provincial and national levels), political institutions and their functions (parliament and municipal assembly), rights and roles of voters and other relevant public issues. Generally, results reveal that voters in Maxixe have limited knowledge about politics, particularly among adult citizens, most of them illiterate or with low levels of education.

The first aspect explored was the level of knowledge or understanding of democracy itself. The findings reveal three categories of voters in Maxixe. The first category corresponds to citizens who, despite participating in almost every election, have limited knowledge of what

democracy is and how it operates. A considerable number of respondents reported that they have been voting since the first elections, but they do not understand what democracy is. Responses such as the following were very common among adults:

*I really don't know the importance/meaning of elections. I go to vote simply because the government says we have to. (P31)*

*I don't know anything about elections; I just know that when time comes I go to vote... I don't know what type of elections. (P42)*

Despite having no sufficient statistical evidence, the study shows that adult women had the lowest level of understanding, compared to men. In an interview, a young citizen confirmed what was found in most of the interviews and gave the following observation:

*People in general, particularly the elderly don't have a good understanding of what democracy is and how it works... Others simply know that they must register and vote; but democracy goes beyond that. It entails accountability, transparency... (P41)*

The prevailing notion of democracy in Maxixe is associated with casting of the vote, without having a clear understanding of reasons for or the issues at stake, as highlighted below by one of the respondents:

*People simply vote, but they don't understand political issues. When election time comes people are mobilised to go to and vote, but they don't have a deep understanding of why to vote. (40)*

The low level of political knowledge associated with high levels of poverty results in political manipulation of voters by political parties, as stated by one of the respondents:

*People are attracted to t-shirts, caps, and sometimes bicycles... they don't vote for a particular political party for being the best to rule the country – they vote as a way of thanking them for that 'important gift', with expectation that next time will receive gifts again; they don't understand that it is electoral campaigning generosity just to*

*fool voters... The five years of suffering are supplanted by the 45 days of electoral campaigning because of t-shirts and capulanas<sup>5</sup>. People are like children; they are easily fooled by a sweet. (P15)*

In most cases the lack of knowledge about basic aspects of democracy such as the secrecy of vote makes people live in permanent fear from the false threat of being sanctioned, losing state benefits or having their children deregistered at public schools in case of voting for the opposition.

The second category of voters is that of respondents with a distorted vision of democracy. These view democracy as malicious, a source of suffering, chaos, instability, political tension and disturbance to peace. This sentiment is common among adults who lived under the one-party regime. If given a choice, they would prefer to go back to one party system. In this regard some participants expressed the following views:

*Having so many parties causes suffering. It is preferable to have only one. (P17).*

*Democracy is bringing chaos now. If that was not the case, democracy would be the best model for the people to hold power. (P4)*

The third category is that of respondents with a reasonable understanding of democracy, mostly youngsters and educated voters. These are the ones who, despite recognising the existence of shortfalls, relate democracy to freedoms, participation, transparency, accountability and good governance. It is important to mention that not all respondents that pronounced these words (freedoms, participation, transparency, accountability and good governance) could elaborate on the meaning. This group also associated democracy with checks and balance between the ruling party and the opposition political parties, and improving of living conditions, as shown below:

*Democracy and elections are important because opposition parties work as watchdogs. This forces the ruling party to keep improving the livings conditions of the citizens, which is good. (P6)*

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<sup>5 5</sup> African cloth (in Portuguese)

Other aspects that the study wanted to find out included the extent voters know anything about the electoral system, elected bodies and public figures and the functioning of public institutions. Voters also have a limited knowledge about how governments (electoral system) are elected. The knowledge about the functioning of the electoral system in Maxixe is close to zero.

At the end of each interview, all interviewees were given an opportunity to ask whatever question they wanted concerning elections, and a 40 year old woman, who has been voting since the founding elections and who indicated that she was ready to vote for the coming elections, asked the following question: “...*how are we going to know who the candidates for the Municipality councillors are?*” (P19).

This is symptomatic lack of the basic knowledge of the electoral processes such as the type of election, how the candidates are fielded, how results are determined.

The knowledge about political parties seemed to be average. Respondents knew only the three big parties (Frelimo, Renamo and MDM) out of the sixty registered. These parties are most probably known by the virtue of being represented in the national parliament, which makes them exposed to the media. Secondly, the three have a physical presence of branches in Maxixe. The knowledge of existence of these parties is not extensive to knowledge of their individual political ideology or what each party stands for.

Political figures elected individually are well known than those elected for collegial organs such as the parliament and the local municipality assembly. Respondents easily knew who the mayor was, the governor of the province and the president of the republic, than local councillors within Maxixe municipality or MPs representing Inhambane constituency in national parliament, as the excerpt below show:

*... although they are representing us locally, personally I don't know any municipality councillor... after elections councillors are confined in Chambone area [urban area of Maxixe] and they don't go out to hear the electorate. We only see them in elections period like now, when they diffuse their electoral promises, but after that they disappear. (P8)*

In relation to MPs representing Inhambane constituency in the national parliament, one respondent said: *“I know some of the Inhambane MPs in the parliament, but immediately after elections they move to Maputo; but they say that they represent Inhambane.”* (P8)

Despite the reduced knowledge about the local MPs, the level of understanding of the basic role and functioning of the national parliament was surprisingly high compared to understanding the local municipality assembly. Some respondents affirmed having decided their vote based on the pretention of the balancing the parliament:

*I had never voted for Renamo before, but looking at the political situation [the dictatorship of vote in parliament] I decided to vote for it in order to increase the number of its MPs in parliament. The 50/50 situation between Frelimo and Renamo would be better for me!* (P18)

Another respondent, in justifying why they decided to vote for Renamo, added:

*Well, as I said earlier our state is still in the making. In the last term the parliament was badly used or managed. The organ became a ‘Yes Man’ to the executive and the president. This led to a conflict that is still prevailing. My perspective was to change this state of affairs, to impose an order in the parliament so that only legislation that is to benefit the majority passes. My preference was to have a 50/50 situation in parliament, or at least have a minimum difference of two MPs between Frelimo and Renamo. That is why I am not that happy with the current results. The 50/50 situation would force the president to respect the will of the people.* (P4)

One possible explanation to why the parliament is well known resides in the media exposure of the work of the parliament. During fieldwork, important debates were taking place in parliament on electoral legislation to enable peaceful local and general elections and on mechanisms to end political tension between opposition Renamo and government. Some sessions parliamentary sittings are broadcast live on the public television. This increases the awareness of the citizens about what is happening in the parliament.

The inefficient civic education was noted to be another factor influencing low levels of political knowledge. The first phase of fieldwork research happened three months prior to the 2013 local government elections. The civic education is done through media outlets as well as civic agents on the ground, using local languages and public rallies. However, on the ground the researcher only witnessed a couple of civic education agents doing door to door campaigns, not well resourced, visibly exhausted for working under a scorching sun, demoralised with the low pay that still arrives late. As a result, until few weeks before elections sizeable number of respondents had no clear information about the type of elections and the date. This was confirmed by one respondent in the following words:

*... We are having elections in less than a month, but some people are still not sufficiently informed about them. They ask whether they will be general or local elections, and where they will take place. (P4)*

During interviews, demands for permanent civic education not only to educate citizens about when, where and how to vote, but also as an important mechanism to reduce the prevailing political distrust were heard. The official message of the civic education has been simplistic, with slogans such as ‘vote to choose your leaders’ or ‘your vote counts’.

### **5.5.3 Interest in politics in Maxixe**

*Political knowledge* is known to be an important driver of *interest in politics* and both form an important predictor of electoral *participation*. Citizens interested in politics are most likely to try to be informed and follow political events and eventually engage in political activities. In the field, questions were asked to depict the degree of i) interest in politics and ii) the level of engagement in politics through discussion of public affairs or casting the vote.

The findings indicate that the level of interest in politics is generally low. This became evident in the earlier stage of the fieldwork with the number of interview refusals to participate in the study. Citizens with low or without interest in politics are less likely to accept to be interviewed about politics or any other related subject. Most citizens approached, particularly adult women, refused to be part of the study after hearing that the study was related to politics and elections. They associated politics with negative attributes described by



statements such as; “*I don’t want to get involved into confusion*”, “*let me in peace*”, “*I gain nothing from politics*”, “*politics is for others*” and “*There is a kind of hiding political game that it is better to leave for politicians*”.

People look at politics, elections included, as waste of time because their personal involvement in it is unlikely to have direct positive effects in their lives. Therefore, people prefer to focus on their immediate concerns in their daily lives. Some respondents, taking a comparative advantage they said that on the voting day they prefer to stay at home doing their domestic activities or going out to the market to sell their goods and earn a living than wasting their time by voting, as highlighted below:

*...there are some people who do not bother with politics; they say they don't gain anything from participating in politics; they say that they earn their living independently from political intervention. These people do not participate in elections. They prefer to keep themselves busy with their domestic affairs. They consider going to vote as wasting time. (P25)*

Politics is a dangerous and dirty game that should be left for politicians, as a respondent explained: “*Politics is a dirt game; it can destroy your life. Therefore, it is important to stay half in and half out... I don't get fully involved.*” (P25)

Participation in elections or the turnout cannot in any way be understood as signalling interest in politics. For example, numerous respondents indicated that they got registered to get the voter’s card, but not to vote. In a context where ID system is less functional, a voter’s card has been widely accepted in different public services, including in the banking sector. In 2013, there were widespread rumours that voters’ card would be a requisite to access public services and employment, as shown below:

*I got registered for the sake of my children because I heard that only those who can produce voters’ card will be attended at hospital. But I’m not going to vote. Voting for whom? (P5)*

As a result, even those with no interest or intention of casting their vote ended up registering, as noted in the words of one respondent below:

*I confirm the rumours. For me particularly looking for job, I had to quickly register in order to get my voters card because I heard that in case of public job offer only those registered will qualify. I also heard that some banks demand voters' card to open an account. (P37)*

The inexistence of alternative forms of participation through civic movements or activism and the biased nature of the information disseminated by the state media make things even worse, as explained by one of the respondents in the passage below:

*Politics in Mozambique doesn't make any outsider happy and interested in following it. Something is not right in Mozambique. For example, in the TVM talk shows, guests tend to hide the reality of the country and defend unreal things... they drive people to liars. I'm not well into politics because I get angry when I watch. (P43)*

The youth and educated respondents showed a degree of interest at least in following closely the debate about public affairs. However, some respondents, particularly public workers, get involved or show interest in political issues through being forced by circumstances, as one public worker put it below.

*You know what, being a public worker, in Mozambique we are forced to belong to the ruling party. I ended up being a member of Frelimo party and I hold the member card... Initially I didn't even want to hold any party member card, but later on, to avoid conflicts in my institution that can prejudice my carrier I applied for it... In the last voter registration I was chosen by my school principal to be Frelimo's delegate to monitor the voter registration... Frelimo has cell in the school. I didn't volunteer myself to be party monitor, I even refused to give my personal details to fill in the list, but my school principal got them from my personal file. Then I was deployed to be party delegate in the November polling. (P3)*

Interest in politics has been a survival strategy and the leaning is towards the ruling party – a patronage. Public workers particularly have realised that the show of interest in politics and showing support to incumbent is an easy way for promotion. One respondent explained using the following words:

*In Maxixe what I have seen is that some are only interested in membership card. I have seen that teachers, particularly those furthering their studies, tend to approach the party leadership to make their promotion easier when they finish their studies.*  
(P8)

One important indicator of interest in politics is active involvement in political discussions. In both rural and urban Maxixe few people noted that they debate about politics. Politics remains a sensitive issue to be discussed in public. This is in part a reflex to limited freedom. In the extract below, a voter explained the feeling:

*People are not free. People live in a permanent fear. We feel like controlled by a chip device. People supporting the opposition are afraid to express themselves. Only those supporting the ruling party can talk freely and praise the government... We are living in a prison, but we haven't discovered that!* (P15)

In the last years Frelimo has reinforced its surveillance mechanisms in all spheres, making people to have fear talking about the government, particularly when it comes to criticising it. Public workers contacted noted that at workplaces discussions are limited to non-sensitive issues. The two quotations below provide evidence:

*... There is a reluctance to talk about politics with friends because you never know their political position.* (P44)

*Being a public worker I cannot open myself up to anyone because if I do so and comment about bad things happening here I'll be in trouble. If I make a negative comment about the government and that reaches my school principal I will be called in... people are not free to speak their mind here.* (P43)

#### **5.5.4 Participation in political/electoral processes in Maxixe**

Participating or not in elections is the first decision a voter takes before even thinking about whom to vote for. What motivations make voters participate or abstain from electoral

processes in Maxixe? This question is explored in the following two sub-sections, starting by a presentation of a summary of the findings on what motivates participation and then on what makes others abstain.

#### ***5.5.4.1 Participation in elections in Maxixe***

The literature on electoral studies upholds that participation in politics or electoral processes is positively linked to knowledge and interest in politics. However, findings of this study cannot confirm this, since the large majority of respondents who affirmed participating in elections have neither sufficient political knowledge nor interest in politics. A considerable number of respondents that reported having voted in almost all elections held since the establishment of multiparty democracy could not show a clear understanding of the importance of vote. A young man confirmed this when he said: *“People simply vote, but they don’t understand political issues. When election time comes people are mobilised to go to vote, but they don’t have a deeper understanding of why to vote.”* (P40).

This was supported by another respondent, who said: *“When elections come I just go to vote..., I just go to vote for the sake of going... I don't know anything about elections; I just know that when the time comes I go to vote.”*(P42).

Others participate in response to political pressure, particular for those somehow linked to the state apparatus, as it was reported by one young participant:

*Over 100 teachers from my school were forced to register and vote. In the following day after elections we all had to show a painted finger with indelible ink to our school principal to confirm that we really voted and he was ticking on the list. This is not hearsay; personally I was part of the group... Those who didn’t have their finger painted had to answer to why they didn’t vote.* (P43)

Most adults, particularly, affirmed that they voted to avoid problems with authorities. Voting is assumed as a mechanism for adherence to social norms:

*We are like goats or cattle. When they release you from the kraal you must go to grassy. If you don't grassy they will call you back to kraal before eating. When they say go to register, we go; when they say don't go, we don't. Who are you to say I don't care about voter registration? If you don't go you will suffer the consequences later on without you realising the reasons. We just go to register but we don't have a better understanding of what for. We just follow the orders. (P42)*

Participation in elections was also understood as a means of ensuring peace and stability in the country, as stated below by a woman who justified why she voted: “... *We are interested in leaving peacefully in the country...*” (P22)

However, it would be an error to generalise and assume that all citizens in Maxixe participate blindly. Some voters' participation is motivated by the knowledge of instrumentality of the vote, as explained by this respondent:

*People have to keep in mind that they have the power to enthrone and to remove them [referring to political leaders] from their position through vote. If you don't vote others will put in power the person or party that you don't like... The power lies in the people. That's why during election period politicians look for us to convince us to register and vote for them. We should take advantage of the power of one day that we have to go and vote. (P3)*

Another respondent said:

*I think people do not realise the importance of such a decision. Voting is an important decision. During electoral campaigning I felt so important when I saw all candidates looking for me to convince me to vote for them. How can I miss this opportunity? I pity those who really miss this opportunity. (P9)*

Furthermore, other voters voted because they were aware of the power of their decision to punish incumbent, as stated by a respondent: “*At school I have learnt that vote serves to sanction bad leaders. That is why I say it is important to vote.*” (P13)

Another group of voters said that they voted to fulfil their civic duty and to enjoy the internal good feeling or psychological satisfaction of a mission accomplished. Participation, for this group is something rewarding, as a young man commented: “*Make people feel much patriotic. It is duty.*”(P9)

That vote is a civic right and a duty has been the principal message of the civic and electoral education campaigns by the Mozambican EMBs.

#### ***5.5.4.2 Abstention in Maxixe***

Mozambican democracy is remarkably characterised by decreasing turnouts from election to election (refer to chapter four). Maxixe is not an exception. For example, Shenga (2013) found that participation in local elections in Maxixe is always below the national average. The most worrying aspect is that in Maxixe the youth is less interested in voting, including the new cohorts entering the electorate.

If institutional factors such as the requirements for voting are more relaxed and the proportional system are known to facilitate massive participation (Karp & Banducci, 2007; Sinnott, 2003) then what is taking voters away from polls in Maxixe? In a context characterised by fear to talk publicly about politics, reasons behind non-participation were difficult to capture. Voters do not disclose their apathy, probably to avoid sanctions by authorities. The tendency of over-reporting the turnout was also observed. No one wants to be seen as abstainer. To go around this obstacle the researcher used indirect questions like: *what do you think are the reasons behind voters abstaining?* This allowed respondents to elaborate freely.

Other reasons for absenteeism included i) lack of understanding of the importance of democracy and vote, ii) perception of fraud, iii) lack of trust of the work of EMBs, iv) dissatisfaction with democracy or government performance were cited. The issue of the perceived lack of importance of the vote came to the fore, as it was presented by several respondents in the following quotes:

*When elections come I just go to vote, but they already [the political leaders] know the results. My vote means nothing; I just vote for my own satisfaction, but my vote*

*doesn't count because they select amongst themselves. I just go to vote for the sake of going, but results are known. I don't know anything about elections; I just know that when the time comes I go to vote. (P42).*

The perception that democracy does not yield expected outcomes was noted as another reason for the abstention. Respondents who associated their participation to democracy and elections with tangible benefits, service delivery, end of poverty, improved living conditions cited disappointment, dissatisfaction and frustration as the main reasons for low turnout. No changes in voters' life, no vote. The two citations below reflect the feeling of most of the voters:

*... I have been looking for job and I can't find one; that is the reason why I don't vote... I prefer to stay at home because voting or not it is the same... What is the point of going to vote and come back to sit at home? (P7)*

*Other colleagues said that they were not going to vote because even voting there is no change. (P2)*

In a democracy operating in an extreme poverty, the fight against poverty and improving service delivery (education, water, health services) have been the main electoral issues or messages of politicians in both general and local government elections. In most cases, in their electoral campaign they raise the voters' expectations high. Electoral promises are not met at times; if they are fulfilled, they may be delivered in a slow pace, resulting in disillusionment and consequently withdrawal behaviour from electoral processes. The extract below evidences this:

*Here in Maxixe the lack of implementation of the promises is a problem. In the following elections voters ask themselves "why voting while the promises made in previous elections have not been kept?" I have heard people in my area talking about this. They say: they promised this and that, but they didn't put in practice; next time I'm not going to vote. (P47)*

Dissatisfied voters prefer to abstain over voting for the opposition.

If promises not kept repeatedly, voters may abstain, as shown in the extracts below:

*Candidates have different ways of canvassing. It is like we men. When interested in a woman we lie to her saying that we are rich, we are going to buy car, train, aircraft, while sometimes we can't afford. The same happen with politicians when trying to get vote. (P39)*

Another respondent put it this way:

*I don't think this situation will change in near future. When Chissano won elections our expectation was raised; he delivered what he could. When Guebuza came into power we expected even more, but only few things. We have the third one now. I'm no longer having any hope. (P21)*

Politicians are perceived to be liars, who only talk good when they want to be elected. At election time street vendors can do their business freely, but immediately after elections they are mistreated, as a single mother explained below:

*In 2013 I didn't vote because I was angry. I don't gain anything from voting every time I do it. The municipality police are always chasing us away from the streets to prevent us from doing our business freely. I'm a single mother; I have no means to bring up my children. You vote for them and immediately after elections they start chasing us away and confiscating our merchandise... (P5)*

Closely linked to the previous point is the perception that politicians are working for personal benefit. The general understanding is that voting means electing people to benefit themselves or to “eat alone” as was repeatedly highlighted in interviews.

*Here in Maxixe they say why vote? Why follow long queues? Why vote knowing that the elected candidate will eat alone? Let me do my domestic work. (P14)*

*They are going to eat alone and when they come here they lie to us. (P3)*



Lack of jobs, corruption and nepotism were reported as the other factors for abstention. Unemployed people or looking for jobs, mostly youth, showed little interest in participating in elections:

*Because I have been looking for job for long time, and I haven't found it. Why bothering with voting? Voting for whom? ... Before voting I have to know whom to vote for and why voting. Maybe if I had a job I would bother myself in trying to find the importance of vote. (P7)*

The perception of poor performance of EMBs was advanced as another reason for abstentions. CNE and STAE are perceived to be biased, partial and non-transparent in their functioning, and are less trusted organisations. The extracts below testify this:

*Election results do not reflect the choice of the people. The CNE is party lined, not independent. Frelimo infiltrated all spheres of the society. In the last elections some result sheets disappeared or were falsified.... It's not true that most voters from the South vote for Frelimo. There are so many people who are unhappy, frustrated, although they are not free to show their anger. There are so many people who voted for the opposition, but this is not reflected in the results. The landslide results in the south are cooked. (P21)*

Voters have the understating that their vote is not decisive. Their understanding is that the vote is unlikely to influence the outcome, and it does not work to remove leaders they dislike because results are decided by the CNE. One respondent confirmed this by saying the following: “*People feel the need to change, but they are still not mindful that only their vote can produce the desired change.*” (P3)

The phenomenon of ‘winner known in advance’ is another aspect that was found to discourage participation in Maxixe, as shown in the extracts below:

*People do this because they are not excited with elections. Elections should be taken as a sport competition whereby the teams start at 0 score mark...What happens now is that before the match starts one team is winning with ten points. It doesn't work.*

*Practically we go to the field just to formalise the competition because we know the winning result will be from ten onwards. (P15)*

*Some say that they are not going to vote because they already know who the winner will be. This is the main factor for abstention. Voting or not they already know who will win the election. So, voting or not will not change anything in terms of how the country or municipality will be governed. (P18)*

In some cases abstention was caused by technical problems related to the performance of the EMB. During the voter registration process conducted ahead of 2013 and 2014 elections some voters were turned back home several times because voter registration machines kept malfunctioning; registration staff was not well trained or were always on strike over payment. This in part made the registration difficult, slow, and consequently several voters ended up not getting registered. A respondent who happened to have been a voter registration officer noted that: *“Some people were getting crossed when they were failing to register in two three days...”* (P9)

The respondent added that the limited resources (time and human) also created human fatigue that may have led to errors, as she explained:

*We also had instructions to explain each voter why he or she was registering, but it was not possible to explain to each and every voter because we were concentrating on taking the next voter to meet the target. (P9)*

The perception that Frelimo is unlikely to be removed through vote makes some voters stay away from polls, as the following extract shows: *“Others say they are not going to vote because Frelimo will be the winner always”* (P4)

The immovability of Frelimo from power is perceived to be associated with fraud; therefore, voters find no point in wasting time and effort to go to polls, as a respondent explained below:

*Polling agents involved in the stuffing and electoral manipulation are local and when they go back to their community tell others about all the tricks (including how much*

*were they paid for the wrongdoing). How those who voted for the losing candidate feel? They see that even voting for their preferred party the results will remain the same. As result, they prefer to stay at home. (P21)*

Voters whose candidates win successive elections feel encouraged to participate in elections compared to those whose preferred candidates always lose elections. In Maxixe, those voting habitually for the opposition, with the hope of achieving changes, have been showing fatigue and finding participation in elections as an useless exercise, as explained by a respondent in the following passage: *“Even voting in big numbers for a particular candidate or party, it keeps losing, all the time.” (P18)*

This sentiment is fuelled by public comments by the opposition leaders and by the media about possible fraud in elections (see chapter four).

The idea of eternal losers abstaining was supported by another respondent in the following extract:

*After observing that their vote is not valid, after several defeats, people end up losing their expectation. They get frustrated with the results... Those who voted for the party B feel discouraged to go and vote again. (P21)*

There are also voters who preferred not to vote, to avoid regretting later. Respondents said that it was useless to vote knowing that their favoured candidate will be defeated, as it has been happening repeatedly.

Theoretically the fact that Mozambique has a fragmented party system should be a push for higher turnout. However, smaller parties have not been consistently engaged in politics. In Maxixe, they are almost inexistent, which limits available alternatives. Electoral competition is dominated by the two major parties. So having high numbers of parties is meaningless to the Mozambican democracy because they are not seen as viable political alternatives.

Insecurity during the polling day was highlighted as one of the reasons keeping the voters away from polling. Since the first elections in 1994 the period before each election has been surrounded by uncertainty, fear and threat of boycott, particularly by the main opposition

party, Renamo, spreading fear of among voters. In 2013 particularly, Renamo threatened not only to boycott, but also to prevent local elections from taking place in all municipalities and threatened to attack whoever was going to turn out to vote.

Poor representation was also highlighted as contributing towards abstention in Maxixe. Voters do not feel adequately represented by the elected councillors at municipal level, the same with members of parliament. Councillors are looked as parasites, as the following extract indicates: *“They come here looking for our vote and then they forsake us!”* (P3)

Respondents with acceptable political knowledge pointed fingers at the electoral system in place, the party list PR system. Most of the time councillors are much more interested in pleasing the party leadership to secure re-election than pleasing the electorate. This makes some people to reject the political system.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the summary of findings from the fieldwork. The data were grouped in four themes. Each theme is related to one of the four theoretical approaches and to one of the four secondary research questions. The data were collected through one on one interview, focus group discussions. In the next chapter the themes are integrated and interpreted according to the four theoretical approaches guiding this study.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter interprets the empirical findings presented in the last chapter, based on the theoretical approaches discussed in chapter two and other existing literature in the field of election studies in Africa in general and in Mozambique in particular, giving the respective parallels and comparisons with the findings of this study. The table below highlights the theoretical approaches, corresponding research questions as well as the working assumptions guiding the study.

**Table 4: Theme, research question and working assumption**

APPROACH/THEME	RESEARCH QUESTION	WORKING ASSUMPTION
<b>Sociological</b>	To what extent do social factors, other than ethnicity, for example, language, place of origin, religion and age influence electoral choices? What other social factors determine voting decisions in Maxixe?	Ethnicity, known as the most important cleavage determining voters' choice in Africa, does not play any role among voters in Maxixe. This is because historically, ethnic groups have not been strongly politicised in Mozambique.
<b>Socio-psychological</b>	To what degree does party identification play a role in voters' choice in Maxixe?	Like in most of emerging democracies in Africa, party identification does not determine voting behaviour in Maxixe. Landslide victories of the Frelimo in Maxixe are more associated with the historic ties, habituation and lack of valuable alternative rather than party attachment  The strong support to Frelimo in Maxixe is also driven by the high levels of patronage and social control on the ground;  Voters vote for Frelimo to gain rewards or to avoid sanctions
<b>Rational Choice</b>	Does the economy matter in electoral decisions? If yes, what economic factors have the most influence? Are voters concerned	Economy matters in determining voters' choice. Voters use elementary indicators such as unemployment, inflation, corruption in

	with collective well-being or about improving individual living conditions? Do voters assess the incumbent based on what they have done or failed to do or on what they promise to do? How do voters punish or reward government performance?	public institutions, lack of water and health facilities to assess government performance; however, despite widespread levels of dissatisfaction, voters do not use their vote to punish the government.
<b>Cognitive Awareness</b>	Does political knowledge and information help in determining their voting decisions? If yes, what are the most important sources of information? How do voters select and use the information in their voting decisions?	Limited access to information has contributed to low levels of political awareness. However, unlike the cognitive awareness main assumption that states that informed voters participate effectively due to high levels of interest in politics, in Maxixe better informed voters tend to abstain from politics.

## 6.2 DISCUSSION BASED ON THE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

After deciding to participate in elections the second most important decision voters take is who to vote for (Keulder, 2000). This decision can be determined by social, political and economic conditions (Bratton *et al*, 2012). In other words, a vote can express social identity, party attachment or an evaluation of the party candidate. In polling, voters can also express their sincere or strategic choice or still exercise choice based on negative motivations (Keulder, 2000). There are also voters who simply pick the candidate or party that is immediately available before them.

According to the sociological approach, despite being an individual act, voting choice is still highly influenced by the social structure in which the individual lives; therefore, voting is taken as an expression of an identity with a particular social group (Andersen & Heath, 2000; Evans, 2004; Punch, 2006; Catt, 1996; Achen, 2002; Green, Palmquist & Schickler, 1998; Greene, 2004).

With regard to the discussion of the findings based on the sociological approach, the analysis of this study privileges the social cleavages sub-model. The main reason is to follow the path of other African scholars (Bratton *et al*, 2012; Erdmann, 2007; Erdmann, 2007a; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Keulder, 2000; Horowitz, 1985) who have used a modified original social cleavage model by introducing ethnicity as the main cleavage. This was in response to the

difficulties in using the four cleavages found in Lipset & Rokkan (1967). It is believed that the historical context in Africa was never conducive for the emergence of such cleavages.

The discussion takes into consideration how social categories such ethnicity, religion, age, region and social context influence voting behaviour in Maxixe. It begins with the main debate around African elections about the role of ethnicity in influencing voters' choice. Are elections in Maxixe an ethnic census as defended by Horowitz (1985) or the salience of ethnicity is simply assumed, but not proven (Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008; Erdmann, 2007; Fridy, 2007).

Empirical results indicate that voters in Maxixe view themselves in non-ethnic terms; that is, they do not vote based on ethnicity. Firstly, the notion of ethnic group seems to be lacking in Maxixe. Despite the wide acceptance that they do speak different home-languages (Gitonga or Matswa) they hardly identify as Gitonga or Matswa in the context of ethnic group. This study contradicts previous studies conducted in Africa that have found the influence of ethnicity, but rejected its primacy over other factors in determining voters' choice (Basedau *et al*, 2011; Bratton *et al*, 2012; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Fridy, 2007). If looked at in isolation from the rest of the country, ethnicity in Maxixe does not exert any influence in voting behaviour. According to voters in Maxixe, only those from other regions of the country, particularly the central and northern parts, are likely to use ethnicity in their choice; so, ethnicity only applies to others. This sentiment is close to the one found by Bratton & Kimenyi (2008).

If the two ethno-linguistic groups have had tensions in the past, particularly over resources, why do these differences fail to divide them in their voting choice? The theoretical answer is that social conflicts can only become political positions if political elites link the existing intergroup conflicts into their party ideology and convert them into party positions (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Evans, 2004; Andersen & Heath, 2003; Brooks *et al*, 2006). However, the historical trajectory of Mozambique did not have enabling conditions for the development of the sentiment of ethnicity.

Following independence, in order to build the projected state-nation and national identity, Frelimo destroyed all other forms of identity, including ethnic and regional identities. Literally, the slogan used was 'kill ethnicity and tribalism to give birth to the nation'

(Chichava, 2008; Shenga, 2008; Pereira, 2007; Pereira, 2008). Therefore, all manifestations of ethnical and linguistic particularities were abolished to promote national unity. The Portuguese language was adopted as the only national medium of teaching and language of communication in public offices.

Secondly, even after democratisation, the existing legislation does not allow for the formation of ethnic or even regional-based political parties (Hanlon, 2009; Brito, 1996), making it difficult for ethnicity to be politicised. All parties are required to be national in scope. Thirdly, unlike most African countries, Mozambique has no clear ethnic geographic boundaries (Brito, 1996). Looking at Maxixe particularly, one will see that the claim by Gitonga that they are the ‘sons of the land’ is no longer valid. The influx of Matswa from the interior due to the civil war and as economic migrants created intermarriages between the two ethnolinguistic groups, and individual identity became diffused. Maxixe belongs to the two groups. Maxixe houses people from different parts of the province or the country, including citizens from central and northern regions.

Thirdly, when it comes to voting, the Matswa and Gitonga differences, be they regional, linguistic or level of civilisation are smothered by what can be called the regional ‘super identity’—the southerners. One remarkable observation is the fact this regional identity is openly spoken of among the people of Maxixe. This researcher did not come across any respondent who had affirmed to be a proudly southerner; however, the sentiment of regional identity, in comparison to others from central and northern Mozambique is present in the mind of the residents of Maxixe, and this influences strongly the voting behaviour. This sentiment is entangled within the historical identity of Frelimo. Southern Mozambique is the place of origin of most party leaders and it has been regarded as more privileged, economically and politically, when compared to the central and northern regions of the country. This sentiment becomes stronger when Frelimo power is threatened, like in the 2014 general elections.

Lastly, with time, the social position of the Matswa ethno-linguistic group improved. Matswa are no longer looked at as uncivilised, uneducated; but they have gained a prominent position and conquered political and economic space through increased levels of education and hard work. They are no longer maids, and occupy important positions in public sector, including a mayorship.



Election results in Maxixe show a clear landslide victory for Frelimo one election after another. However, this study shows that it would not be correct to assume that voters in Maxixe vote for Frelimo simply because they are Gitonga or Matswa. This reflects clearly the situation described by Basedau *et al* (2011), Erdmann (2007) and other scholars that it might happen that a majority of voters belonging to a particular ethnic group and residing in a given district or region express their sympathy with the same party in every election, without necessarily voting based on ethnic cues.

Studies conducted in Mozambique showed a clear regional distribution of the vote across different parts of the country; however, these studies did not find any evidence of the role of ethnicity in structuring party choices (Brito, 1996; Brito, 2010; Pereira, 2008; Pereira, 2009). That Shangana ethnic group in the south is closer to Frelimo and Ndau ethnic group in the northern Mozambique is closer to Renamo. It is a simplistic claim based on the fact that the leadership of these two parties originates from each one of these two regions respectively (Pereira, 2008; Brito *et al*, 2005). So, results of this study corroborate with other studies in the country and on the continent (Keulder, 2000; Posner & Simon, 2002; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005).

That ethnicity does not determine the vote in Mozambique does not mean that the sentiment of exclusion was never present in Mozambique. Brito (1996) and Chichava (2008) demonstrated how historical trajectories from the colonial period still exist elsewhere across Mozambique. Chichava (2008) reported that Frelimo has been accused of being tribal since during the struggle for independence (see also Brito, 2008) when people from southern Mozambique were given more privileges and occupied leadership positions than those from other regions. Similar animosities were reported between Makonde and Kinwany ethnolinguistic groups in the north (Chichava, 2008).

The strong victory for Frelimo and its candidates in both local government and general elections, despite the contentious internal nomination of candidates for both elections is a clear indication that ethnicity has no influence in electoral choice in Maxixe. Reports indicate the existence of ethnic or regional rivalry relations over internal power within the parties, Frelimo in particular, but the parties never assumed ethnic antagonism or bringing the ethnic issue forward as electoral trophy.

If it is true that the vote for Frelimo in Maxixe and in the southern region as a whole is explained by loyalty to the Frelimo leadership which originates from the south, the argument by Bratton *et al* (2012) that voters from the region or ethnic group of the incumbent are likely to vote for his or her party is confirmed in this study.

Another important cleavage that seemed to exacerbate the regional divide is the 16-year civil war. The level of violence perpetrated by Renamo during the civil war in southern Mozambique has been the chief justification for not voting for Renamo. It was indicated in chapter four that during the civil war Renamo used more violence and coercively recruited its members from southern Mozambique compared to other regions of the country (Vines, 2013; Carbone, 2005; Seibert, 2003). Maxixe, like any part below Save river, is an almost no go area for Renamo.

Besides being an important determinant of partisanship, as Campbell and his team discussed extensively, age can also be analysed as an important social variable (Pereira, 2008). A number of studies conducted in Africa looked at age as one of the most important socio-demographic factors acting as predictors of voting behaviour (Resnick & Casale, 2011; Bratton *et al*, 2012; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Barbie, 2005). In the context of Mozambique, studies looking at the age variable are still limited.

The findings of this study show that adults are much more conservative and more predictable to vote for Frelimo in every election, while the youth are much more open to ‘taste new waters’. Voters who experienced colonial rule, the one-party regime after independence and a large part of the 16 year civil war have developed a strong belief in Frelimo and at the same time a great fear of the unknown, while younger voters have no regard of Frelimo as liberator party. These are the voters who behaved independently and even split their vote between the presidential and parliamentary elections. These results are in line with the conclusions of Pereira (2008) who in analysis of party identification in Mozambique found that youth had less stable partisanship than adults. This also corroborates with those of other African scholars who found that in Africa older generations tend to favour parties that fought for independence from colonial masters or played a pivotal role in introducing democracy than the youth (Resnick & Casale, 2014).

Religion is another important category of analysis in voting behaviour. The church versus state or religious versus secular was one of the social cleavages in the classification of Lipset & Rokkan (1967). However, this cleavage seems not to have had predominance in Africa, given the historical trajectory; this researcher did not come across studies analysing the role of religious versus secular cleavage in African elections. The history of Mozambique did not create conditions for two reasons: firstly, before independence, the colonial regime neutralised possible cleavage with integration of religion (Catholic Church) in the state; secondly, with independence, Frelimo adopted a Marxist and anticlerical ideology, characterised by not only breaking any kind of relationship with any religion, but even banning religious practices in the country.

With no possibility of analysing the cleavage of the religious versus the secular, as defined by Lipset & Rokkan (1967) the focus of the study shifted to analyse whether belonging to the two most common denominations (Catholics and Protestants) influence the voting choice. The result showed that religion does not influence party choice in Maxixe. Pereira (2008)'s hypothesis that protestant voters are more likely to identify with Frelimo is not valid in Maxixe.

The rural versus urban is one of the social cleavages analysed by Lipset & Rokkan (1967) where the rural is more linked to the land or primary economy while the urban is regarded as the second economy. A number of studies in Africa have emphasised the relevance of urban versus rural in elections. Studies conducted in Mozambique (Brito, 1996; Pereira, 1997) found that the rural versus urban mattered in most areas of Mozambique, with the urban areas voting mostly for Frelimo while the rural voted massively for the opposition. The main explanation relates to the effects of Frelimo's post-independence pro-urban policies and their destructive consequences in social structure in rural areas. In this study, though voters living in rural areas share the sentiment that they have benefited less from government interventions, urban Maxixe basically is a continuation of rural Maxixe, in all aspects of life; they do not vote differently from those living in urban areas. This study found that in Maxixe the distinction between rural and urban is very narrow. Pereira (2008)'s hypothesis that urban citizens are more likely to identify with Frelimo was not confirmed in this study, since both rural and urban voters voted for Frelimo.

Brito (1996) found the existence of community vote, a kind of sociological vote, local authorities of a particular community determine how members of its community have to vote. This study does not confirm this. Respondents in Maxixe reported the existence of political and social pressures from local traditional chiefs and administrative authorities to vote for the ruling party, but they also clearly indicated that the voter had the last say. That is, with time, voters accumulate experience in voting that makes them adopt individual choices. This was reported even in rural areas, where given the limited access to information and political sophistication, community vote is most likely to occur. Again, the time gap between the two studies may justify the discrepancy.

### 6.3 DISCUSSION BASED ON THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

The Socio-psychological approach holds that voting behaviour is highly determined by party identification or an enduring psychological attachment that one has with a particular political party (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Weinschenk, 2010; Bartle & Griffiths, 2002; Greene, 2002; Thomassen & Rosema, 2006; Marthaler, 2008; Bratton *et al.*, 2012; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Greene, 2002; Achen, 1992).

There is a ferocious debate about the existence and relevance of party identification in democracies outside America, particularly in Africa, given the novelty of democracy. Some election studies conducted in Africa have indicated the relevance of partisanship in voting behaviour (Young, 2009; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Bratton *et al.*, 2012). However, other scholars call attention for not looking at partisanship as initially conceptualised by Campbell and his team, but look at party identification as situational (see, for example, Mattes, 1995).

In Mozambique surveys conducted by Afrobarometer and CNEP identified a strong support for the ruling Frelimo party, a situation that seems to be common in Africa (see Keulder, 2000) where liberator parties use either patronage and spread fear based on the state power to gain more support. However, in most cases this closeness the ruling party is much strategic or tactical rather than emotional or psychological as originally defined. More than pre-dispositional party identification in Africa is found to be more situational, instrumental or resulting from calculation (see for example. Mattes, 1995).

The situation found in Maxixe substantiate that reported in other studies conducted earlier in Mozambique or even on the continent in terms of party support, party membership and party identification, as it will be demonstrated in the paragraphs below. Firstly, the number of respondents that declared formal membership with a political party is very low in Maxixe. Voters have their preferred party which they support or sympathise with and eventually vote for, but they do not necessarily hold a formal membership of that particular political party. Based on the Afrobarometer and CNEP surveys Brito (2008) also reached conclusion. Schoeman & Puttergill (2007) also found similar tendency of general lower party membership if compared to party support in South Africa.

Secondly, in Maxixe, a large majority of respondents who reported party membership were members of Frelimo. This finding resonates with that of Bratton *et al* (2012) who in an Afrobarometer cross-national survey found that in Mozambique 87 per cent of respondents who declared party membership were supporting Frelimo, placing Mozambique on top of the list of countries with prevalent support for the ruling party. In another earlier survey, the CNEP found that 91.5 per cent of the total respondents (23 per cent) who reported party membership were Frelimo members (Brito *et al*, 2005). Brito (2008) study and the above referred surveys also found similar results in Mozambique.

Studies conducted elsewhere on the continent also confirm that voters tend to report closeness with a political party in power (Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Keulder, 2000; Resnick & Casale, 2014; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005). Schoeman & Puttergill (2007) foresee difficulties for opposition parties to end the longevity of liberator parties (see also Resnick & Casale, 2014).

Can the closeness to Frelimo be considered a sign of party identification, as originally defined? The answer is no. In a previous study with similar results in Mozambique, Brito (2005) had already indicated that the closeness to Frelimo does not necessarily equate with party identification. With similar results in Namibia, Keulder (2000) rejected the idea of assuming closeness and trust for the ruling party as a signal of party identification when in most cases voters showed no knowledge of what that party stands for. Results of this study also show this tendency in Maxixe.

From the above one can wonder if it will be rational to conclude that there is party identification towards the ruling parties. The most probable answer is no, if we look at party identification as discussed in *The American Voter*. However, the safest way of interpretation is following the proposition by Bratton *et al.* (2012) who argued that voters' identification with the ruling party can be sincere or strategic and can also be motivated by positive or negative incentives.

According to Bratton *et al.* (2012) in former one-party African regimes voters have developed a strong and well embedded loyalty with parties which have been in power for a long time, regardless of their performance. These are what he called sincere partisans. Results from this study show that there are voters in Maxixe who have developed an unbeatable loyalty to Frelimo. This sentiment was common particularly among adults, who crossed different periods of historical trajectories of Mozambique with Frelimo (see similarities with Resnick & Casale, 2014). They have developed a kind of moral attachment to this party. They look at Frelimo with the same loyalty as that of a spouse or parent who under any circumstance they cannot betray. Still similar to Bratton *et al.* (2012) findings, most of these voters do not know what Frelimo stands for and in some cases contradict themselves when it comes to evaluating the performance of this party's 40 years in power. These are part of what Mattes & Shenga (2007) called uncritical citizens. These results contradict the findings of Pereira (2008) who concluded that the attachment to Frelimo was a result of positive evaluation.

According to Bratton *et al.* (2012) the attachment to the historic ruling parties may be triggered by the habit developed over years. Voters who identify with a particular party for long time are likely to develop strong loyalty to that particular party (Pereira, 2008a; Glenn & Grimes, 1968). In Maxixe, this study found a considerable number of what Dalton (2007) named ritual partisans who identify with Frelimo simply because they are used to it. Others, because they have been voting for Frelimo since the founding elections, got used to it. This finding also confirms the Bull (2005) findings that voters who get habituated to vote for a particular party makes them to identify with that particular party. This may be encouraged by the comfortable victories of this party from election to election. For them, voting for Frelimo becomes an affirmation rather than choice, just like it becomes difficult to change the service provider and the cellular number that one has been using for such a long time.

The fact of adult voters identifying mostly with Frelimo may look like drawing us closer to the claim by Campbell *et al* (1960) that partisanship strengthens with age and duration of current identification. However, this does not seem to be the case. An alternative explanation is closer to the findings of Schoeman & Puttergill (2007) that in their analysis of the South African context found that party identification does not appear in its pure form, as designed in the America Voter, but it is always associated with other factors such as race, gender or social status. In this study it is appropriate to associate party identification, if it exists, with the category age. This is not new; Resnick & Casale (2014) had already concluded that parties that freed the country from a tyrannical regime enjoy more support among older generations.

In a context of African democracies working in an environment of high patronage, partisanship can be instrumental (Bratton *et al*, 2012). Voters may identify with the ruling party based on strategic calculations. Results of this study in Maxixe also show that identification with Frelimo is strategic or tactical. Firstly, in a context where ruling parties exercise greater domain over opposition parties and also greater domain in access to state resources, voters tend to show sympathy to the ruling party as a mechanism to guarantee access to state resources (Bratton *et al.*, 2012). This is reflected in the findings in Maxixe. Being in power for over 40 years Frelimo has now established itself within the state apparatus and controls different spheres of the government. At the time of the research the opposition was vocal against this. Most respondents openly noted that being a Frelimo member was the sole condition to get employment, promotion at work and access to services. This was also supported by the work of Guilengue (2015) in his short analysis of the Mozambican political situation. Showing closeness to Frelimo is the only way a business person can prosper; otherwise they will have their business sabotaged by the tax and revenue authorities mandated by the ruling party.

The separation between state and party is problematic in Maxixe and in Mozambique as a whole. Therefore, voters do not have a clear line dividing Frelimo party from the government. These results go in line with the existing literature showing that voters hardly distinguish between Frelimo and the state apparatus (Bratton *et al*, 2012). In fact, the history of Frelimo resembles the history of the country.

The second aspect is that voters strategically identify with the ruling parties because they know that it is most likely to win (Bratton *et al.*, 2012). This is most close explanation to the

situation reported in Maxixe. Even in the most disputed general elections of 2014, voters knew in advance that at least in Maxixe Frelimo was going to secure victory. Association with the winning party has the double psychological benefit of avoiding regret and gaining satisfaction from the feeling of his or her vote having been counted. Sure of victory, the Frelimo mayoral candidate in 2013 was presented to the public as the future mayor of Maxixe.

Strategic partisans also show loyalty to the ruling party to avoid negative sanctions. According to Bratton *et al* (2012), in emerging democracies in Africa, identifying with opposition is a risk that can lead to being ostracised, compulsion and exclusion from state benefits. This reflects what the study found in Maxixe, particularly for those working in public institutions. Respondents in Maxixe reported that supporting the opposition, particularly Renamo was a real danger and risked suffering negative sanctions. In some cases, if you are a public servant, being seen frequently with a member of an opposition party was a serious risk. Those who are found or suspected to be supporting opposition parties are transferred from their work stations and posted to the most remote areas of the district as a punishment.

In some respondents' answers, one could tell that the opposition Renamo party had a considerable number of supporters resident there but felt uncomfortable to express their support publicly for fear of exclusion from state benefits or fear of vengeance after elections. This aligns with the findings of Brito *et al* (2005) and Brito (2007). Surveillance, monitoring and intimidation may be other factors pushing voters to vote for the incumbent (see for example Bratton *et al*, 2012; Young, 2009). In Maxixe, there were reports of use of state apparatus by ruling party agents to discourage the vote for opposition through social control or political pressure. Some voters felt coerced to vote for Frelimo. Brito (2005) had already alluded to this phenomenon.

The partisanship found in Maxixe is more situational, than pre-dispositional in the conception of Campbell *et al* (1960). This corroborates with results by Mattes (1995). However, the loyalty towards Frelimo has durability and stability closer to that of partisanship. Keulder (2000) reached similar findings in Namibia. This study established similar findings in Maxixe.



## 6.4 DISCUSSION BASED ON THE RATIONAL CHOICE APPROACH

Extensive literature on economic voting postulates that voting behaviour is determined by the individual's evaluation of the economy. Voters reward or punish the government based on its performance in economy. In good economic times they reward the incumbent by voting for them and in bad economic times punish by voting against them (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000; Bratton *et al*, 2012; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008).

Like in the previous approaches used for data analysis, the question is whether voters in African democracies also consider the performance of the government to make their electoral decisions. The answer that to some extent voters consider the economy in their voting, (Bratton *et al*, 2012; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Cowen & Laakso, 1997). Bratton *et al* (2012) is of the idea that the economy matters more in developing countries, like most of the African democracies, than in most developed countries with more consolidated democracy. An evidence of the role of the economy in voting is the focus by candidates on development-project politics in their campaign (Cowen & Laakso, 1997). Posner & Simon (2002) do not reject the importance of economy in voting in Africa, but they take a much cautious position by arguing that economy matters less than intangible factors like ethnicity.

This study confirms the relevance of economy, to some extent in voting in Maxixe. However, economic evaluation of the government does not work in isolation when it comes to voting decision. Economic evaluation always comes associated with other factors such as the socio-historic and political dynamics of the country. This results in some distortions of the initial assumptions of the economic theories, for example, the fact that despite negative assessment of the economy, voters still prefer not to punish the government.

Obviously one cannot expect a sophisticated evaluation of the economy by the voters because the democracy itself operates in an environment with limited information. As indicated in the previous chapter, parties do not publicise widely their manifestos, limiting themselves to giving small pieces of information during electoral campaigning periods through the media, rallies and door to door campaigns.

Although without well elaborated answers, voters indicated that issues of concern such as increasing prices of basic commodities (especially food), unemployment, poverty, hardships

corruption, nepotism and lack of basic service delivery were factors that at some extent had implications in their behaviour, including their decision to participate or not in elections. In the results described in the previous chapter a number of respondents showed no interest in participating in elections simply because they did not see any economic benefit resulting from their participation.

It is a fact in general that the government received a clear low approval in Maxixe. The negative perception of the Mozambican government performance is a well-known phenomenon in the entire country and beyond (Pereira, 2002; Brito, 2005; Brito, 2000). In an Afrobarometer survey, the Frelimo government received the lowest approval ratings when compared to the rest of Southern Africa governments (Pereira *et al*, 2002). In Maxixe there is also widespread sentiment that government officers are more interested in accumulation of personal wealth than in serving people. This finding corroborates with the findings of studies conducted in African democracies (see for example, Bratton *et al*, 2012). The self-interest of elected officers is considered as one of the factors that tend to drive countries into poverty. In Mozambique this sentiment is quite strong. It might be a simple perception, but there is clear suspicion that the political elite is accumulating at the expenses of the general people. For example, Frelimo government officials are known to be controlling the exploration of the booming mineral, timber extraction, and the discovery of natural gas in the northern region of the country.

The inefficiency of the Proportional Representation (PR) system has been blamed for lack of accountability by elected bodies to the public. According to the Rational Choice, it is the accountability that facilitates voters to reward or punish the incumbent. For the Rational Choice approach, voters can only use the evaluation of the economy to reward or punish the incumbent if they have a clear understanding of who is managing the economy (De Graaf, 2001; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Bratton *et al*, 2012). In this study, taking into consideration that Frelimo has been in power for 40 years, respondents had a clear understanding that it was the only one responsible for poor management of the economy. This finding supports the research of Brito (2007) in Mozambique. The fact that voters in Maxixe have not experienced any other government than Frelimo makes it easy for voters to understand who is really in charge of the economy.

In terms of the level of responsibility, the national executive government was thought to be responsible for the state of the affairs than the parliament. Also at local government level, responsibility falls on the mayor than the councillors. If the reward-punish paradigm is applicable in Maxixe, one could ask why voters still vote for Frelimo, despite the high levels of dissatisfaction with economic performance? Here we found evidence of the weaknesses of the Rational Choice approach. By failing to examine the role of political context in mediating the relationship between the voter and the economy (Anderson, 2000), the approach cannot explain why voters continuously reward the incumbent in direct contradiction to its economic performance (Erdmann, 2007a).

Maxixe is not an isolated case of rewarding the government, despite its perceived poor performance. Firstly, studies conducted elsewhere in Africa show that the level of poverty prevailing in the country has no implications on voters supporting the incumbent, most particularly at district level (Posner & Simon, 2002). This assertion corresponds to that of Maxixe. Despite being the economic hub of the province, Maxixe has high levels of poverty. Most residents came from different parts of the province and of the country looking for better living conditions, but still live in poverty. Some of the respondents do not have proper housing.

Secondly, other studies found that dissatisfaction does not necessarily make voters shift to the opposition, as the original approach suggests (Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007). The change for the better does not necessarily mean changing the ruling party. Mattes & Shenga (2007) had already labelled Mozambicans in general of being uncritical citizens after observing that Frelimo remained the top choice despite of its poor performance. In Maxixe, the situation is similar; despite the high levels of dissatisfaction, the majority of respondents, particularly adults, confirm their strong loyalty to Frelimo. Voters in Maxixe share a general hope of a better future, real or imagined, but still under the same party, Frelimo.

There are a number of factors that prevent voters in Maxixe from blaming Frelimo for lack of delivery. One is the effect of the destructive 16-year civil war. Over two decades down the line, voters in Maxixe still blame the war atrocities and Renamo for poor delivery by the incumbent. Even after the peace and the introduction of democracy, Renamo has been perceived to be a political force that hinders government efforts to promote development. As Brito (1996) concluded, Renamo carries the burden of maladministration for Frelimo. Voters

exercise tolerance towards Frelimo and share the general perception that Frelimo needs to be given time until it gets it right. They believe that the future will be brighter someday.

In Maxixe, Renamo carries an image of violent party, likely to take the country back to war even after winning elections; therefore, the majority of respondents indicated that they do not trust Renamo. Most of them still have fresh memories of the atrocities of the war. A considerable number of residents in Maxixe are originally from Homoine or have extended family ties where a horrendous massacre happened in 1987, attributed to Renamo. The occurrence of violent combats between government forces and Renamo residual forces at the time of the study reinforced the lack of trust in Renamo. Furthermore, despite the fact the war was between the two former warring foes, locals seem to blame Renamo more.

In a similar research conducted in Zambia, another emerging democracy, Posner & Simon (2002) found high prevalence of voters dissatisfied with the incumbent; however, they did give their vote to the opposition, but they simply decided to abstain in large numbers. This is the situation found in Maxixe, where respondents openly said that they did not see the point of going to vote while they were unhappy. However, no reference was made for voting for the opposition in order to overcome the dissatisfaction. It seems to be the tendency in African democracies of punishing the incumbent by abstaining rather than by voting for an opposition party, as the reward-punishment paradigm suggests. The chief argument has been the weakness of the opposition parties in Mozambique.

The Rational Choice approach lays down that voters only decide to replace the incumbent if they have available alternatives or options likely to do better than the incumbent (De Graaf, 2001; Andersen & Heath, 2000; Anderson, 2000; Bratton *et al*, 2012). The findings in Maxixe are that opposition parties are not fit for the job corroborate with other analyses done earlier in the country which concluded that Mozambicans still do not trust the opposition (Pereira, 2008; Pereira, 2008b; Brito, 2008). Brito (2008) found that the widespread national sentiment of poor managerial competence of Renamo was also supported by the international community based in Mozambique.

The findings of this study also corroborates with results reached by other studies conducted elsewhere in Africa which highlighted that opposition parties are unprepared to take over power because they are poorly organised and incompetent (see for example Resnick &

Casale, 2014; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008). Likewise, respondents in Maxixe do not consider Renamo as a trusted alternative political force, neither at national government nor at local spheres of government. The far they can go is to allow Renamo to get a considerable number of seats in parliament to curb the dominance and hegemony of Frelimo, but not for Renamo to control the executive. Respondents admitted that MDM is likely to become an acceptable alternative one day, but not Renamo.

One cannot ignore the general sentiment that the emerging economy of Mozambique is almost totally in the hands of the emergent bourgeoisie closely linked to Frelimo (Guilengue, 2015). This sentiment raises some uncertainty among voters about the future in case an opposition party takes power. Most respondents in Maxixe expressed this feeling by saying that they prefer to vote for Frelimo to keep the little that they have acquired. Voting for Frelimo is a manifestation of the fear of change. This resembles what Zaller (1989) called resistance to attitude change.

Voters in African democracies are known for their sociotropic nature in the evaluation of the incumbent (Young, 2009; Bratton *et al*, 2012). Results of this study show a similar situation in Maxixe. Voters in Maxixe are more interested in the provision of public goods and services (water, sanitation, education, roads health care) than receiving personal benefits. This finding corroborates with an earlier study in Mozambique which found that “people were more concerned about common goods that are not within their power to build rather than family goods” Pereira (2008:175). Another justification for preferring the common goods was that once public goods are made available, individual living conditions will automatically improve.

In terms of time of evaluation, the Rational Choice approach states that voters can reward or punish the government based on what it has done or failed to do, or on what it promises to do in future. There is also the possibility that voters may base their choice on retrospective or prospective evaluation. Bratton *et al* (2012) are of the opinion that voters in African context are more prospective than retrospective. This does not seem to be the case in Maxixe. Responses such as ‘I voted for Frelimo because I need it to continue doing what has started and to develop further’ are reflection of a kind of positive assessment of what has been done, but at the same time, exhibits the hope that Frelimo is likely to do better in future. It seems to be more correct to say voters in Maxixe use the past to estimate the future. This finding

correlates with that of Lindberg & Morrison (2008) who found that voting for the incumbent was associated with rewarding for what has been done, but at the same time an encouragement to do much better in future. So, it is reasonable to conclude that voters in Maxixe seem to look back to see what has been done in order to preview what is likely to happen in future; vote using retrospective assessment combined with prospective to make their electoral decisions.

The change of leadership at central government from former President Guebuza to Filipe Nyusi and at local government level from Mayor Narciso Pedro to Simão Rafael also brought some hope that living conditions would improve, particularly because both were elected amid internal controversy. Voters hoped that both will strive to convince their party members and the general public that their choice was the most correct.

## **6.5 DISCUSSION BASED ON THE COGNITIVE APPROACH**

For the Cognitive approach, voting behaviour is shaped by cognitive factors. In other words, decisions of voters are influenced by the level of political knowledge voters possess, facilitated by the level of exposure to political communication, level of education and the degree of interest in politics (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944; Downs, 1957; Marthaler, 2008; Pereira, 2008; Zaller, 1989; Kuan & Lau, 2002; Hobolt, 2005; Luskin, 1990; Friedman, 1999; Resnick & Casale, 2014; Amer, 2009; Pereira *et al.*, 2002).

Studies conducted in the country put Mozambique in a very low position when it comes to political knowledge and political culture. This ignorance does not affect only the ordinary voter, but also politicians and government members lack the basic knowledge about the rule of democracy (Brito, 1996; Brito *et al.*, 2005; Pereira, 2014; Pereira *et al.*, 2002; Shenga, 2013). Findings from this study tally well with these studies. Based on an Afrobarometer survey Pereira *et al.* (2002) found that though the majority of Mozambicans preferred democracy to any other type of regime, they could not elaborate or express their opinions about much of the issues indicated in the questionnaire. This level of ignorance was much more prevalent among illiterate respondents residing in rural areas. This is a symptomatic of low political sophistication.

Respondents in Maxixe proved to have a very limited knowledge of politics and of factual political knowledge about public figures, political parties, political institutions and their functions (parliament and municipal assembly), rights and roles of voters and other relevant public issues that a voter should know in order to have an informed decision.

In Maxixe, political party leaders and individually elected political figures enjoyed much popularity than collectively elected organs such as parliament. This tally confirms the findings of the CNEP survey that knowledge of public figures like the president of the republic and district administrators scored high (Brito *et al*, 2006). This does not seem to be a Mozambique phenomenon only; in well-established democracies like the American one, Lau & Redlawsk (2001) found that citizens could easily name the president of the republic, but not members of cabinet or senators.

A number of studies argue that in the context of poor infrastructure and limited sources of information, the public media is the main source of information (Keulder, 2000; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Bratton *et al*, 2012). This is a reality in Mozambique. Studies conducted in the country confirm that the public media (TV, radio and newspaper) despite its limited coverage exerts influence in providing political information and contributing to the formation of public opinion (see for example Brito *et al*, 2005; Pereira, 2007; Pereira, 2014; Afrobarometer, 2013). Findings in this study also confirm this. The state owned media, particularly the television, has been the most important channel for political parties to interact with the electorate or to convey their political messages in their attempt to mobilise support to win political battles. The radio was the second most popular source of political information in Maxixe.

Given the strategic importance of public media, in the run for the 2014 general elections, the expected high competitiveness among the three main candidates fuelled further the use of state media in favour of the ruling Frelimo and its debutant candidate. This confirms results from other studies that found that in democracies operating in weak private economy and where winning elections means gaining access to control state resources, the public media is biased toward the incumbent, particularly when the level of competition is high (Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Bratton *et al*, 2012; Young, 2009; Lindberg & Morrison, 2008) According to Lindberg & Morrison (2008) this has been a long-lasting dilemma in emerging democracies

where the desirable competitiveness turns into political misuse of state resources and corruption.

Confirming the results from other studies conducted in the country (Brito *et al*, 2005; Pereira, 2014), the newspaper was the least used as a source of information, particularly due to limited access. The few respondents who affirmed to get their political information from the newspapers preferred independent ones. Again, the perception of the biased nature of state owned newspapers was the justification for not reading state owned papers. This result differs from Brito *et al* (2005) where the majority preferred state owned papers.

Lazarsfeld *et al* (1944) had already indicated the importance of social networks as sources of political information. In Maxixe, family members, friends, colleagues, and neighbours were important sources of information. In most cases, they recycled information disseminated by the public media or other formal channels or electoral campaigning. Other studies conducted in Africa confirmed this (Keulder, 2000; Pereira, 2008; Brito *et al*, 2005). Worryingly, like in the results of Keulder (2000) in Namibia, civic education did not seem to be an important source of information for most of the respondents.

How much interest in politics is found in Maxixe? This study follows a few others conducted in the country that revealed that despite the fact that the large majority of citizens preferred democracy rather than any other type of regime, they present limited enthusiasm and low interest in politics and democracy (Brito, 1996; Brito *et al*, 2005; Pereira *et al*, 2002).

A number of factors contribute to reduced levels of interest in politics, such as the perception that politics and particularly elections are source of chaos and instability, a waste of time because only political elites benefit. These findings also show a relationship with those of Cowen & Laakso (1997) elsewhere in Africa.

Age is considered an important category likely to influence the degree of interest in politics, with youngsters showing less interest in politics than adult citizens (Glenn & Grimes, 1968; Sinnott, 2003). This study contradicts this perspective. In Maxixe, the youth represent the age group with more education, with access to information from different sources, more up-to-date with societal issues, which in turn increases their political sophistication and therefore increasing their interest in politics. This finding aligns with results from Amer (2009). In a



context of high levels of illiteracy in Maxixe, adults find themselves in a difficult situation to access and follow current and important political and societal issues.

Participation in discussions about politics or public issues is correlated to the level of interest in politics. Citizens with more interest in politics tend to engage more in discussions of political or public issues than those with less or without interest in politics. This study reveals that in Maxixe the level of engagement in discussion of politics or public issues either with family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues or church fellows is still limited. This confirms the findings of Brito *et al* (2005), based on the CNEP survey and also Shenga (2013). The 2008 Afrobarometer survey also showed that 85 per cent of respondents never discussed issues with political leaders, launched protests against local government leaders or government officials in their community (Shenga, 2013). Equally, in Maxixe respondents reported that the further they could go is only to attend meetings called by the municipality, administrative authorities or ruling party structures to receive ‘orientations’ or to meet government candidates when elections approach, with limited space for discussion of issues of public concerns.

Participating or not in elections is the first decision voters make. This decision can be influenced by the time and type of elections to be held, prevailing political cleavages or issues at stake (Sinnott, 2013) as well as by tangible or intangible factors that voters consider (Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007), level of interest in politics (Amer, 2009; Pereira *et al*, 2002; Cowen & Laakso, 1997) and the strength of partisan attachment (Karp & Banducci, 2007). Interest in politics and the degree of knowledge about democratic principles and how the political system operates have been positively linked to participation in democratic processes (Amer, 2009; Friedman, 1999).

Participation can be influenced by both positive and negative motivations (Keulder, 2000). The findings here show that though limited in number, in Maxixe there are what Friedman (1999) called enthusiastic voters. These are voters who associated their participation in elections with the enthusiasm of exercising their political rights and freedoms; to express their citizenship and civic duty, or what Schoeman & Puttergill (2007) called intangible factors or the feel good factor (Cowen & Laakso, 1997). Findings here also tally with those of Shenga (2013) and Brito *et al* (2005) who found that some voters are motivated by the

understanding that elections are the only form of participation and the expectation that only vote can change their lives for the better.

On the other side, participation in elections does not necessarily reflect interest in politics (Glenn & Grimes, 1968). Voters can participate in elections without their will, forced by circumstances or what Keulder (2000) called negative motivations. Like in a previous study conducted by Brito (1996) in Maxixe, some respondents reported to have neither knowledge nor interest in politics, but they found themselves compelled to do so for fear of possible reprisals since not voting would be perceived as a confrontation to political authorities. This sentiment was most common within adult voters, who always wanted to be perceived as morally decent. The youth, particularly public workers, faced a different kind of negative motivation through surveillance and monitoring by government authorities. Most public servants reported that they voted because their superiors wanted to see the finger painted with indelible ink a day after elections. This is part of the historical legacy of authoritarian tradition of colonial and post-independence regimes characterised by social control, political pressure and domination over citizens (see also Brito *et al.*, 2005; Brito, 1996).

The traditional literature holds that participation in elections increases with age (Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Resnick & Casale, 2014). Adults participate more in elections, either in a genuine interest, fulfilment of their civil duty or in response to political pressure and fear of confronting authorities. Youngsters are least likely to vote than adults for reasons ranging from weak party attachment, lack of electoral experience, more interested in securing their daily living or because they are always on the move (Glenn & Grimes, 1968; Amer, 2009; Sinnott, 2003). The findings in Maxixe confirm this. Adults tended to participate more in elections than the youngsters. However, the participation does reflect neither the political sophistication nor party identification.

Another explanation for lack of enthusiasm by the youth is that this has been the age group hit most by unemployment (Resnick & Casale, 2014) corruption, nepotism (Cowen & Laakso, 1997; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007). Young respondents that reported lacking interest in voting said that they did not see any importance in voting because their vote would not take away their unemployment, or end corruption and nepotism in public institutions.

Low turnout is a common concern in emerging democracies (Keulder (2000); however, the sharper and continuous drop of participation is seen by Mozambican experts as a serious threat to political legitimacy, if not to the entire democratic system (Brito *et al*, 2005; Brito, 2007; Brito, 2008; Shenga, 2013).

Rules and regulations of how a particular democracy should operate may influence political attitudes and behaviour as well as mobilising or discouraging the participation of the voters. For example, the proportional representation (PR) electoral system is known for encouraging more participation if compared to majoritarian system (Karp & Banducci, 2007; Sinnott, 2003). This is what was expected of Mozambique. However, the reality on the ground shows the opposite.

In Maxixe, the youth, the most educated, informed, political knowledgeable and urban residents abstain more if compared to the less educated, less sophisticated and rural adults. This finding contradicts the general understanding that takes high levels of education, political sophistication and information as predictors of political participation (Amer, 2009; Sinnott, 2003; Feddersen & Pesendorfer, 1999; Glenn & Grimes, 1968; Pereira *et al*, 2002). In a seminal study of voting behaviour in Mozambique, Brito (1996) had already disproven the principle that abstention increases with low levels of education. This finding suggests that although education may facilitate the acquisition of political knowledge, it cannot be taken in isolation as a predictor of participation in elections. In the context of Maxixe, for example, it is important to link education with employment, type of occupation and access to public services. One evidence, educated voters who completed secondary schooling are still unemployed and have been involved in small business to earn the living; therefore, with less interest in participating in elections. On the other side, adult voters are most sensitive to political pressure and tend to avoid contravening against the state rules.

The most common explanation is that the youth has lost hope of using their vote to promote political change or improve their livelihoods. Pereira *et al* (2002) and Brito (2007) linked the disengagement of youngsters due to levels of frustration with the entire political system characterised by generalised sense of lack of political freedoms and political liberties among those more educated and competent.

Despite being a concern, abstention has not been sufficiently explored on the continent. In Mozambique the few attempts to comprehend the phenomenon through questionnaire by the Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP) and by the Centre for Democracy and Development Studies (CEDE) were tainted by methodological flaws (Brito, 2005; Brito, 2007) and cases of over-reporting most probably because citizens did not feel comfortable to assume their own political actions; fearing being seen as abstainers (Brito *et al*, 2005; Brito, 2007). This also happened in Maxixe; respondents did not want to confirm that they did not vote. Only others abstain. Other studies that looked at abstention in singular elections include those of Braathen & Jørgensen (1998), Serra (1999), Brito (2007) and Brito (2008).

What takes citizens to decline their rights and freedoms of enjoying the only form of participation (Shenga, 2013; Brito *et al*, 2005) or to exercise the power of one day (Cowen & Laakso, 1997) in Maxixe? How can in a region known as a ruling party stronghold people decide not to vote? Sinnott (2003) provides a useful framework for analysis of abstention and distinguishes two types of abstention: the circumstantial (lack of institutional mechanisms/facilitation to make voting easier) and voluntary (lack of mobilisation mechanisms to incentivise an individual to vote).

Cowen & Laakso (1997) correctly established that the African understanding of democracy is associated with material gains. Studies conducted in Mozambique seem to confirm this when they conclude that the weak interest in participation in elections among Mozambicans is directly linked to discrepancy between voters' expectations and what democracy can effectively supply (Pereira *et al*, 2002; Brito, 2007; Brito, 2008; Brito *et al*, 2005; Shenga, 2013; Brito, 1996; Serra, 1999). Democracy does not directly yield socio-economic benefits or rising standards of living for the majority of Mozambicans (Pereira, 2009). Findings in this study corroborate with the above. In Maxixe, voters associated democracy with improvement in their life, without which elections become meaningless. Comments such as 'we have been voting since, but nothing has improved in our lives' were common among respondents. In the CNEP survey 77 per cent of respondents minimised the importance of participation in elections simply because for them voting does not change anything (Brito, 2007).

Another factor is the perception of the uselessness of the vote. Participation in elections is only possible if voters believe in the importance of their vote to influence the election outcome or government decisions (Friedman, 1999; Resnick & Casale, 2014; Schoeman &

Puttergill, 2007). For most voters in Maxixe, the perception of usefulness or instrumentality of their vote is close to nil; this was associated with the perception of the performance of the EMBs and also the perception of fraud. This finding confirms the previous ones of studies conducted in the country (Brito, 1996; Serra, 1999; Pereira *et al*, 2002; Brito, 2008; Shenga, 2013).

The level of interface between the elected bodies and the voters can determine the level of engagement of citizens in politics. Voters feel less motivated to participate in elections if they are not well connected to those they voted for (Keulder, 2000; Young, 2009). Findings here support the existing literature. Respondents in Maxixe showed a great dissatisfaction due to a poor relationship with those they elected. Voters do not identify themselves with the elected because once they gain their vote politicians vanish and get busy with their own business. The inadequate representation caused by the PR electoral system is an old problem reported in previous studies in Mozambique (see for example Braathen & Jørgensen, 1998; Brito, 2007; Brito, 2008; Shenga, 2008), where elected bodies tend to be more accountable to their party machinery than to the electorate.

Furthermore, similar to the findings of Harrison (1999) elsewhere, in Maxixe, the perception that democracy only serves a minority, those close to the top of the ruling party, prevails. In Mozambique, this sentiment heightened with the prominence of large investments in mining and mega-projects exploiting natural resources. Though these projects have not yet yielded visible impact in the economy through job creation or reduction of poverty (Pereira & Nhanale, 2014), among the ordinary citizens, the perception is that the distribution of revenues has been exclusive to a minority Frelimo elite.

The existing literature shows that a negative assessment of government performance can lead to abstention (Resnick & Casale, 2011; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Posner & Simon, 2002; Keulder, 2000). Brito (2007) had already discussed how the negative assessment of the government performance resulted in low turnout in some areas of Mozambique (see also Pereira *et al*, 2002; Brito *et al*, 2005; Shenga, 2013). The findings from this study support the existing body of knowledge. Participants in Maxixe linked their lack of interest in voting to their dissatisfaction with government performance both at central and local levels. The most common problems in Maxixe include unemployment, inflation, corruption and nepotism. As discussed earlier in the chapter, in Maxixe unsatisfied voters preferred to punish the

incumbent by staying at home rather than voting for the opposition. These results confirm the findings of other studies conducted in Africa (see Resnick & Casale, 2011; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007; Keulder, 2000).

The abstention caused by negative assessment of government performance is also explained by the perceived lack of an alternative opposition. In Maxixe there is a generalised perception of weakness of opposition parties. In chapter four, this study indicated that opposition parties have been disorganised, with limited mobilisation skills, and almost disappear in between elections (see also Pereira, 2008); and thus fail to provide a credible alternative to Frelimo and Renamo. Therefore, in Maxixe, opposition parties, including Renamo, are not perceived as credible alternatives to Frelimo. The perception of weakness of opposition parties as the source of abstention has been reported elsewhere by Posner & Simon (2002).

The political environment characterised by violence, corruption or perception of manipulation of election outcomes discourages massive participation of voters in elections (Amer, 2009). Threats of violence and boycott of elections are also common in Africa (Posner & Simon, 2002; Lindberg & Morrison, 2005). In Mozambique, Renamo has championed the boycotts or threatens to boycott elections. Previous studies have highlighted this as one of the factors for abstentions (Braathen & Jørgensen, 1998; Serra, 1999; Brito, 2008; Shenga, 2013). Renamo not only decides to withdraw from the electoral processes, but also mobilises voters not to participate. Furthermore, boycotts are accompanied by threats of violence and return to war, which scares voters from turning up at polls. Braathen & Jørgensen (1998) found that the 1998 Renamo boycott of the first local government over irregularities in voter registration was accompanied by threats of possible massacre on the polling day. Threats of violence were also propagated before boycotting the 2013 local government elections. Renamo not only decided to withdraw from the electoral processes, but also mobilised voters not to participate and threatened to attack whoever was going to turn up to vote. In a country with fresh memories of a violent civil war, simple threats suffice to take voters away from polling stations. For example, respondents in Maxixe clearly indicated that they were not going to vote in 2013 for fear of violence in the polling centres.

Voters with a general perception that democracy and elections cause conflicts, violence, instability and war do not see any reason to participate in elections. In 1994, voters turned up in their numbers because they believed that elections were the way for preservation of peace

(Brito, 1996); however, with time, voters came to face the critical situation where each election is characterised by political conflicts and sporadic violence. For these, abstaining is the best way of maintaining peace in the country.

An EMB only can make or break an election, but can also make or break the level of participation in elections<sup>6</sup>. If perceived to operate with transparency, professionalism and impartiality an EMB can work as an institutional mobilisation factor for participation (Sinnott, 2003). Unfortunately the Mozambican EMBs have received less trust from different stakeholders, including voters (Brito, 2008; Hanlon & Fox, 2006; Shenga, 2013). The CEDE survey showed that only 26 per cent of respondents trusted the work of CNE and 25 per cent preferred not to comment (Brito, 2007). In this case the lack of comments can be interpreted as a negative assessment. The European Union report of the Election Observer Mission of 2014 general elections indicated that the level of distrust over the work of EMBs remained. Equally, this study found that respondents are suspicious of the work of local branches of EMBs. At the time of the fieldwork Renamo was vocal demanding equal representation in the EMBs at all levels, a demand rejected by the ruling party. This raised suspicions that the rejection of parity was a strategic move by Frelimo to control and manipulate the whole electoral process.

Furthermore, sentiments that the ruling party dominated electoral rules and institutions were expressed several times during this study. This finding correlates with that of previous studies that showed the unpunished wrongdoing by the electoral officers at all levels and throughout the electoral cycle, the inconsistent interpretation and application of the law and regulations, had fuelled sentiments of lack of confidence in the work of CNE (Brito, 2008; Hanlon & Fox, 2006; Shenga, 2013).

Ballot stuffing and unlawful change of election results have been reported in almost each election in different regions of the country and the general perception is that Frelimo is behind the manipulation. The sentiment expressed by some respondents in Maxixe was that you vote for one, but the other wins; meaning that their vote was given deliberately to somebody else. If this is the case what is the point of going to vote? Some respondents asked. These results also support the Bratton *et al* (2012) findings that manipulating the rules and

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<sup>6</sup> Public distrust and suspicion regarding STAE performance remained, with its staff still perceived as prone to interference and pressure from the ruling party. (EUEOM, 2014:16)

results is common in democracies where elections determine the access and control of state resources, which is the case in Mozambique.

Another important factor mentioned in Maxixe as leading to abstention was the anticipated winner. Frelimo and its candidates are declared winners even before the Election Day. For example, before the 2013 elections the Frelimo candidate was presented to the public by the party leaders as the future mayor of Maxixe, even before the electoral campaigning had started. Many respondents asked this researcher the following, during the fieldwork: what is the point of voting while the winner is already known? The similar situation was reported in previous studies by the Brito (2007) and Shenga (2013). This is clearly attributed to an uneven playing field which produces less competitiveness, making Maxixe a fiefdom of Frelimo.

Recurrent defeats of the opposition parties in elections perceived to be problematic due to unprofessional work of the EMBs and perception of manipulation of the results by the incumbent make a considerable number of opposition followers to abstain. This explanation aligns with the findings by Brito (2008) that recurrent defeats (real or fallacious) by the opposition make their followers to abstain. Voters prefer to stay at home because their preferred candidate or party has no chance of winning anywhere. These kinds of responses were common in Maxixe.

Civic and voter education is an important component in emergent democracies in providing political knowledge to potential voters. A well done civic education works as what Sinnott (2003) in his typology of factors influencing participation, called institutional mobilisation factor or what Shenga (2013) called mobilising agencies for an effective participation in electoral activities. Citizens need to have sufficient information about election procedures in order to feel motivated to participate. However, data show that the ways in which civic education is conducted in Maxixe has not yet yielded important results in mobilising voters. Civic and voter education are conducted in an environment of limited time and resources. The EU report of the observation of the 2014 general elections raised the issue of insufficiency of information to improve citizen's participation. When interacting with some voters attending civic education rallies, this researcher found that most of them were simply attracted by entertainment (music, dance and theatre). Others hoped to receive t-shirts, caps and pamphlets to decorate their homes. Only a few indicated that they attended rallies to learn



or listen to the message about elections. These findings correlate with those of Serra (1999) and Braathen & Jørgensen (1998). Similar results about less contribution of civic education were reached by Keulder (2000) in Namibia. So in Mozambique civic education has been limited to voter education. That is, it has only been limited to *when, where* and *how* to vote, not with no emphasis on voters' rights.

## 6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter interpreted the empirical findings presented in chapter five, based on the theoretical approaches discussed in chapter two and other existing literature in the field of election studies in Africa in general and in Mozambique in particular, giving the respective parallels and incongruities with the findings of this study. The next chapter concludes this study indicating the methodological and theoretical contributions and recommendations for future research and for electoral management bodies, political parties and legal framework.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

How do voters decide in Maxixe district? This study set out to answer to this question in an attempt to understand the dynamics of democracy in Mozambique specifically, but also in Africa in general. Studies of this nature have been limited in the continent. Four theoretical approaches were used to explore voting motivations in Maxixe, namely the sociological, socio-psychological, rational choice and cognitive awareness. Following the discussion and interpretation of the empirical findings in the previous chapter this chapter seeks to outline the main conclusions of the study by looking at how findings responded to the research question. It also highlights the theoretical and methodical contributions the study brings to the body of knowledge. It closes with some recommendations for further research, and practical recommendations for electoral management bodies, political parties and for legal framework reform.

### **7.2 OVERVIEW OF PRECEEDING CHAPTERS**

The introductory chapter outlined the background of the study; the thematic and geographic area and the rationale for choosing Maxixe district and the topic of voting behaviour. It also presented the purpose of the study, research questions and working assumptions, and provided a broad overview of the theoretical framework and a summary of the research design, methodology and strategies applied in the research.

The second chapter presented the theoretical approaches on which this study is based and also provided an overview of existing literature on election studies conducted in Africa in general and Mozambique in particular. Chapter three gave a detailed explanation of the methodology and the research process followed, starting with the explanation of the epistemological paradigm and the research design that guided this study. It also explained research strategies used in the selection of study case, access to the site and respondents. It then explained the methods and techniques used for data collection, data capturing and data analysis. The chapter closed with a description of ethical aspects taken into consideration to ensure integrity and quality research.

Chapter four provided an overview of the political trajectory in Mozambique, from the pre-independence era to the current post-civil war, peace and democratisation transition. It also gave an overview of the electoral and party systems in the country and a review of all elections as well as the challenges in the building of democratic institutions. These aspects have an influence in voting behaviour.

Chapter five presented the empirical results of the study, with themes that originated from the four theoretical approaches guiding the study. The researcher used direct verbatim quotations from transcribed interviews as well as from focus group discussions and extracts from the field notes to enrich the explanation of the data. Chapter six interpreted and discussed the empirical findings based on the four theoretical approaches and established parallels and differences between the findings of this study and those from other studies conducted in the continent and in Mozambique.

### 7.3 MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The sub-sections below present conclusions based on the four secondary research questions that guided the study. The answers to the secondary research questions helped in reaching the final conclusions.

#### **7.3.1 Secondary research question 1: *To what extent do social factors, other than ethnicity, for example, language, place of origin, religion and age influence electoral choices? What other social factors determine voting decisions in Maxixe?***

To respond to this question, social variables such as ethnicity, language, place of origin, religion and age were used in the analysis. Ethnicity does not determine party choice or voting behaviour in Maxixe. The self-identification of the two ethnolinguistic groups (Gitonga and Matswa) does not go beyond the perception of difference in the home language. In fact, this study showed that the language differences tend to be diluted due to intermarriages and miscegenation between the two predominant linguistic groups. Historical political trajectories in Mozambique failed to create conducive conditions for the

development of ethnicity to become an institutionalised cleavage and a political cue. This does not necessarily mean a total absence of animosities between the two groups. However, in election times the majority vote for Frelimo, giving it landslide victories.

The regional dimension seems to be relatively stronger in influencing electoral choices in Maxixe. Maxixe forms part of the historic regional cleavages between the south and the rest of the country. The strong loyalty towards Frelimo is also associated with the fact that its leadership originates from the south. On top of that, Renamo is still blamed for the unforgettable atrocities it committed during the civil war. Renamo therefore belongs to others, not to the southerners in Maxixe.

Religion does not influence party choice in Maxixe. With independence, the Frelimo anticlerical ideology brought down the hegemony of Catholics, a factor which may have contributed towards dissolving any possible faith-based tensions and political alignment based on religion.

Age is an important cleavage among voters in Maxixe. Adults tend to be much more conservative, favouring or rewarding the liberator party and ‘peace maker’ (Frelimo) and fear voting for the unknown, while the youth have less regard of Frelimo as the liberator and tend to be more independent in their choices. Frelimo has always won landslide victories in both rural and urban settings of Maxixe. This is probably because the difference between rural and urban settings in Maxixe is very narrow.

Social factors, particularly ethnicity and religion, cannot be considered important determinants of voting behaviour in Maxixe, contradicting studies that consider African elections as an ethnic census, but confirming some studies conducted in Mozambique. However, region and age seem to have some influence.

### **7.3.2 Secondary research question 2: *To what degree does party identification play a role in voters’ choice in Maxixe?***

Party identification influences vote choice to some extent. However, there are a number of elements to be explained in support of this conclusion. Firstly, the number of voters

expressing identification was low and almost all identified themselves with Frelimo. Secondly, unlike the initially defined pre-dispositional attachment, despite its durability and stability, the partisanship in Maxixe is more situational.

The identification with Frelimo was more strategic than sincere. This study considers sincere partisans as those who identified and voted for Frelimo because of a long and strong loyalty over time. This was common among adults who have been under Frelimo leadership since independence and have developed a moral attachment that makes them uncritical of Frelimo. Others identified positively with Frelimo due to habit factor because they have been voting for the party since the founding elections. Most of the respondents who identified with Frelimo do not know the political ideology or what the party stands for.

On the other side, identification with and voting for Frelimo were more strategic reasons; that is, in order to gain access to state resources or to avoid negative sanctions. Therefore, strategic minded voters did not identify with the opposition.

### **7.3.3 Secondary research question 3: *Does the economy matter in electoral decisions? If yes, what economic factors have the most influence? Are voters concerned with the collective well-being or about improving individual living conditions? Do voters assess the incumbent based on what they have done or failed to do or on what they promise to do? How do voters punish or reward government performance?***

This study found some evidence that the economy determines voting behaviour in Maxixe. However, this conclusion needs to be looked at with caution, particularly for readers from consolidated democracies. Despite limited sophisticated information, voters assess government performance through simple indicators. The general evaluation of the incumbent ruling party is negative. Reasons for such dissatisfaction include high prices of basic commodities, especially food, widespread unemployment, corruption and nepotism in public institutions, self-interest of government agents and the consequent poor service delivery.

One aspect that seems to contradict the assumption of the rational choice is that despite having a clear understanding that the executive government is in charge of the economy,

voters in Maxixe do not use their dissatisfaction to punish the incumbent. A number of reasons were found for this scenario. Firstly, poor performance is not associated with incapacity, but is often blamed on external factors like war and international interventions. As such, the majority of voters share the real or imagined hope that Frelimo will one day build a brighter future for all and therefore deserves to be given another chance to continue improving what it has started. Secondly, voters do not trust the opposition, which is seen as weak and not a reliable alternative. Even young voters, who demonstrated a tendency of independence through voting for the opposition in legislative elections to have a balanced parliament, argue that they can not to give executive power to the opposition due to the uncertainty about how it will handle the economy if it wins an election. Thirdly, there is also a general fear of the unknown. In a context where the control of the economy lies in the hands of Frelimo's new bourgeoisie, voters prefer to secure the little achievements rather than voting for the opposition and then lose all that they have acquired.

In terms of target of evaluation voters in Maxixe are more interested in the provision of public goods and services than personal goods or improving individual conditions. Voters have a perception that once public goods are in place, individual well-being will also improve. Economic conditions therefore influence the vote, but not as assumed in the reward-punishment model. Voters punish the poor performance not by voting for the opposition, but by abstaining, and the ruling party still wins at the end.

**7.3.4 Secondary research question 4: *Does political knowledge and information play a role in determining voting decisions? If yes, what are the most important sources of information? How do voters select and use the information in their voting decisions?***

Voters in Maxixe still have limited political knowledge and political culture. The ignorance ranges from lack of understanding of the basic rules of democracy to lack of factual knowledge about public figures, political parties, public institutions, as well as their rights and responsibilities as voters. The limited information that voters in Maxixe have is acquired through the biased public media, poor civic education, and is complemented by other sources such as family members, friends, neighbours and other networks.

Limited political knowledge contributes to low interest in politics and democracy. Lack of enthusiasm is also associated with the perception that elections are a source of chaos and instability and the view that democracy only benefits political elites and does not yield tangible results to improve the life of the majority of the population. Voters therefore prefer to engage in activities that give them food than engaging in politics. The alarming levels of surveillance, social control and monitoring of those against the incumbent also discourage people from engaging in discussions about politics or public issues.

Only a small number of voters reported participating with a genuine interest in politics and a clear understanding of the importance of their involvement such as participation as a means of exercising their political rights and freedoms; to express their citizenship and civic duty. Their participation was motivated by intangible factors or to feel good. The majority of voters reported participating in politics and elections for fear of possible reprisals, since not voting would be perceived as a confrontation with incumbent political authorities. Adults, the most sensitive to political pressure, participated to express their moral decency, while youngsters participated as a result of surveillance and monitoring by government authorities.

Limited knowledge and interest in politics in most cases resulted in lower voter turnout. Factors behind low voter turnout included the discrepancy between voters' expectations and what democracy can effectively supply; poor relationship between elected representatives and voters or inadequate representation; the perception that elections are associated with conflicts, violence, instability and war; and lack of trust in the work of EMB.

#### **7.4 REFLECTIONS ON THE PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION**

The following subsections present what this study believes to be the contribution of this research to the body of knowledge in Mozambique and beyond. The reflections are based on the main research question guiding this study, which is: *What factors shape voting decisions in Maxixe district?*

### 7.4.1 Theoretical contribution

Despite the eager interest of electoral students to analyse and disclose the motivations that make voters to cast their vote in favour of or against a particular political party or candidate, there has been no universal explanation that is applicable to all democracies. Studies conducted in emerging democracies in Africa have leaned towards Western theoretical frameworks and in most cases results of such studies lead to ecological fallacies and raise more debates than providing answers.

This study tested four theoretical approaches, namely the Sociological, the Socio-psychological, the Rational Choice and the Cognitive Awareness to see whether they are applicable in explaining voting behaviour in Maxixe. Results from the study produced a number of theoretical implications; some partially confirm the postulations of these traditional theories, while others simply contradict the postulations.

Firstly, this study reveals that the compartmentalisation of theoretical frameworks into different approaches, models or paradigms does not always correspond to the reality in which voters live. Voters' experiences, opinions and views are so intertwined and when elections come they mobilise these different sentiments in order to make one single decision. This study showed that a single voter may combine a political motivation together with non-political factors. The study has shown for example, how the negative assessment of the performance of the government is smothered by other non-economic factors such as the regional dynamics and historical trajectory. Voters' choices are based on complex motivations beyond the partitions established by theoretical approaches.

Secondly, the widely embraced assumption that African voters always play ethnic card, be it exclusively or in part, has not been confirmed by this study. The Gitonga and Matswa, the two distinct ethnolinguistic groups, all tend to vote for Frelimo during elections. Belonging to different ethnolinguistic groups can work as source or channel of information as Pereira (2008) found, but not necessarily as a cleavage because this difference was never politicised or manipulated. The rebuttal in this study of the widely accepted notion that the African vote is an ethnic census (Horowitz, 1985) represents an important contribution to enforce the findings of the previous studies conducted in Mozambique and in Africa that categorically or



partially rejected the influence of ethnicity, but more than that, the study reinforces the call for further reflection on the exact influence of ethnicity and to uncover other social cleavages likely to influence voters' choice individually or in conjunction with others.

Thirdly, a number of studies conducted in Mozambique identified the salience of the rural versus urban cleavage. Brito (1996) and other studies that followed, argued that urban voters tended to vote for Frelimo, while rural voters voted for the opposition. The chief explanation was that the rural vote was a protest against Frelimo's failed socialist project and economic crisis (Brito, 1996; Serra, 1999) that hit the rural areas the most. This study covered urban and rural areas of Maxixe, including former communal villages and found no evidence of major differences on voting behaviour between the two settings. This takes us to a reflection that may eventually lead to a new way of approaching the urban-rural dichotomy. Firstly, after about three decades after its end, can it be that the socialist project is still fresh in the memory of voters to the point of influencing voting motivation? One should also consider the number of events and transitions that occurred after the end of the project. Secondly, the war and economic crisis led to a massive rural-to-urban exodus; in fact, urban areas are a continuation of the rural setting. With the end of war and the advancement of technology of communication, the frontier between the rural and the urban tended to narrow. Lastly, with peace and the economic liberalisation the government initiated a number of investments in rural areas that reduced the gap between rural and urban areas. The theoretical question is: with all these transformations is it still relevant for the Mozambican context to consider the urban-rural dichotomy as a cleavage likely to influence political choices? It should also be noted that a great feature that characterised the cleavage between urban and rural areas in the European context, that is, industrialisation, is not present in Mozambique.

Fourthly, one particular aspect that came to the fore in this study, even though respondents did not want to express it openly, is what in the study was called 'super identity'. This was reflected in the sentiment that regardless of being Gitonga or Matswa 'we are southerners', in clear opposition to others from other regions of the country. The most common narrative is that this identification is caused by the historical legacy of being a place of origin of the Frelimo leaders and economic imbalances. The study brings up new variables that must be considered in the analysis; first, the fact of this region did not experience the armed struggle for independence–Frelimo reaping the benefits–and lastly the fact southern Mozambique

suffered the most horrendous atrocities of the 16-year civil war (refer to chapter four)—all blamed on Renamo.

Fifthly, empirical studies analysing voting behaviour through the lens of party identification approach are still limited in African democracies. Furthermore, these studies raise more questions than providing answers on whether party identification influence voters' choice in emerging democracies. One cannot deny the existence of some voting based on any kind of party attachment. The number of voters who do so may be smaller, but they are there. Results in Maxixe give evidence of an existence of this group of voters. The question is: are there partisans in exactly the same way as they were defined by Campbell and his team in *The American Voter*? The answer is no. The study found that the loyalty to Frelimo has multiple dimensions; some of them do not fit in the party identification approach. The attachment to Frelimo reflects sympathy, rewards, gratitude, voting habit not necessarily transmitted from parents as the original model suggests. Long acquaintance and voting habit becomes a source of partisanship.

Furthermore, identification with Frelimo is more instrumental than affective. This instrumentality can be driven by positive and negative forces. Voters positively driven are those who show loyalty to gain some patronage or material rewards in return, a situation very common in most parts of Africa, particularly where the party in power dominates the weak opposition and exercises almost total control over state resources, as is the case in Mozambique. On the other side, the study shows that there are those who, against their will, identified with the ruling party for fear of reprisal or to avoid harm. Additionally, there is another type of instrumentality of party identification associated with the perception of the weakness of the opposition. These are the voters who preferred to identify with or vote for Frelimo because they still do not trust sufficiently the opposition as a political option that they can turn to. This situation is common around the Southern African region, where liberation former parties still remain in power.

The theoretical implication of this study in terms of our understanding of party identification is that there is a need to break new ground for the understanding of how party identification operates in African democracies. One intriguing finding, for example, is that the party machinery seems to be stronger than candidates.

Sixthly, with regards to the rational choice approach, this study also corroborates partially the assumption that the economy influences voting decision in Maxixe. One important aspect that calls for a theoretical reflection is the applicability of the reward-punishment paradigm, given the fact that despite the high levels of dissatisfaction with the government performance the large majority of voters continued to cast their vote in favour of the incumbent party, both at local government and national levels. Voters in Maxixe desire change of the economic conditions for the better, but that does not necessarily mean the removal of Frelimo from power. Frelimo still needs time to do better what it has started. Does the non-use of reward-punishment paradigm mean that voters in Maxixe do not use rational calculations? The answer is no. Findings in this study show that deciding to reward the incumbent party represents a rational calculation based on the evaluation of the available alternatives. As reported earlier in chapters five and six, the large majority of respondents in this study did not think that the opposition possessed managerial capacity to lead the country. That is why they prefer to express their dissatisfaction by abstaining. This study reinforces the findings from some previous studies.

Seventhly, a rational voter is expected to be egotropic rather than sociotropic and prospective rather than retrospective. This study found that despite the fact that voters complain about their personal circumstances, most of them revealed their sociotropic standpoint in the voting decision. This finding reinforces previous studies that showed that Africans use economy, but in relation to other motivations. Additionally, a true rational voter is expected to be prospective rather than retrospective; however, voters in Maxixe combine both their past and future calculations when deciding in elections.

Lastly, by incorporating the cognitive awareness approach in the analysis, this study provides a significant theoretical contribution, since this approach has rarely been used in Africa. This study did not find evidence that the most informed politically skilled voters are the most interested and tend to engage actively in politics. In contrary, the study found that informed voters were the less interested in politics and were most likely to abstain. Like Pereira (2008) found, cognitive awareness does not influence voting behaviour directly, but works as an intermediary.

## 7.4.2 Methodological contribution

This is purely a qualitative study, with data generated solely from qualitative interviewing in a methodological fieldwork research in one particular location. By doing this, the study takes a route not common in other election studies characterised by analysis of large amounts of data collected from cross-national surveys or national election results (see Brito, 1996; Pereira, 2008). Qualitative interviews allowed respondents to express themselves freely about a range of economic, social and political aspects that they believed affect their vote choice. The use of one-on-one interview technique and regular contacts/visits for follow-up purposes allowed respondents to spontaneously narrate their feelings, opinions and experiences, minimising the problem of fear to express their political thinking. In a context where people feel limited to express their feelings, this strategy seemed to be suitable. The data generated here cannot be replicated in other regions, but this strategy can be used in other similar studies in Mozambique and the rest of Africa.

Secondly, the use of social constructivism paradigm in a study on voting behaviour made a significant contribution to the field. This allowed participants to explain their understanding about democracy, elections and voting motivations based on their social perception outside of the traditional theories of voting behaviour. This helped the researcher tremendously in gaining insights on different views about motivations that make voters to decide in elections. This also allowed the researcher to collect rich data that helped in interpreting voting behaviour in its complexity. One important finding after asking a range of questions, informal conversations and regular visits, is that it became clear that the general assumption that voting behaviour in Africa is explained by ethnicity did not hold in Maxixe.

Thirdly, the use of qualitative approach in this study is ground breaking if compared to previous studies that usually analyse voting behaviour in Mozambique based on aggregated cross-national data from national election results or generated through national surveys (Afrobarometer, CNEP, and so on). Lastly, unlike other studies based on cross-country analysis in a large territory, this study was based on analysis of a small territorial unity. It was not the intention of the researcher to have the results of this study replicated in other parts of Mozambique or elsewhere. However, other locally-based election studies can methodologically benefit from this.

## 7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study closes with recommendations for future research in the field of electoral studies in Mozambique, for electoral management bodies, political parties, and legal framework reform.

### 7.5.1 Recommendations for future research

The question of how and why voters choose their preferred candidates and contesting political parties in elections remains open, particularly in emerging democracies like Mozambique. Drawing from the findings in Maxixe, future studies should focus on the following areas:

Firstly, the high levels of abstentions in Maxixe in particular and in Mozambique in general have been jeopardising the legitimacy of elected governments as well as the exercise of democracy in the country. The study showed that one of the triggers is the dissatisfaction with the performance of the incumbent ruling party. However, further research is needed for a clear understanding of what other reasons make voters decide not to exercise their democratic rights.

Secondly, results of this study showed a widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of the ruling party, but still vote for Frelimo in large numbers. Similar studies (see, for example, Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007) have concluded that this is caused by the lack of available alternatives. However, further studies are necessary to determine what other factors lead voters to behave this way.

Thirdly, the study did not find any evidence of influence of ethnicity in voting behaviour; however there is a need for further study to find out what other social factors determine motivation in electoral choice. In summary, follow-up studies should focus on:

- In-depth examination of the extent to which ethno-linguistic, regional, and cultural identities influence the party choice.
- How factors such as level of education, occupation, income, and gender can influence voters' choice?

- To what extent government performance assessment influences the vote?
- What other factors determine the vote for the incumbent party?
- To what extent does patronage influence voting behaviour?
- How do electoral campaigning and media influence party choice in elections?
- Voters' choice in local government and national elections: factors and motivations.
- How does the party system and electoral system influence the vote?
- The influence of party leadership and party image in party choice.
- Sources of political information, processing mechanisms and influence on voters' choice.
- Importance of social networks (neighbourhood, community and family) in voters' choice.
- Possible existence of community vote, particularly in rural areas.
- To what extent do political and historical legacies of one-party regime influence electoral choice today?
- Popular understanding and perception about the importance of rights in democracy and elections.
- How strong is the influence of the memories of one-part regime, characterised by the fear of reprisals, in voting decision: do voters vote for the party that they like the most or they fear the most?

### **7.5.2 Recommendations for electoral management bodies**

The study revealed that the work of electoral management bodies in Mozambique has great influence on voters' attitude. In order to strengthen the multi-party democratic competition in Maxixe as well as in the whole country, this study recommends the following:

Firstly, the CNE and STAE have to work to change the public negative perception about their performance, through increasing transparency, accountability and impartiality in their work. The trust in the work of these two institutions is likely to increase the level of interest in participation in elections.

Lastly, democracy and governance can only flourish and be sustained when voters are well educated and informed about voting rights and responsibilities, why and how to participate in

electoral and democratic processes, better understanding of the role and responsibilities of political and public institutions. However, currently, knowledge and understanding of democracy in Mozambique is limited to electoral procedures (how, where and when to cast the vote). The STAE and CNE should put more efforts for continuous civic education targeting mostly youth and women in rural areas, groups that showed to be less interested in participating in elections. Emphasis should be put on the involvement of other actors, particularly the CSOs, schools, media, and grassroots communities in civic and electoral education.

### **7.5.3 Recommendations for political parties**

Political parties play an important part in influencing the voting decisions of the electorate. Based on the findings of this study two recommendations can be made:

Firstly, one of the explanations for the ruling party's consecutive victories is the perception that opposition parties are not a trustworthy alternative. Therefore, voters prefer to keep strategically rewarding the poor performance of what they already know rather than adventuring for the unknown. Opposition political parties should thus work to prove to the electorate that they are credible and trustworthy institutions with strong leadership and candidates in order to widen electoral choices. They should increase the interaction with the electorate even in periods between elections.

Secondly, there is a need for a thorough reform of the party system as a whole. Results in Maxixe show that voters do not look at political parties as working towards their traditional function of aggregating and representing people's aspirations. Citizens look at political parties as selfish business institutions with leadership interested in gaining benefits from the people for personal interests without giving back. This includes the incumbent Frelimo.

Lastly, to increase voters' trust and credibility, opposition parties should develop training programmes at all levels, individual or collectively, on how to use the resources at their disposal (state media and financial resources from state budget) to develop outreach programmes including effective electoral campaigning, strengthen leadership and internal

organisation. Furthermore, political parties need to be capacitated in designing alternative policies to attract the electorate.

#### **7.5.4 Recommendations for legal framework reform**

Firstly, Mozambique has been associated with the challenge of poor law enforcement. In the course of this study, episodes of unlawfulness ranging from the use of state apparatus (administrative, human, financial, material resources) for electoral gains by the ruling party were reported. The separation of powers between the incumbent ruling party and the state is not visible. Therefore, there is a need for the implementation of a legal framework prohibiting the use of public resources during the electoral campaign to create a level playing field for all contesting parties.

Secondly, countries that were under one-party regime for a long time used the public media as an instrument for political propaganda. With transition to democracy, most of them remain with the old practices of censorship, and use it as an instrument to fight opposition parties. These allegations have been noted in Mozambique, but were more prevalent in the 2014 general elections in Mozambique. Therefore, there is need for a heightened control of enforcement of legal provisions on the role of the public media as an independent body (from the ruling party) and to cater for democratic plurality. The quality of information is crucial for decision making process.

Thirdly, the proportional representation system does not seem to produce results that benefit voters directly. Voters in Maxixe do not feel represented neither in the elected bodies nor in the state organs. It is recommended that the country adopts a new route with a new electoral system likely to motivate voters to participate in elections and other electoral processes.

#### **7.6 CONCLUSION**

This study helped not only to understand how voters in Maxixe behave, but also to gain more insights about various aspects of Mozambican politics, from the legal framework, party system and political parties, electoral system and governance. With regard to voting behaviour, what seems to be a simple act of casting the vote is influenced by a complex of



interrelated factors; and the voting behaviour of one voter can only be understood through using a multiplicity of theories.

Secondly, this study offers a valuable opportunity for a better understanding of possible variations that traditional approaches can produce when applied in a different context from where they originated. That is, the study showed that the sociological, party identification, rational choice and cleavage awareness approaches can yield results in Mozambique that could not be predicted in much consolidated democracies. However, the study showed that the complementarity of the four approaches remains unchanged.

Thirdly, in line with other studies conducted in Africa, this study showed that elections in Maxixe are not an ethnic census; secondly, that party identification has less influence on voters' choice; thirdly, the incumbent ruling party wins elections in spite of the popular dissatisfaction and lastly, that cognitive factors still do not exert strong influence in voters' choice because voters still have a limited political sophistication.

Lastly, the study found that the political context has a great influence on voting behaviour. The perception about lack of transparency, independence and the politicised nature of the EMBs, the party system dominated by one party over weak opposition, lack of separation of powers between the state and the incumbent ruling party and massive political ignorance all influence voting behaviour.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: LETTER OF CONSENT



### Department of Political Sciences

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08 May 2013

### INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear Participant,

My name is Zefanias Alberto Matsimbe. I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria. My topic is:  
**Voting Behaviour in Mozambique: a Study of Maxixe District.**

I will be conducting research within the Maxixe District, involving adults and potential voters. You are kindly invited to participate in this project. The aim and purpose of this study is to determine and explain the factors that influence voting behaviour in the district. The study focuses particularly on political, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors and the extent to which they influence voters' decision making.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and will in no way disadvantage you. Your participation will be in the form of one semi-structured interview which will be conducted by me. The duration of the interview should be no longer than one hour. You may be asked to elaborate or explain some of your answers. The interview will be recorded and I will also take notes. After the transcription of the interview, a follow-up interview will be arranged to give you the opportunity to verify information

obtained during the interview. Your personal contribution and responses are crucial in assisting me to answer the relevant questions regarding the voting behaviour in Maxixe District.

Your confidentiality and anonymity regarding the information provided is guaranteed. You may also withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences and any data collected from you during this study will be destroyed. Data collected during this study will be stored in a secured place for a period of 15 years as required by the University of Pretoria. There are no known risks to you as a participant in this study.

Yours sincerely,

Zefanias Alberto Matsimbe

Professor Maxi Schoeman

.....

.....

(Student)

(Supervisor)

**Participant consent**

I Agree/Disagree

Participant signature: .....Date:.....

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



### Department of Political Sciences

#### INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – SCHEDULE

**Introduction:** Greetings! My name is Zefanias Alberto Matsimbe. I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. I am representing neither the government nor any political party. I am doing research to understand how citizens in Maxixe make up their choices during elections. I would like to discuss this issue with you. All the information from you will be treated with maximum confidentiality and used for academic purposes only. Your answers will be put together with those of other individuals that I will be interviewing, in order to get an overall picture of how, in general, people in Maxixe decide when voting for a particular candidate or political party. It will be impossible to pick you out from what you say, so please feel free to tell us what you think.

Before the commencement of the interview you will be asked to indicate your agreement by signing a letter of informed consent. May I also ask you whether you agree or not that I may record the interview on tape and take some notes?

Site:.....Interviewee code or pseudonym:.....

Date: .....Transcriber/assistant:.....

Start time: ..... End time: .....

Language of interview:.....

Description of the surrounding environment:.....

.....

#### GENERAL INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

1. Have you ever voted? If yes, what aspects did you take into consideration when deciding to vote for a particular political party or candidate? Do you think that you are going to consider the same aspects when voting in future elections?



**QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS THE SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 1** (*To what extent do social factors, other than ethnicity, for example, language, place of origin, religion and age influence electoral choices? What other social factors determine voting decisions in Maxixe?*)

2. Are you member of any particular group, association or organisation (community of faith based organisation, mutual assistance, charity, credit, funeral scheme, sport club, mutual assistance group, xitike, and so on) in Maxixe?
3. To what extent is your vote likely to be influenced by your family members, friends, neighbours, and people speaking the same language as you, people from the same place of origin, people from the same church or the association/organisation/group you belong?

**QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS THE SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 2** (*To what degree does party identification play a role in voters' choice in Maxixe?*)

4. Are you member or supporter of any political party?
5. Have you always voted for one political party or you have changed? Explain why you decided to change or kept voting for the same political party over time.

**QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS THE SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 3** (*Does the economy matter in electoral decisions? If yes, what economic factors have the most influence? Are voters concerned with the collective well-being or about improving individual living conditions? Do voters assess the incumbent based on what they have done or failed to do or on what they promise to do? How do voters punish or reward government performance?*)

6. What is your overall assessment of the general economic situation of the country, of the performance of the current national and local government and of your living conditions in the last years? What is your expectation in the years to come?
7. How is your general assessment of the economic situation of the country, the performance of the government and the situation of your living condition likely to influence your voting choice?

**QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS THE SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 4** (*Does political knowledge and information play a role in determining voting decisions? If yes, what are the most important sources of information? How do voters select and use the information in their voting decisions?*)

8. Do you understand how democracy works in Mozambique and the importance of elections? If yes, how did you come to know this?
9. Is your choice influenced by what you know about politics and public affairs or not at all?

### **GENERAL CONCLUDING QUESTION**

10. Besides the aspects that we have discussed earlier (social factors, party identification, economic and government performance and cognitive awareness) what other aspects influenced or are likely to influence your voting choice?

### **Biographical data of the interviewee**

- Your name (optional and to be codified or use pseudonyms)
- Your age (It is optional, but I have to make sure participants are 18 or older)
- Gender and occupation (or what do you do in order to earn your living?)
- What level of schooling do you have (no formal education, primary or secondary school, or tertiary – please specify)?

### **Concluding notes**

Thank you very much for your time and for sharing with me your valuable experiences. I am going to listen to the tape and please allow me to come back to you for further clarity about any information that may not be clear or not be captured at all. I also wish to inform you that this information is going to be used to write a thesis and if you wish, I am willing to avail to you how the information acquired from you had been used.

## APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE



**Department of Political Sciences**

### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Site:..... Number of participants:.....  
Moderator:.....Research Assistant:.....  
Start time: ..... End time: .....  
Date: ..... Transcriber: .....  
Description of focus group seating chart:.....

#### **Researcher's name and background**

My name is Zefanias Alberto Matsimbe. I am a lecturer at Eduardo Mondlane University, while currently doing my PhD studies at the University of Pretoria, in South Africa. I am conducting a study on electoral behaviour in Maxixe. Let me also take this opportunity to introduce Mr/Ms.....who will be assisting me throughout the focus group discussion.

Thank you very much for agreeing to be part of this discussion. You have been chosen on the basis that you are local residents and above 18 years of age, which means that you have voted at least once or you are about to exercise your democratic right, that is, the right to vote.

We are going to have a free discussion about factors determining voting behaviour in Maxixe. By “voting behaviour” we mean what makes voters choose a particular contesting political party or candidate in elections. The main issue is to identify and explain the most common factors that voters in Maxixe take into consideration before choosing a particular political party or candidate in elections. During this focus group, we’ll be looking at things

like politics, economics, government and the way it performs, the extent to which we all participate in the things going on around us and the way all of this influences how we vote.

### **Focus Group Session Procedures**

The focus group session will take approximately one hour and thirty minutes. Before we start, remember to switch off your cell phones, and keep them switched off throughout the focus group discussion. The session will start with an icebreaker. You are invited to freely share your knowledge about this topic and remember that there are no right or wrong answers. There should be no interruptions when someone is speaking. Avoid side conversations during the discussion. It would help if you could mention your name every time you speak.

During the discussion, written notes will be taken; you will be tape-recorded when talking; therefore, everybody should please speak clearly. As indicated on the consent form that you have already completed, confidentiality will be respected.

### **Self-introductions of participants**

Please kindly introduce yourself to the rest of the group and tell us what comes to your mind, when you hear the terms “multiparty democracy” or “democratic elections”.

### **Focus group discussion topics**

- i. In your understanding, what do you think are the most common factors influencing voters’ choice in Maxixe?
- ii. To what extent do social factors, other than ethnicity, for example, language, place of origin, religion and age influence electoral choices? What other social factors determine voting decisions in Maxixe?
- iii. To what degree do party identification and party support play a role in voters’ choice in Maxixe?
- iv. Do you think that voters in Maxixe look at what the government has done or at what it is likely to do in future to make up their mind during elections?
- v. Do voters assess the incumbent based on what they have done or failed to do or on what they promise to do? How do voters punish or reward government performance?
- vi. Are voters concerned with the collective well-being or about improving individual living conditions?

- vii. Do you think that the population of Maxixe understand and is interested in multiparty democracy, elections or in following public affairs?
- viii. Does political knowledge and information play a role in determining voters' decisions? If yes, what are the most important sources of information? How do voters select and use the information in their voting decisions?

**Focus group discussion note-taker form**

**Date:** ..... **Note-taker:** .....

Question	Responses	Observation