

DEMOS

**NEW
FRONTIERS**

THE 2019 MOZAMBIQUE
ELECTIONS ON SOCIAL
MEDIA

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JANUARY 2020

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This project is supported by EISA:



Published by Demos January 2020

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Charity number 1042046

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Trying to make sense of major political events through social media is impossible without the support of local knowledge and regional expertise. We are indebted to Aslak Orre at the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen and to Thais Portilho for steering our analysis and providing vital language work. We are also grateful to Egidio Guambe, Ericino de Salema and Domingos do Rosário at EISA for their invaluable support, guidance and feedback, and to Stanley Phillipson Brown for his keen-eyed review.

All mistakes remain the responsibility of the authors.

INTRODUCTION

EISA-Mozambique commissioned Demos to undertake this piece of research in September 2019, ahead of the Mozambique general election held on 15 October 2019 – the sixth multi-party general election in Mozambique’s democratic history.

This report presents the results of a six week study of digital communication platforms during the 2019 Mozambique election. It is the latest piece of Demos research examining the ways in which the rise of digital technologies has impacted democratic processes around the world. Whether in the UK, Nigeria, the DRC or Mozambique, the use of social media in elections now receives widespread attention from traditional media for its role in informing, engaging and influencing citizens.

Mozambique shows many of the conditions that have proven to be fertile for producing changes in political behaviour.¹ The country is experiencing a major boom in digital communications driven by accelerating internet and mobile penetration rates. Latest estimates suggest one in two Mozambique citizens own a mobile phone and approximately 20% of Mozambique citizens are now internet users, concentrated in the major urban centres of Maputo, Matola, Beira, Quelimane and Nampula.² The growth of digital communication and particularly the uptake in the use of social media has been driven by handheld devices: just one percent of Mozambique citizens use social media outside of their mobile device, with the majority of internet usage made up by mobile internet use. Facebook and YouTube remain the most widely used social media platforms and both continue to grow in the country, while WhatsApp is the most widely used messaging platform.

Around the world, the rise of these digital platforms and tools has provided new opportunities for communities to be exposed to political messaging

and to organise and coordinate elements of political activity, and new opportunities for parties to attempt to influence the popular vote. This was the case in Mozambique. The 2019 election, eventually won by the incumbent party FRELIMO and its leader Filipe Nyusi, was fought online as well as off.

This report set out to examine the kinds of activity taking place on online platforms during the 2019 election, and takes in four of the major platforms: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp. It presents a mixed-methods approach: where quantitative methods of data collection and analysis were not possible, research was supported through the qualitative monitoring of groups and communities.

In many ways, this research presents a familiar story: the rise of mobile-first digital platforms is transforming the ways in which voters are able to access, discuss and disseminate information. Significant amounts of political campaigning in Mozambique is now taking place in online spaces. There is, however, more evidence that the rise of digital politics is bringing its own problems: low-quality information is rife, and transparency and accountability for that information is poor. ‘Fake news’ remains a feature of politics online. And as the use of closed networks like WhatsApp for politics becomes more widespread, political messaging and debate becomes decreasingly transparent and more difficult to explore and understand.

This report begins with an overview of the political context in which the 2019 Mozambique general election was held, before exploring the use of different social media platforms in turn. We finish the report with conclusions indicating how this report might be leveraged by EISA and to influence and communicate with Mozambicans using new technology.

¹ Tsandzana, Urban youth and social networks in Mozambique: the political participation of the helpless connected (Comunicação e Sociedade, vol. 34, 2018)

² WeAreSocial Digital, Mozambique (2019)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this report is to provide EISA with a view of the online media ecosystem in Mozambique, identifying the key voices, networks and themes in the Mozambique digital landscape around the 2019 general election.

To do this, we looked at discussion of the election, electoral issues, and the party's own election material across Facebook pages, Twitter, Youtube and WhatsApp groups. Researchers particularly looked into how gender, electoral violence, and the region of Cabo Delgado featured in the election campaign.

- On Twitter and Facebook, FRELIMO have by far the most professional and sophisticated digital strategy of the main political parties. They have multiple times more followers than any other party, and considerable message discipline focusing on their main slogans and positive messages around their leader Filipe Nyusi. Blog posts claiming to represent supporters from different provinces are shared, repeating FRELIMO's key messages.
- In contrast, RENAMO makes almost no use of Twitter. On Facebook, their messaging is much less consistent, with a variety of styles of posts. Much of their content is resharing posts and videos submitted by activists.
- FRELIMO dominates the wider conversation on Twitter, with the plurality of tweets relating to them. But the majority of these posts are critical of Frelimo, with many involving 'gallows humour', making jokes for example about the race being rigged - though there is also straightforward criticism and allegations of nepotism and corruption, particularly with reference to the hidden debts scandal.
- Perhaps unsurprisingly given the relative penetration of Twitter in Mozambique, many of the most widely shared tweets regarding the election were from foreign journalists and other observers. However, there is evidence of an emerging class of domestic journalists and bloggers specialising in social media content creation, with lesser known commentators and civil society actors gaining traction during the election period.
- Some of the issues facing Mozambique over the election period that one might have expected to dominate conversation on social media garnered relatively little engagement - allegations of electoral violence and the apparent Islamist insurgency in Cabo Delgado province were not frequently mentioned. Where reference was made to these issues, it tended to be journalistic in nature - perhaps as the people affected first hand tend to be the least likely to have access to social media, or due to government control of information related to insurgency.
- On Youtube, FRELIMO appears to be the only political party with its own channel, but their professional - if repetitive - videos for the most part failed to cut through. Miramar news videos related to RENAMO were particularly popular - perhaps due to the dearth of information on the party otherwise available in the likes of FRELIMO's official broadcasts and videos produced by the national public broadcaster TVM. By far the most successful Youtube content for any political party - and indeed the most watched video collected - was the pro-FRELIMO music video by Mr. Bow.

- RENAMO supporters were disproportionately represented in comments on Youtube, with one in three including a pro-RENAMO message, compared with 10% which were pro-FRELIMO.
- Finally, we studied the use of WhatsApp - almost certainly the most widely used messaging application in Mozambique. We found WhatsApp performed three major roles - as a news source, sharing stories before the election and the results as they were announced; as a platform to document cases of electoral malpractice, violence and difficulties voting; and to co-ordinate and encourage proactive anti-corruption activities.
- A handful of key voices across the different WhatsApp groups studied were responsible for sharing a disproportionately large amount of the news and information shared on the platform. Encouraging and increasing the number of these 'super users' will be integral to strengthening the networks of voices in the country.
- MDM received limited coverage across Twitter, Youtube and WhatsApp. However, on Facebook, they appeared to run a campaign with similar levels of engagement and interaction to that of RENAMO. They seemed to have a slightly better coordinated Facebook campaign, focusing more on their presidential candidate, Daviz Simango, and repeating their key messages more clearly.

THE ELECTION

Mozambique entered the 2019 general election in the aftermath of a peace deal between the two main parties, FRELIMO and RENAMO - but with serious issues facing the country, and widespread concerns about the electoral process.

Much of Mozambican political debate revolved around the hidden debts scandal, in which the government guaranteed two billion US dollars' worth of debt for dubious projects - in turn leading to the International Monetary Fund and other international donors cutting off the supply of foreign aid. The scandal appeared to be touched on by the Pope in a visit to Mozambique during the run up to the general election, which dominated much of Mozambican social media.

In August, President Filipe Nyusi and RENAMO leader Ossufo Momade agreed to peacefully participate in the general election; RENAMO agreed to disarm members of their military wing and reintegrate them into society, and FRELIMO in return allowed provincial governors to be elected on the basis of general election votes within each province, as previously agreed by President Nyusi and the late Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, in February 2018, and then confirmed by a constitutional amendment in June 2018 - widely expected at the time to lead to RENAMO ruling in provinces where it traditionally had strong support.

However, at the time of the election, the demobilisation of RENAMO fighters had yet to be completed, and there were allegations they were involved in violence in the lead up to elections. Leaders of this military faction criticised Mr Momade and the peace deal.

There were widespread concerns about the credibility of the voter register, with hundreds of thousands more voters appearing in the latter in places like Gaza province, where the extra people increased the number of Assembly seats in the FRELIMO stronghold by eight. There was also a lack of trust among opposition leaders and civil society observers in the government, security services and electoral commission to allow a free and fair election.

The election also took place against the background of instability and violence in the province of Cabo

Delgado, leading to some polling stations failing to open on election day.

Over the election period, violence was not widespread, but there were incidents of intimidation and attacks on candidates (including on an MDM candidate in Gaza, Ossufo Momade in Zambezia and Nova Democracia's head candidate in Gaza province), allegations of ballot stuffing, and incidents that led to deaths. Notably, civil society leader Anastácio Matavele was assassinated, seemingly by members of the police force - indicating covert violence by the security services, though flagrant police intimidation was not often seen in the open (although of course, Mr Matavele's murder sent its own message).

The official results of the election showed a crushing victory for FRELIMO, with Filipe Nyusi winning 73% of the vote, ahead of RENAMO's Ossufo Momade on 22%, Daviz Simango from MDM on four percent and Mario Albino of AMUSI garnering less than one percent of the vote.

Surprisingly, every province - including those in which RENAMO had traditionally had strong support - returned a majority for FRELIMO, meaning they maintained control of every provincial governorship, despite the peace deal.

RENAMO have rejected the results and called for fresh elections, citing violence, arbitrary arrests and ballot-box stuffing.

FRELIMO

FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front) is the current governing party in Mozambique. It was originally an anti-colonialist movement founded in 1962 in Tanzania by Eduardo Mondlane. After training operatives for two years in camps situated mainly in Tanzania, FRELIMO launched a military campaign in Mozambique for the liberation of the Mozambican territory from Portuguese rule in 1964.

Mozambique declared independence following 10 years of armed struggle against Portugal, on June 25, 1975. FRELIMO ascended to power and Samora Machel, Eduardo Mondlane's successor, became the People's Republic of Mozambique's first President.

From 1976 to 1992, FRELIMO was at war with RENAMO (National Mozambican Resistance). FRELIMO has been the governing party since the first democratic multiparty elections were held in 1994, when Joaquim Chissano became the country's first elected leader.

In 2004, Armando Guebuza was selected as FRELIMO's candidate for president, replacing Chissano and becoming Mozambique's second president in 2005.³ Prior to the 2014 General Election, Guebuza agreed a peace deal with RENAMO leader, Afonso Dhlakama, after an outbreak of conflict since 2012.

Filipe Nyusi was selected as FRELIMO's candidate in the 2014 election and subsequently won. He is the current president of Mozambique, having stood for re-election in 2019.

Filipe Jacinto Nyusi is the fourth and current President of Mozambique, in office since 2015, having previously served as Minister of Defence from 2008 to 2014.

RENAMO

RENAMO (National Mozambican Resistance) is the main opposition and second largest political party in Mozambique. It was founded in 1976, shortly after Mozambique gained independence, as an armed organisation and engaged in a civil war with FRELIMO. In 1992, RENAMO signed a peace treaty with FRELIMO⁴, becoming a populist political party. Its former fighters joined the Mozambican Army.

The Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, went into hiding in October 2012, after accusing the government of breaking the terms of the 1992 peace deal. A peace deal was initially agreed in September 2014 before the 2014 General Election.⁵ However, after RENAMO's refusal to accept the 2014 presidential elections⁶, problems in the implementation of the peace deal and after continued efforts by government forces to disarm RENAMO met resistance, Dhlakama broke off the peace process in August 2015.⁷

On August 1st 2019, RENAMO agreed to renounce violence and signed another peace agreement with Mozambique President Filipe Nyusi. This agreement resulted in the last remaining members of the RENAMO insurgency agreeing to surrender

their weapons. RENAMO is currently led by Ossufo Momade, who was made leader after the death of Afonso Dhlakama in 2018.

Ossufo Momade has served as president of the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), the main opposition party of Mozambique, since January 17th 2019. He had been the interim president of the party after the death of its leader Afonso Dhlakama in May 2018 until he was elected president of the party at the start of 2019.

MDM

MDM (Democratic Movement of Mozambique) was founded in 2009 as a RENAMO breakaway party. After the 2014 General Election, they represented in the Republic's Assembly (Assembleia da República) by 17 representatives and in the Provincial Assemblies by 32 members.⁸

It claims to be the largest opposition party in Mozambique, although in reality is the third party and not a realistic challenge to either FRELIMO or RENAMO at this time. It is currently led by Daviz Mbepo Simango, son of the first vice-president of FRELIMO, Uria Simango.

3 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13890720>

4 <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/mozambique-peace-agreement-1992.pdf>

5 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-29075345>

6 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-29653391>

7 <https://reader.chathamhouse.org/prospects-sustainable-elite-bargain-mozambique-third-time-lucky#new-mediation-2013-present>

8 <http://www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news/newsletter/aim498.html#story3>

PLATFORM STUDY: TWITTER

Twitter is a relatively minor platform in Mozambique, used by approximately 1 percent of social media users in the country.⁹ Nevertheless, its use resembles activity we see in states around the world - poorly representative of the population as a whole, but a useful space for journalists to connect and commentate, and activists and parties to coordinate messaging.

- The split of Twitter users into two communities hints at the rise of 'social-media first' citizen journalists and commentators.
- The plurality of tweets referred to FRELIMO, with the majority of these - some 27% of all tweets analysed - in some way critical of FRELIMO over the time period.
- When linking to external sites, low-budget pro-FRELIMO blogs are dominant, and are often tailored to regional narratives and contexts.
- FRELIMO dominate the gender-related discussion with a pro-women line, emphasising their place in politics and the economy. However, this faced push-back and claims of hypocrisy from commentators.
- FRELIMO seemed reluctant to speak about Cabo Delgado and faced accusations of failing to help people in the region either through incompetence or deliberately, to send a political message.
- Discussions of specific incidents of electoral violence was limited on Twitter.

DATA COLLECTION

Prior to the project beginning, researchers worked to create a list of keywords used on Twitter in user discussions of the Mozambique elections. These keywords included geographic keywords, names of prominent political parties and figures, and election hashtags. A full list of keywords used is reported in Appendix 1. Between 3rd September 2019 and

28th October 2019, researchers collected all tweets matching at least one of 44 keywords, resulting in a dataset of 120,000 tweets.

Inevitably with large social media datasets there remains some 'noise' in the data: false positives captured in the data collection that are not linked to the election. Three categories of 'noise' were identified:

1. Tweets relevant to Brazil: Portuguese language messages that discussed electioneering and politics in Brazil. These tweets were judged to be irrelevant and removed from the data.
2. Tweets relevant to Portugal, specifically the Portuguese election. These tweets are also removed as irrelevant.
3. Tweets focusing on the Pope's visit to Mozambique.

Pope Francis visited Mozambique on from 4 to 6 September. The visit prompted a huge response on social media, and messages shared by the Pope's Twitter accounts contributed to a significant part of the data collected. This pattern can be seen in Figure 1.

The visit in early September was by some distance the most significant event captured in the data in terms of the international attention it received: 26,000 tweets were sent on the 5th September, compared to just 3,000 on the 15th October - election day. This can be understood as a result of the great international interest in the activities of the Pope and his social media following.

To minimise the impact of the pope's visit on the dataset, a narrower window of analysis was selected: a six week period from the 15th September to the 27th October. This final dataset contained 45,262 tweets from 22,562 users.

Based on this data, researchers set out to understand:

9 Based on Twitter's internal advertising market of 35,000 active users.

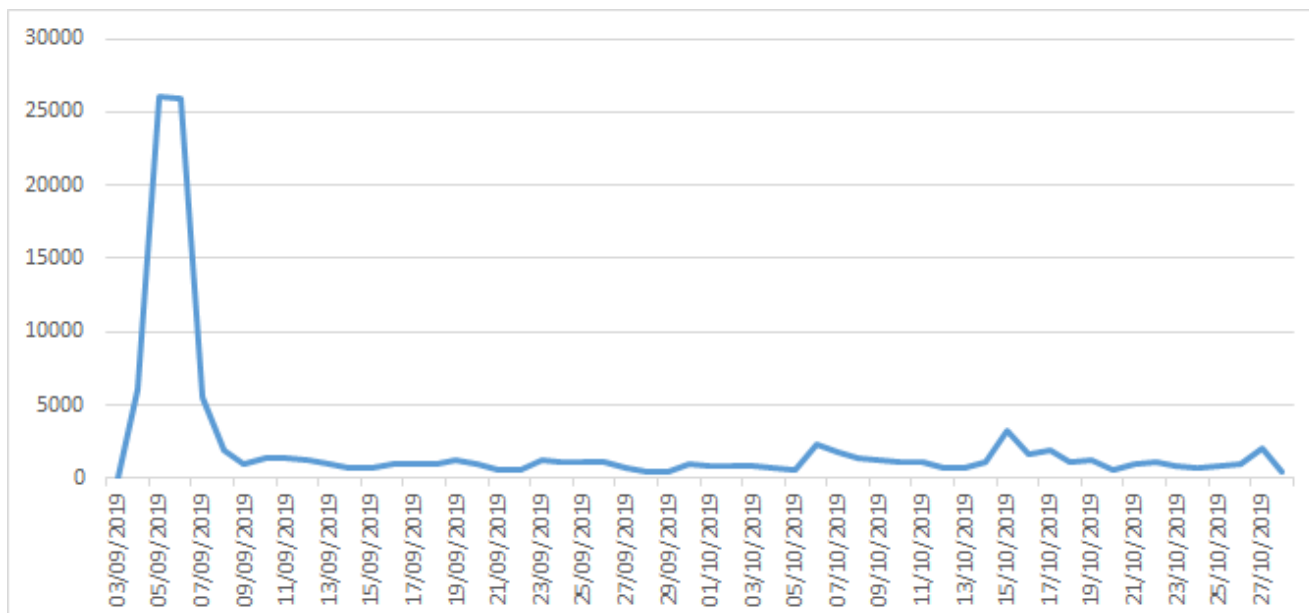


FIGURE 1.
TOTAL TWEETS OVER TIME

- Key influencers on the conversation
- The topology of messaging during the election period
- Key messages circulating on the platform during the election period
- The specific conversations around three focus areas:
 - Gender
 - Electoral violence
 - Cabo Delgado

KEY INFLUENCERS

To better understand the Mozambique Twitter ecosystem and identify the key accounts driving their messages, researchers collected all Twitter accounts retweeted or mentioned by a user within our dataset. This data is best represented through network analysis.

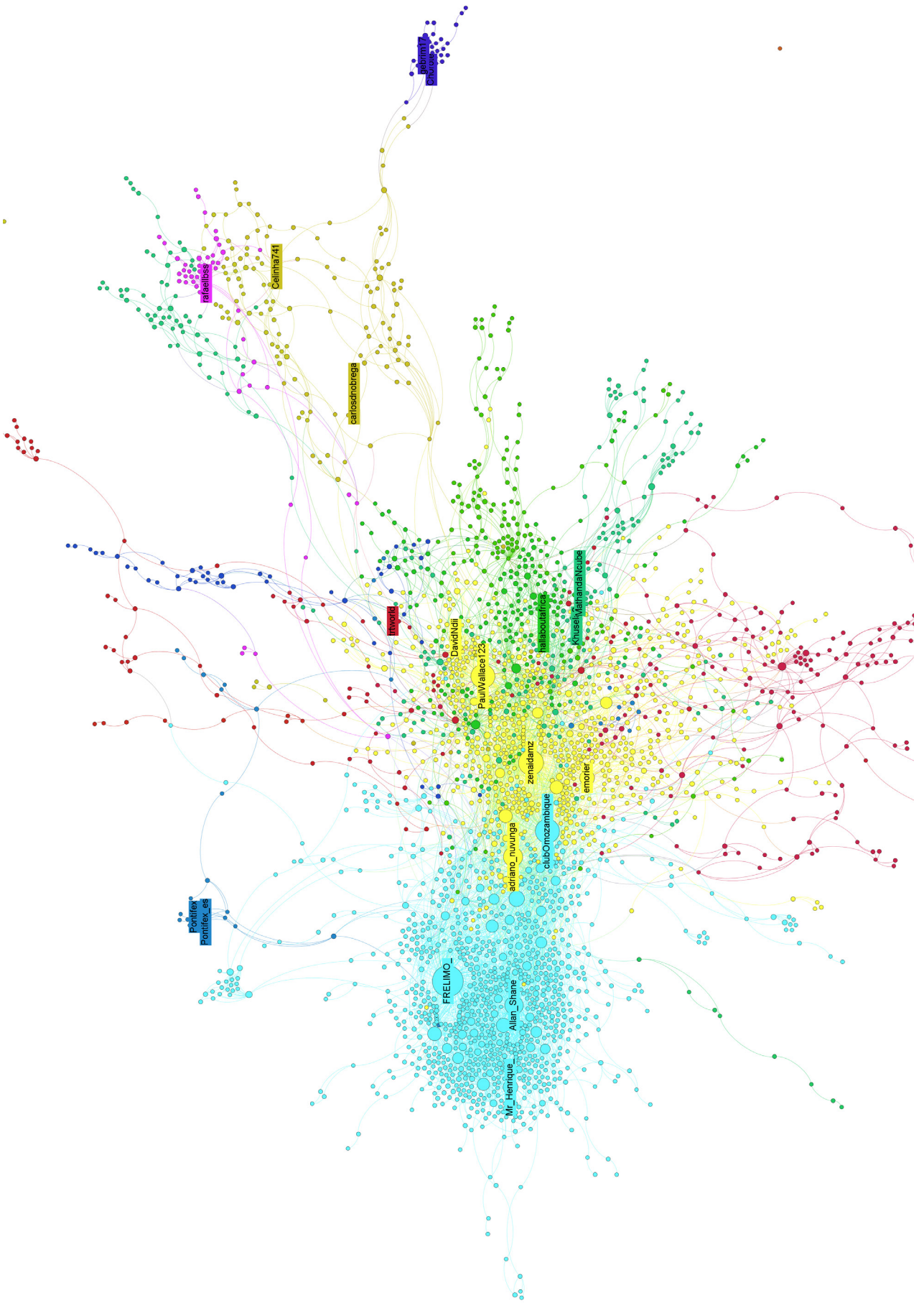
Each point in the chart represents a Twitter user who has posted in a group identified as a venue for hate speech or counter-hate speech. The size of the nodes represents the number of different groups the user interacts with: a large node is a user who is a member of many groups.

Where nodes fall on the chart is determined by which groups they are most strongly affiliated to. A node in the centre of the chart, for example, will have links ('edges') with a number of different groups

(B). A node outside a main collection of nodes surrounding a group, but still nearby, is a user who is active in a number of groups but is primarily a member of one (C). The 'pull' of the group on the nodes is called 'edge weight' (D).

Finally there is the colour of the node. This represents the 'cluster'. Blue nodes connect to other blue nodes most frequently.

All seed accounts and all other Twitter accounts that were mentioned or retweeted by at least two of our seed accounts were moved to a new dataset and visualized in the network map shown below. In total, this map contained 3,554 individual Twitter accounts connected by 6,247 retweets or mentions.



Twenty accounts were retweeted by at least 100 Twitter users during the period of our analysis. Those users are coded below, showing the type of account, whether they are foreign or domestic, and whether they belong to one of the three major clusters in the dataset.

User	Users Retweeting	Type	Foreign/Domestic	Cluster
PaulWallace123	525	Media	Foreign	Yellow
FRELIMO_	294	Politics	Domestic	Cyan
MathandaNcube	271	Media	Foreign	Green
zenaidamz	234	Civil Society	Foreign	Yellow
DavidNdii	203	Media	Foreign	Yellow
clubOmozambique	201	Business	Domestic	Cyan
hallaboutafrica	188	Media	Foreign	Green
Ch0rote	173	Other	Foreign	White
Pontifex_es	145	Religion	Foreign	White
adriano_nuvunga	138	Civil Society	Domestic	Cyan
Mr_Henrique_	133	Social Media	Domestic	Cyan
trtworld	129	Media	Foreign	White
emorier	126	Civil Society	Foreign	Yellow
KhuselaS	114	Politics	Foreign	Green
Allan_Shane	112	Social Media	Domestic	Cyan
Pontifex	109	Religion	Foreign	White

FIGURE 2.

TOP USERS (RETWEETS BY OTHER USERS)

CLUSTER ONE (YELLOW): FOREIGN MEDIA, CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICS

Five of the most frequently retweeted accounts were foreign 'observers' of the election, either in the media, civil society or from foreign politicians. This included the most frequently retweeted user, journalist Paul Wallace, alongside other journalists and politicians from neighbouring South Africa. For an observer of the election on Twitter, it is likely that a significant proportion of commentary was delivered through foreign media.

CLUSTER TWO (TEAL): DOMESTIC POLITICAL ACTORS AND COMMENTATORS

In contrast to the Yellow cluster, a number of lesser-known domestic commentators emerged from the data. Dominated by the account belonging to FRELIMO, the primary political party and eventual contested winner of the election, a number of smaller, social-media-based accounts were successful in having their messages shared during the period.

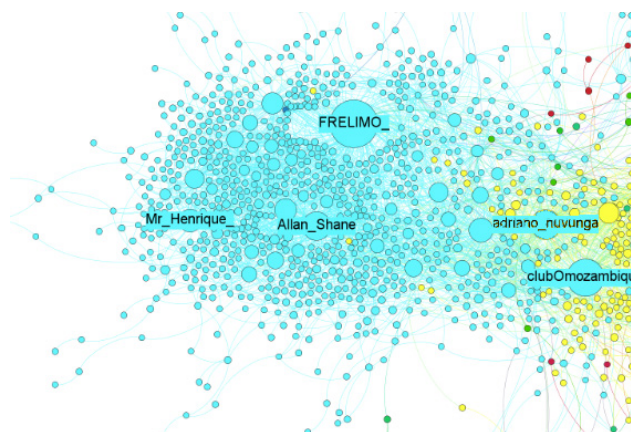
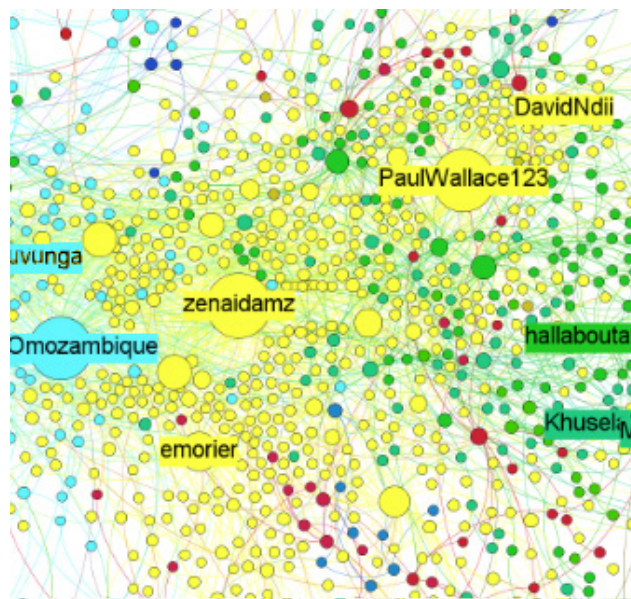
This included members of Mozambique civil society such as Adriano Nuvunga, director of the Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento, as well as dedicated social media commentators such as Allan_Shane and Mr_Henrique_ who tweet a range of political and cultural messaging and memes.

Given the relative penetration of Twitter into the communications environment in Mozambique, it is plausible that these accounts are representative of some of the newer class of social-media first journalists, content-creators and bloggers.

CLUSTER THREE: SOUTH AFRICAN COMMENTARY

Finally, three of the most widely retweeted users were observers based in South Africa, either in the media or part of the political machinery, such as the President's spokeswoman Khusela Diko.

Taken together, the map shows a diverse communications environment on the platform, with a range of voices both domestic and foreign driving the primary conversations around the election. It is noticeable that the primary opposition to FRELIMO, RENAMO, is not represented here: the party does not appear to have an official Twitter account, leaving Twitter as a platform largely in the hands of the ruling political party.



MESSAGE TOPOLOGY

Researchers monitored the volume of tweets during the six week period. The patterns were consistent with elections in general, with a consistent pattern in the volume of tweets in the days prior to the election and spikes in activity on election day (15th October) and when the provisional results were announced (27th October). This is shown in the graph below.

There were on average approximately a thousand tweets sent each day, peaking at 3,200 tweets on the day of the election. The day of the election was dominated by a mix of news reportage, political messaging and users' attempts to draw attention to alleged electoral malpractice. Figure 4 shows those messages most widely shared on the 15th October. Note - usernames and links have been removed and Tweets bowdlerised to prevent reidentification.

There were on average approximately a thousand tweets sent each day, peaking at 3,200 tweets on the day of the election. The day of the election was dominated by a mix of news reportage, political messaging and users' attempts to draw attention to alleged electoral malpractice. Figure 4 shows those messages most widely shared on the 15th October. Note - usernames and links

have been removed and Tweets bowdlerised to prevent reidentification.

Political messaging included the sharing of pro-FRELIMO content, including text, images and videos supportive of the party: the most widely shared piece of content was a video of a chant in Portuguese led by Jacob Zuma with the caption "Long Live FRELIMO".

However, there were also a number of satirical messages circulating on Twitter that were critical of FRELIMO, often predicting a FRELIMO electoral victory many years into the future:

FRELIMO em 2064 depois de ganharem sua vigésima eleição seguida

"FRELIMO in 2064 after winning their twentieth straight election..."

Alongside political messaging, a number of tweets looked to draw attention to allegations of electoral malpractice, such as the unexplained closure of polling stations and allegations of ballot box stuffing. These themes were reflected in a closer analysis of the conversation on Twitter as a whole. Analysts took a random sample of 200 messages and coded them to understand the theme of the tweet and its tone. The results are shown in figure 5.

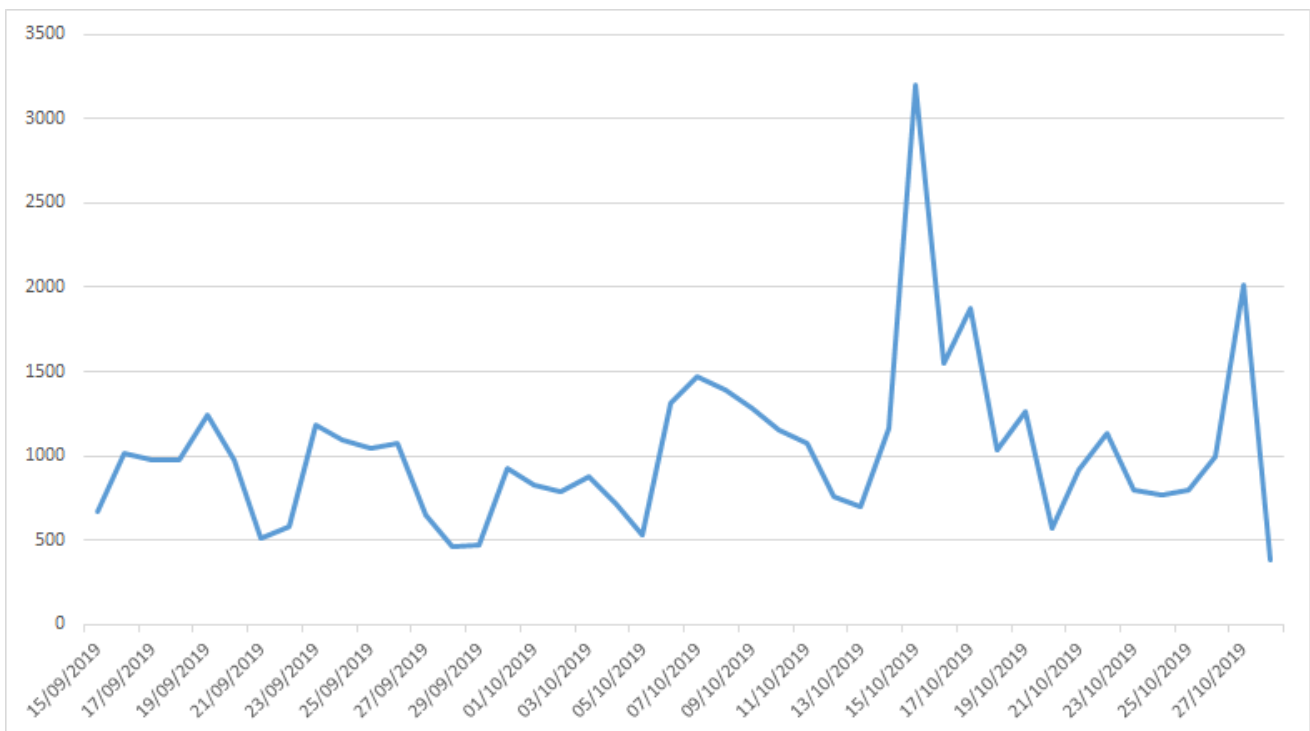


FIGURE 3.

TWEETS OVER TIME

Tweet	Type	Retweets
long live FRELIMO [link]	Political Messaging	65
FRELIMO não está perdendo em 3 províncias pelo menos [link]	Political Messaging	54
vai que votou pra RENAMO [link]	Political Messaging	33
"oi papa, votei pra FRELIMO não..." [link]	Political Messaging	30
[name], da FRELIMO, foi encontrado na posse de doze boletins de votos a favor da FRELIMO ao tentar introduzir na urna. o caso foi na mesa [number] da epc eduardo mondlane, em Johar, no município de Angoche, Nampula.	Electoral Malpractice	30
already marked votes (in favour of FRELIMO) discovered in the province of zambezia this morning [link]	Electoral Malpractice	26
FRELIMO no ano dois mil e sessenta e quatro após ganharem a 20a eleição seguida [link]	Political Messaging	25
o kota quis saber, onde fica a bicha da RENAMO? [smiley face emoji]	Political Messaging	25
staff at polling station where RENAMO's ossufo momade is due to vote, having a physical altercation instead of working. voting has been suspended. we have no idea when he will be able to vote at Ilha de Moçambique, Nampula [hashtag]	Electoral Malpractice	24
[hashtag]: opposition candidate won't accept "results that have been manipulated". momade warned that denying the will of the people has led to military conflict in the past [link]	Electoral Malpractice	20

FIGURE 4.

TOP TWEETS

Category	% tweets
Anti-FRELIMO	27%
Pro-FRELIMO	19%
Papal Visit	18%
Political Situation	6%
Other	32%

FIGURE 5.

% TWEETS BY THEME
(SAMPLE OF 200)

Across the dataset, tweets fell into five broad categories.

Anti-FRELIMO (27%)

27 percent of tweets were critical of the ruling party, making up over a quarter of the sample analysed. These tweets focused on Nyusi and made accusations of nepotism with regards to his children's roles in the political machinery. The Dívidas Ocultas scandal is frequently mentioned here. Many of these critical tweets were light-hearted, humorous or satirical, with many jokes about the election being a foregone conclusion before it had even started. Other topics included accusations of incompetence, violence by FRELIMO supporters and corruption within the party's executive.

Pro-FRELIMO (19%)

19 percent were supportive of the ruling party, most often repeating campaign slogans and jingles and criticising RENAMO. Their origins as a supposed terrorist organisation was frequently brought up as part of this criticism.

Papal Visit (18%)

Discussion and reportage surrounding the visit of Pope Francis to Mozambique was a key theme in social media discussions even in the period after the visit and in the run up to the election, but for the most part these messages were apolitical.

Political Situation (6%)

6 percent of tweets reflected on the political situation within Mozambique as a whole - warning of violence if supporters of RENAMO and FRELIMO were to clash while campaigning.

Other (32%)

The remaining 32% of tweets in the sample turned on political situations in foreign countries, media, music and sport, and were largely irrelevant to the election process.

In a media environment that is strictly controlled, it appears that social media does play a role in carrying dissenting messages during periods of political instability and electoral activity. More than one in every four messages sampled was in some way against the ruling party. Given the public-facing architecture of Twitter as a platform, it is noticeable that users in and around Mozambique are relatively willing to criticise FRELIMO in this space, and is it plausible that the platform offers a useful outlet for the dissemination of dissenting voices in the country.

MEDIA SHARING

Twitter frequently functions as a crossroads for the wider internet. To understand the wider digital media ecosystem, researchers captured the sharing of external content through the platform. Figure 6 shows those news and media websites linked to by at least 100 Twitter users.

Figure 6 reveals the striking use of blogs by FRELIMO to amplify their content and messaging. Of the 15 sites shared by at least 100 users, 11 are linked to the ruling party.

These low-budget sites all feature similar descriptions in their header, the only variable being the region named in the text: "Enthusiastic young people who support Zambezia, raising awareness of and spreading knowledge about Zambezia. FRELIMO-supporting young people moved by the development-focused vision of President Filipe Nyusi, who are resolved to support him on his mission to get Mozambique to contemplate a better future".

All posts look professional and are well-written in clear, relatively formal Portuguese, resembling press releases about FRELIMO's party-political and official government activities. All blogs have the exact same design and little to no information about who authors or publishes the posts in each blog.

This use of context-specific blogging was unexpected, and points to a level of sophistication in the ruling party's digital media strategy that may otherwise have gone undetected.

AREAS OF FOCUS

In order to draw out an understanding of how particular narratives are discussed in the Mozambique twitter ecosystem, we decided to focus on three areas: Gender, Electoral Violence and Cabo Delgado. We choose based on our initial analysis of the Twitter discourse and based on discussions about the most salient and important issues with electoral observers on the ground during the election.

Area of Focus: Gender

We focused on the narratives around gender and the role of women deployed by parties and others as it appeared on Twitter.¹⁰ Only 387 tweets related to women and gender were tweeted during the collection period, less than one percent of total tweets. The majority of tweets appeared to be from FRELIMO or RENAMO supporters, so we focused on analysing each side's messaging. FRELIMO appear to dominate the gender-related discussion with a pro-

Website	# Shares	# Users Sharing
allafrica.com	276	1288
www.verdade.co.mz	288	718
FRELIMOnazambezia.blogspot.com	406	416
FRELIMOemniassa.blogspot.com	346	362
FRELIMOemnampula.blogspot.com	294	309
FRELIMOeminhambane.blogspot.com	270	279
FRELIMOemtete.blogspot.com	226	231
FRELIMOemgaza.blogspot.com	155	174
africanwomenincinema.blogspot.com	120	167
FRELIMOemmanica.blogspot.com	160	165
FRELIMOemsofala.blogspot.com	136	145
FRELIMOemmaputo-cidade.blogspot.com	139	142
FRELIMOnaprovinciademaputo.blogspot.com	135	138
clubofmozambique.com	135	135
FRELIMOemcabodelgado.blogspot.com	96	102

FIGURE 6.

MOST FREQUENTLY LINKED TO URLS (# SHARES AND # UNIQUE USERS SHARING THE

women line, emphasising their place in politics and the economy. However, this faced push-back and claims of hypocrisy from commentators.

FRELIMO messaging

Gender did not appear to be a core part of FRELIMO's election messaging. However, when they did mention it, they pushed a pro-women line. They emphasised the importance of female education, women in entrepreneurship and the economy, and gender equality in politics.

In particular, Nyusi's speech on October 7th was the most significant gender-related event during the collection period. In it, he emphasised the importance of women in the economy, particularly in the informal economy and entrepreneurship, and

improving rates of female education. This was pushed out through a number of FRELIMO associated accounts tweeting links to regional FRELIMO blogs.

FRELIMO also made gender equality and women in power a talking point. They tailored their message across different regions, again utilising links to specific regional FRELIMO blogs which repeatedly similar but contextualised messaging. For example, in the Manica region:

FRELIMO em Manica: Igualdade para mulheres, Progresso para todos [link]

FRELIMO em Manica: Conheça algumas mulheres que fazem parte do Governo... [link]

And in the Tete region:

FRELIMO em Tete: A FRELIMO diz sim ao emponderamento da Mulher em T...[link]

FRELIMO em Tete: A mulher e a consolidação da democracia.[link]

In the Inhambane and Zambezia regions, they even addressed gender-based violence as an issue to be dealt with:

FRELIMO em Inhambane: A FRELIMO diz não à violência contra a mulher e ra... [link]

They also occasionally talked about the role women have within FRELIMO itself as a political organisation, e.g. female candidates:

Na FRELIMO mulher sempre tem voz e espaço! [hashtag] [hashtag] [link]

Mulheres de Mecula vêem-se bem representadas por Judite Massengele: <https://t.co/2qjabE3AU2> #FRELIMO #Elections #Mozambique #Nyusi [link]

However, FRELIMO received some pushback on this pro-women positioning. Their presidential candidate, Filipe Nyusi, was repeatedly accused of failing on bringing women into decision making roles in his previous administration.

O [username] mostra que no primeiro mandato de Nyusi havia menos mulheres tomando decisões em Moçambique [link]

O índice de paridade de género [hashtag] passou de cem funcionários masculinos para cinquenta e três do sexo feminino em dois mil e quinze para cinquenta mulheres em dois mil e dezessete. "Há disparidade entre funcionários e agentes do governo em cargos governativos de chefia" [link] [link]

RENAMO messaging

RENAMO was less coherent and on-message in their narratives around women and gender. There was some discussion about women marching for RENAMO in various regions:

RENAMO marcha pela mulher. Mulheres filiadas ao partido e seus apoiantes, nas centenas, marcharam em Nacala para conquistar o voto para as eleições de 2019. [link]

There was also particular outrage at a woman who was a relatively high-level official within RENAMO

being murdered with her partner.

Foi assassinada com oito tiros [name], Presidente da Liga Feminina da RENAMO em Tete, e seu esposo carbonizado. Fonte [name] [username] [link]

Some apparent RENAMO supporters even suggested that "Only women would vote for treasonous FRELIMO", possibly in response to FRELIMO's pro-women messaging but most likely simply sexism.

Area of Focus: Electoral Violence

About 1260 tweets in the dataset referenced violence or arson over the collection period, making up 3% of all tweets.¹¹ Discussion of specific incidents of electoral violence was limited on Twitter. The discussion appeared primarily journalistic in nature, rather than as an issue weaponised by partisans to attack other parties, perhaps because all sides appear to have engaged in it across the election campaign.

The overwhelming majority of these tweets, at least 880, appeared to be retweets of the Pope's message from when he visited, urging the pursuit of peace, e.g.

A busca da paz, missão envolvendo a todos, exige trabalho constante e incansável, porque é como flor frágil surgindo entre as pedras da violência [hashtag] [hashtag]

Otherwise, it mostly seems to be journalistic coverage rather than supporters obviously directly pushing messages on Twitter. For example, at the beginning of October, there were 12 tweets discussing violence between supporters of FRELIMO and MDM.

Violência em Gaza Tiros e pauladas foram a técnica dominante nos dias em que Daviz Simango fez campanha em Gaza. Em vista dos últimos episódios, porta-voz da FRELIMO frisou: FRELIMO condena e repudia toda e qualquer tentativa de violência [link]

Daviz Simango esteve em Gaza num ambiente de violência No segundo dia de campanha eleitoral da província de Gaza, Ontem, Simango enfrentou mais violência. Houve briga entre simpatizantes do MDM e FRELIMO. A Polícia foi obrigada a fazer disparos ao ar. [link]

There was also coverage of Ossufo Momade

accusing FRELIMO of burning down Manuel de Araújo mother's house, though not obviously much discussion of this from pro-RENAMO accounts.

Momade responsabiliza FRELIMO por incêndio que destruiu a casa da mãe de Manuel de Araújo Durante campanha da RENAMO em Gilé, o Presidente do partido acusou a FRELIMO cometer o crime. [link]

No single incident of electoral violence stood out on Twitter during the campaigning period. There was fairly high-level coverage of widespread violence of election day, particularly in the centre and north of the country. One of the most repeated stories around election day was about polling stations being torched by RENAMO supporters in Niassa.

A noite eleitoral foi marcada por violência generalizada e por ora extrema, no centro e no norte de Moçambique. Em Lago, seis assembleias de voto com 4605 eleitores registrados foram incendiadas por supostos simpatizantes da RENAMO que estariam furiosos com alegada atividade fraudulenta.

Area of Focus: Cabo Delgado

We also looked at discussion of the situation in Cabo Delgado, which has faced insurgency and ultimately had several polling stations fail to open on election day. 1,232 tweets mentioning 'Cabo Delgado' were posted during the collection period, 3% of total tweets. Overall, FRELIMO seemed reluctant to speak about Cabo Delgado and faced accusations of failing to help people in the region either through incompetence or deliberately, to send a political message.

FRELIMO messaging

FRELIMO seemed reluctant to mention Cabo Delgado, except in denials of foreign interference mentioned below. When they did mention Cabo Delgado, they played up the positives where possible, for example Filipe Nyusi's visit to Cabo Delgado and Mr Nyusi himself bringing up the Pope in reference to Cabo Delgado.

FRELIMO em Cabo Delgado : Isaura Nyusi trabalha em Ngapa. [link]

[username] [username] lamentou ainda não poder visitar pessoalmente vítimas dos ciclones Idai e Kenneth. Violência em Cabo Delgado (de jihadistas?) foi referida pelo Presidente Filipe Nyusi, cujo discurso também foi muito bom, terminando com oração de São Francisco

**FRELIMO começa movimento em solidariedade as vítimas de ataques em Cabo Delgado* O Secretário Geral da FRELIMO Roque Silva Samuel, procedeu ontem, em Mocimboa da Praia... [link]*

Towards the end of the campaign, FRELIMO appeared to start addressing outbreaks of violence in Cabo Delgado and promising to do everything possible to stop it. It seems likely that the amount of discussion meant they felt under pressure to address the issue.

O candidato a Presidência pela FRELIMO, Presidente Nyusi, promete o mais rápido possível estancar a intranquilidade provocada pela violência armada em alguns distritos de Cabo Delgado. [link]

Blaming the government/suggesting political motives for lack of help

This lack of discussion is perhaps unsurprising given that other discussion of Cabo Delgado included highlighting the government's failures in dealing with the Islamic insurgency and helping victims of Hurricane Kenneth. Particularly, a story about government security forces being killed was shared multiple times and appear to gain some traction.

Baixas que não cessam nas Forças de Defesa e Segurança face aos ataques em Cabo Delgado [link]

Some blamed the government for failing to deal with insurgency and accused them of incompetence, suggesting that the problem was solvable but that the government had taken the wrong approach.

Well put [username], the main issue in Cabo Delgado is not the insurgency, but the way in which the situation is being handled [username] [link]

Presidente Nyusi exige do Exército solução rápida para conter ataques em Cabo Delgado, académico alerta que solução militar não vai resolver o problema [hashtag] [link] [link]

Esta doente Nyusi "Vote FRELIMO para acabar com a guerra em Cabo Delgado"

There were also a few suggestions that the Cabo Delgado insurgency had been allowed to go on or was not properly dealt with for political reasons. Some suggested that the regions where attacks are happening in Cabo Delgado have the least FRELIMO support, with a history of large-scale protest.

As zonas onde há mais ataques em Cabo

Delgado são as zonas onde tem menos apoio ao FRELIMO e são distritos com grande historial de protesto [hashtag]. [link]

There were also accusations by RENAMO that FRELIMO was engaging in political blackmail of cyclone victims.

RENAMO denuncia chantagem política as vítimas do ciclone Kenneth em Cabo Delgado [hashtag] [hashtag] [hashtag] [hashtag] [hashtag] [hashtag] [link] [link]

This also comes within a wider context in which the government has sought to control and keep secret information around the situation in Cabo Delgado, with journalists in some cases being imprisoned for their reporting on the subject.

Overall, the topic of Cabo Delgado appears to have been a difficult one for FRELIMO and one which they avoided discussing and debating when possible on Twitter.

Suggestion of foreign influence in Cabo Delgado

There was also reporting of suspected foreign influence in Cabo Delgado and denials by Russia. However, this was mostly English language tweets, which appeared to be geared towards an international audience rather than discussion internal to Mozambique and their election.

Mozambican minister of defence: attacks in Cabo Delgado have external hand increased after the Peace Deal. Question: Is it the case that you might need help? Minister: We defeated a heavily armed colonial army, this group is not what will defeat us.

Presence of Russian troops in Cabo Delgado denied by Embassy [link] [link] [link] [link]

PLATFORM STUDY: FACEBOOK

Facebook appears to be the most popular public platform in Mozambique, used on a monthly basis by approximately 8% of the population and 44% of active internet users.¹² It is growing quickly, with users up 4% quarter on quarter. Facebook users in Mozambique appear to skew male¹³ and are likely to be mostly the upper classes and well-connected in the country who can afford the data usage. Thus, Facebook discussion is more likely to reflect discussion within the elite and party activists than we would expect in other countries.

Political activity on Facebook is likely to occur through five main channels: Messenger, individual timelines, events, groups, and pages. Closed groups and events in particular are often used to coordinate activists and share messages between partisans. Many of these are inaccessible to researchers due to Facebook's data-sharing restrictions. However, researchers can still observe public pages. These are likely to be sources of content for timelines and groups, and reflect the public image that parties and public individuals are trying to push, and thus are still a useful source of insights into how Mozambique's electoral campaign is conducted online.

- FRELIMO, the governing party, had much more focused and professional messaging than the smaller opposition parties, who often relied on sharing activist content.
- Even FRELIMO's Facebook page, four times as popular as RENAMO, only had ~80,000 followers in a country of 30 million.
- The most open and aggressive debate and confrontation takes place in the comments on pages of individuals, rather than parties. Smaller partisan pages seem to encourage and attract the most vitriol. Some individuals use more restricted personal accounts which are less hostile, likely due to restrictions on who they let interact with their account.

DATA COLLECTION

Researchers looked at how each party and their outriders utilised their Facebook pages during the campaign. Facebook have introduced prohibitive measures to reduce researchers' ability to monitor pages computationally and have deprecated previously valuable API tools. Given these limitations, data was collected manually.

With dozens of parties running across Mozambique, focus was limited to major parties in this section, using the presence of a candidate in the presidential election as selection criteria: FRELIMO, RENAMO, MDM and AMUSI.

Researchers looked to identify:

- How professionally run the parties' social media campaigns were.
- The key messages pushed by the major parties.
- The types of interactions between Facebook users and the party pages.

MOZAMBIQUE LIBERATION FRONT (FRELIMO)

FRELIMO, the current ruling party, is much more popular than other parties, with four times the followers of RENAMO, the next most popular party on the platform. However, they still only had ~80,000 likes, compared to a total population of 28 million in Mozambique. Their content generally only receives 100s of reactions and 10s of direct shares and comments.

Overall, the posts on their Facebook have a very positive and optimistic tone. They often allude to a Mozambique that can work, live in peace, and be prosperous, with a particular focus on agriculture. Their overall message is very patriotic and carries a strong sense of Mozambican identity.

Their messaging is also strongly personality-driven, with a heavy focus on Filipe Nyusi, their presidential candidate. Almost every post has

a picture of Nyusi at a rally in a different region of the country, surrounded by large crowds and a “promise” of some kind.

FRELIMO constantly repeat that he is the man who will “work out” for the country and his slogan is “É contigo que dá certo” (things will “work out” with you). This slogan is often repeated in the comments below the posts, though it’s unclear how much of this is genuine pickup by supporters or a coordinated attempt by party activists to push the slogan. Their non-Nyusi content is also quite repetitive in general.

This constant repetition of specific slogans and key phrases is similar to many Western electoral campaigns, where many campaign communication professionals have emphasised the importance of repetition to ensure messages cut through to the public and start to have some resonance.¹⁴

Interestingly, there is very little to no acknowledgment or mention of political opponents in the party’s messaging. Perhaps as the current dominant party they believe that giving any attention to smaller parties, even to criticise them, is likely to harm them by making their supporters more aware of the alternatives.

MOZAMBICAN NATIONAL RESISTANCE (RENAMO)

RENAMO’s page is not as slick and focused as FRELIMO’s. It contains many different styles of posts. It often reshapes content from RENAMO’s activists, including videos. They only had ~20,000 likes, a quarter of FRELIMO’s page. However, their content only receives a slightly lower level of engagement than FRELIMO’s, with 100s of reactions and 10s of direct shares and comments. This suggests that their activists and supporters may be more engaged on Facebook than FRELIMO’s.

Unlike FRELIMO, their messaging jumps around from post to post and has a much more aggressive tone, even though it talks about hope and revolution it rarely mentions peace or reconciliation.

One theme in the posts was the denouncing of “FRELIMO obstruction” of RENAMO’s campaign across different regions and a general warning to “be vigilant on election day for illegitimate votes”.

Another was attacking on FRELIMO’s record, for example saying that: “FRELIMO hasn’t changed anything in 44 years, they won’t change anything now”. On a similar line, they attempted to paint

FRELIMO as a violent and corrupt party, referencing the hidden debt scandal and saying that “FRELIMO are thieves”.

They also posted about how they are having a “great campaign rally reception” in different areas of the country, though not as frequently as FRELIMO. When they do so, they do adopt a similar approach to FRELIMO in focusing their attention on their presidential candidate, Ossufo Momade. For example, showing him waving at supporters from the back of a truck.

In the days before the 15th of October, polling day, the page picked up in activity. It pivoted towards primarily reminding people to vote, going so far as to change their profile picture every day with a countdown of how many days there were until polling day. Right before polling, they began to accuse FRELIMO of being scared of losing and claiming that FRELIMO were preparing to rig the election.

DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT OF MOZAMBIQUE (MDM)

MDM’s main party page has 22,800 followers, comparable with RENAMO, despite being a smaller party. However, this Facebook page only posted five times between mid-August and the 15th of October when the election was held, mostly reminding people to vote and highlighting rallies.¹⁵

Instead, a smaller page with only 12,500 followers, the MDM - Information Office, appears to have been used primarily during the campaign. This account posted once a day or so in the run up to the election, receiving 100s of engagements, and 10s of comments and shares on those posts, comparable to RENAMO’s main party page.

About half their posts were directly about Daviz Simango, their presidential candidate, showing pictures of him interacting with citizens and especially focusing on large turnout at rallies for him. Despite being a smaller party, the operation on their Facebook page seemed more coordinated than that of RENAMO. Three main messages stood out from their other posts:

1. Vowing to fight corruption and attacking FRELIMO for being corrupt.
2. Repeated mentions of the need to integrate former fighters back into society.

14 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-39730467>

15 <https://www.facebook.com/MDMGabinetedelInformacao>

3. Promising to invest in infrastructure and employment for young people

**ACTION PARTY OF THE UNITED MOVEMENT
FOR INTEGRAL SALVATION (AMUSI)**

AMUSI positions itself as the outsider and the other three parties as the establishment. Their Facebook page only has ~800 followers, with very few interactions and reactions on the limited number of posts they did put out during the election campaign.

PLATFORM STUDY: YOUTUBE

YouTube is the premier video-content sharing platform and is a significant player in Mozambique's digital economy. Statistics taken from traffic analysis provider Alexa suggest YouTube is second only to Google as the most frequently visited site by internet users in Mozambique.¹⁶

DATA COLLECTION

In order to study content shared on Youtube during the election campaign, researchers collected data related to all videos uploaded by four Mozambique focused Youtube channels, as well as the publicly viewable top level comments left in response to those videos. Channels were chosen to include those with an explicit political alignment, as well as avowedly neutral news outlets. Researchers also collected comments left on a popular pro-FRELIMO music video by Mr. Bow, a Mozambican musician.

This collection produced 219 Videos and 504 top level comments collected between 1st July and 25th October 2019, a 116 day period. In total, these videos were viewed 1.4 million times. Channels collected, along with the content they tend to post, are described below.

FRELIMO MOÇAMBIQUE

Official FRELIMO channel. Videos posted on this channel are mostly of Filipe Nyusi's rallies, the official campaign jingle, and endorsements from celebrities and supporters. The production of all videos looks professional, but only one video has a high number of views (29 thousand) – most others are in the low hundreds. This could be because, even though they're well-produced, they're very repetitive. The party has stopped posting videos since the election.

QUELIMANE 24 HOURS

Manuel de Araújo is the Mayor of Quelimane and a member of the RENAMO party. His channel, Quelimane 24 hours, is very popular, even though the production of RENAMO's videos is not as professional as FRELIMO's. He posted more often than the FRELIMO official channel and posts a more

varied selection of videos. Some videos have a tone of denouncement to them - for example, in one a RENAMO supporter accuses FRELIMO activists of beating him up. Others are aimed directly at FRELIMO's candidate, Filipe Nyusi, featuring Mr de Araújo asking Mr Nyusi "where is the peace?"

TELEVISÃO DE MOÇAMBIQUE - TVM

Televisão de Moçambique (TVM) is the national public broadcaster of Mozambique, owned and majority funded – 60% of total funding - by the Government. The news channel did not cover political campaigning during the official election campaign period and, in the sample analysed for this project, the only party mentioned by name was FRELIMO. Even though they carried out non-party political coverage of the electoral process (including a speech by the director of the INE, Mozambique's national statistics institute), they broadcast very little political news. The exception being coverage of a FRELIMO-organised demo to protest the attacks in Cabo Delgado and President Filipe Nyusi's speeches on Armed Forces Day. Another example of exposure for the FRELIMO party was an address by the President on the eve of the election, urging people to exercise their right to vote. Its programmes have a relatively low number of views compared to Miramar TV, in the low thousands and sometimes low hundreds.

MIRAMAR TV

Miramar TV is an avowedly independent broadcaster, part of Brazilian Grupo Record (Record TV), which claims to be the "leading channel" in terms of audience in Mozambique. While claiming to be apolitical, the station has produced openly partisan content in other countries - In Brazil, Record TV openly supported President Jair Bolsonaro's election campaign and continues to support him while he is in office.

Despite being independent, there are subtle disparities in coverage of different political parties in news coverage in the run up to the elections.

While the two main parties, FRELIMO and RENAMO had campaigning visits and pledges covered in similar numbers, negative stories about them during the official campaigning period had different approaches. In one story, the channel invited analysts who claimed internal divisions within RENAMO were to blame for armed attacks in central and northern Mozambique, including Cabo Delgado – where insurgency fighters later claimed responsibility for the attacks. No RENAMO spokespeople featured in the piece. In another story, FRELIMO spokesperson Caifadine Manasse had the chance to defend FRELIMO against the charge of being involved in the arson of RENAMO candidate Manuel de Araújo’s mother’s house in Quelimane and again accused RENAMO of being to blame because of internal divisions.

Figure 7 shows the videos posted, and views garnered, by each channel between 1st September and 25th October 2019. This graph shows, in particular, that RENAMO’s candidate, Manuel de Araújo was much more effective in gaining views than the primary FRELIMO account, which tended to publish bland, positive party political content. Araújo’s account achieved 6,500 thousand views per video on average - almost quadruple FRELIMO’s average of 1,700; Araújo’s videos also generated more comments, demonstrating either a more engaged viewership, or a different approach to moderation and comment deletion.

Also evident from the above is that campaigning through music was far more effective for FRELIMO than the party political broadcasts sent through their official channel. Despite containing much of the same branding and imagery as the official content, and consisting lyrically of repeated invitations to vote for Nyusi and FRELIMO, the video for “Moral Camaradas (FRELIMO Nyusi)” gained 126 thousand views; more than any other single video in our collection.

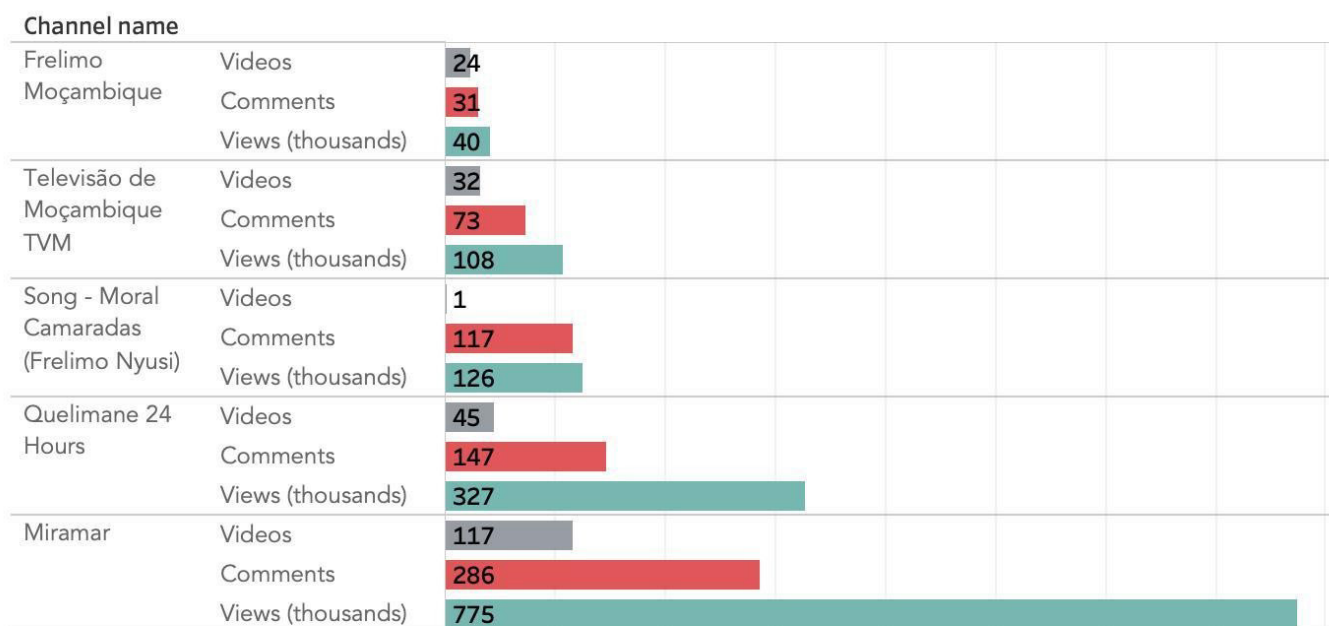


FIGURE 7.
VIDEOS PUBLISHED AND VIEWS FOR YOUTUBE CHANNELS

Figure 8 shows the number of videos published each day between 1st June and 25th October 2019 (the black line above) alongside the total number of views received by each video published on that day (represented by blue bars). This allows us not only to see when the channels collected were at their most active, but also which videos made the most impact.

On this measure, by far the most prominent video was released near the beginning of the campaign, when Mozambican artist Mr. Bow published a popular pro-FRELIMO music video, rife with party imagery and slogans. While this was not the party's official campaign song, it far eclipsed this in popularity. Asides from this video, the most sustained period of viewing was around the week of the election itself, suggesting that people were turning to Youtube news channels to receive results.

In contrast to activity on Twitter, the channels collected almost completely ignored the visit of the Pope to Mozambique on the 5th September. Only one video from the news channel Miramar mentioned his visit, garnering a modest 1,700 views and a handful of likes.

In order to illuminate the content behind the spikes in the graph above, figure 9 lists the 10 videos which garnered the most views during our collection.

These popular videos are a mix of campaign material from FRELIMO's official channel, political reporting from the Miramar news channel and three non-political videos, concerning national and entertainment news.

Strikingly, although many of Miramar's videos focus on FRELIMO, four of the ten most viewed videos concern RENAMO. These discuss threats by Mariano Nhongo, leader of a military junta opposed to the party's official leadership, to disrupt the election, and his claims that he is the true leader of the party. Stories concerning two other RENAMO candidates, including Manuel de Araújo, owner of the 'Quelimane 24 hours' channel, were also widely viewed.

The popularity of Miramar's RENAMO focused content is explained perhaps by the scant mentions of the party elsewhere; when researchers reviewed FRELIMO's official broadcasts, as well as a sample of videos by state funded broadcaster TVM, none made the slightest reference to the party's existence. It is possible that people are turning to YouTube to learn about the opposition, and balance this drought of information.

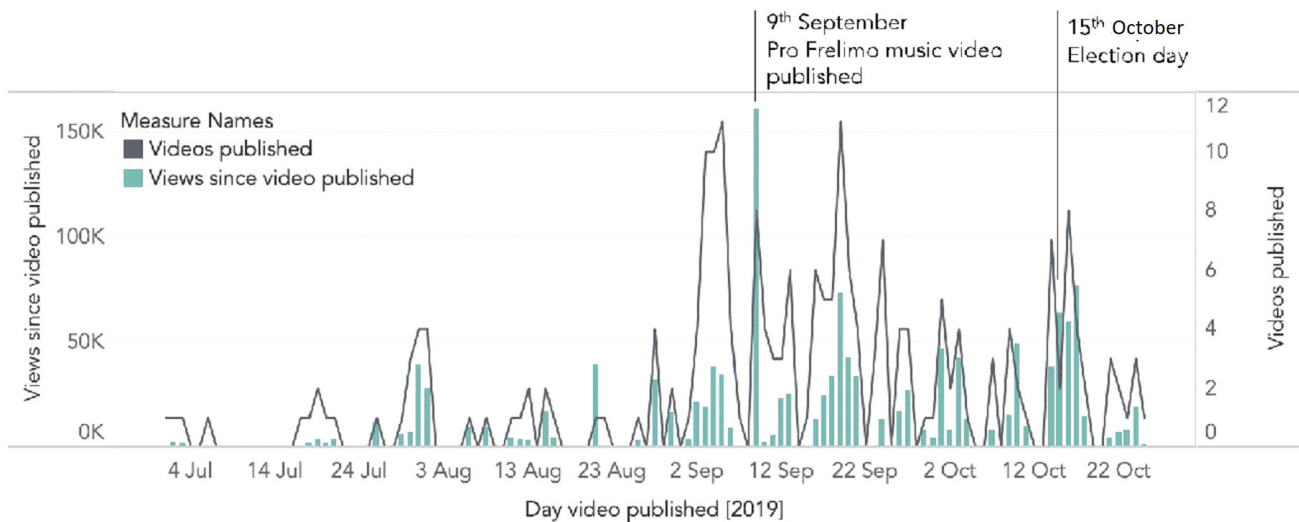


FIGURE 8.
VIDEOS PUBLISHED
OVER TIME AGAINST
VIEWS DURING PERIOD

Channel name	Title	Description	Type	Views
Mr. Bow	Mr. Bow- Moral Camaradas (FRELIMO Nyusi) Official Video Mr Bow - Support Comrades (FRELIMO Nyusi) Official video	Música da campanha do Partido FRELIMO <i>FRELIMO party's campaign jingle</i>	Political messaging	125,624
Miramar	PRONUNCIAMENTO DE MARIANO NHONGO Statement by Mariano Nhongo	O autoproclamado presidente da Junta Militar da RENAMO pronunciou-se hoje sobre a situação interna do partido e o escrutínio que terá lugar amanhã em todo o país. Mariano Nhongo reitera que é o único presidente legítimo da RENAMO. <i>The self-proclaimed president of the Military Junta of RENAMO announced this morning that on internal situation of the party and the judgment coming tomorrow from all over the country [election day]. Mariano Nhongo reiterated he is the only legitimate president of RENAMO.</i>	Political news	57,940
Miramar	ATAQUES EM CABO DELGADO Attacks in Cabo Delgado	Já está em implementação o Plano Operacional no Norte de Moçambique, visando alvos militares que tem vindo a protagonizar ataques na província de Cabo Delgado. Ainda não há muitos detalhes sobre a operação, mas o Ministério da Defesa Nacional diz que durante um ataque das Forças de Defesa e Segurança contra as bases dos malfeitores na noite da última segunda e terça-feira, um número considerável foi aniquilado e outros fugiram. <i>The Operational Plan in Northern Mozambique is being implemented, aiming at military targets who are responsible for the attacks in the Cabo Delgado region. Few details about the operation have been released, but the Ministry of National Defence has said that during an attack by the Forces of Defence and Security against the fighters' bases, on Monday and Tuesday night, a considerable number have been killed and others managed to flee.</i>	News	44,154

FIGURE 9.

THE 10 MOST HIGHLY WATCHED VIDEOS IN THE COLLECTION

Channel name	Title	Description	Type	Views
Miramar	JUNTA MILITAR DA RENAMO Military Junta of RENAMO	O Presidente auto-proclamado da Junta Militar da RENAMO, Mariano Nhongo adverte que se o governo não quiser ouvir mais disparos pelo país deve adiar o processo eleitoral em curso. Mariano Nhongo acrescentou que tem aguardado pacientemente pelo contacto do Governo e outras entidades para negociar o novo pacote de DDR. <i>The self-proclaimed president of the Military Junta of RENAMO, Mariano Nhongo, has warned the government that if they do not want to hear more gunshots in the country, they should postpone the current election. Mariano Nhongo added that he has been patiently waiting to hear from the Government and other entities to negotiate the new DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration) package.</i>		
Miramar	DETENÇÃO DE JOSÉ MANTEIGAS Arrest of José Manteigas	O deputado da Assembleia da República pela bancada da RENAMO, José Manteigas, já se encontra em liberdade. José Manteigas permaneceu horas no Comando Distrital da PRM em Massinga acusado de desacato. <i>The RENAMO representative of the Republic's Assembly, José Manteigas, has been freed from jail. José Manteigas was kept for hours at the District Command of the PRM (police) in Massinga, accused of disrespecting a police officer.</i>	Political news	34,972
FRELIMO Moçambique	FRELIMO é contigo que dá certo - Video Clip <i>FRELIMO - it "works" with you - Video Clip</i>	FRELIMO é contigo que dá certo. Nyusi é contigo que dá Certo. #VotaFRELIMO #VotaNyusi #EcontigoQueDaCerto #Ondavermelha #Eleicoes2019. <i>FRELIMO it "works" with you. Nyusi it "works" with you. #VoteFRELIMO #VoteNyusi #ItWorksWithYou #RedWave#Elections2019</i>	Political messaging	28,967
Miramar	SUSTO NO AEROPORTO INTERNACIONAL DE MAPUTO Scare at Maputo's International Airport	Aeronave da LAM despista-se ao aterrar no Aeroporto Internacional de Maputo. Segundo as primeiras informações não há registo de vítimas humanas. <i>LAM passenger airliner skids off the runway in Maputo's International Airport. According to first reports there have been no casualties.</i>	News	28,464

Channel name	Title	Description	Type	Views
Miramar	IDOSO LADRÃO <i>Thieving old man</i>	Um ancião de 64 anos está a contas com a polícia na 1ª esquadra da PRM na Cidade de Maputo indiciado de roubar 10 pares de sapato feminino numa loja. <i>A 64-year-old man is being kept by police in the 1st Unit of the PRM in the city of Maputo, accused of robbing 10 pairs of women's shoes from a shop.</i>	News	26,957
Miramar	RENAMO NA ZAMBÉZIA RENAMO in Zambia	O cabeça de lista da RENAMO, na província da Zambézia, marchou esta quarta-feira pelas avenidas de Quelimane. Acompanhado pelo mandatário do partido, Manuel de Araújo, dizia levar a mensagem de esperança de uma vida melhor caso vença as eleições. <i>RENAMO's main candidate in Zambezia Province marched this Wednesday on the streets of Quelimane. Accompanied by the leader of the regional party, Manuel de Araújo, he said he was bringing a message of hope and a better life in case he won the elections.</i>	Political news	26,631
Moz News	Fim da STV? Bang cria seu próprio canal para enfrentar a STV End of STV? Bang launches his own channel to rival STV	Durante a briga entre a STV e o Bang, o empresario prometeu criar uma instancia televisiva para enfrentar a STV e oque muitos não estavam a espera è que a promessa feita esta sendo cumprida. Bang criou a strong live tv e estreira brevemente para bater de frente com a STV <i>During the fight between STV and Bang, the businessman promised to launch a broadcaster to rival STV and what many did not expect was that a "promise made was a promise realised". Bang created the Strong Live TV which will go on air soon to compete directly with STV.</i>	News	26,074

In order to explore the themes present within comments left on these Youtube videos, a sample of 306 comments were annotated by a researcher. These broke down into the following broad categories:

FIGURE 10.
% COMMENTS BY
THEME (SAMPLE OF 306)

Category	% Comments
Pro-RENAMO	33%
Other	26%
Political - support unclear	13%
Anti-FRELIMO	12%
Pro-FRELIMO	10%
Anti-RENAMO	6%

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the often political nature of the videos under which they appeared, the majority (61%) of comments mentioned one of Mozambique’s primary parties, either criticising or praising their party of choice. Many of these, especially those shared on explicitly partisan channels, were simple expressions of support (e.g. “Viva RENAMO!”) and repetitions of FRELIMO’s slogans, but some commentators explicitly attempted to persuade others with their messaging.

Researchers also broke these comments down by the explicit political alignment of the channel on which each comment was left – Frelimo’s channel, clearly, on the pro-FRELIMO side, Manuel de Araújo’s on RENAMO. This shows that most comments chime with the alignment of the channel:

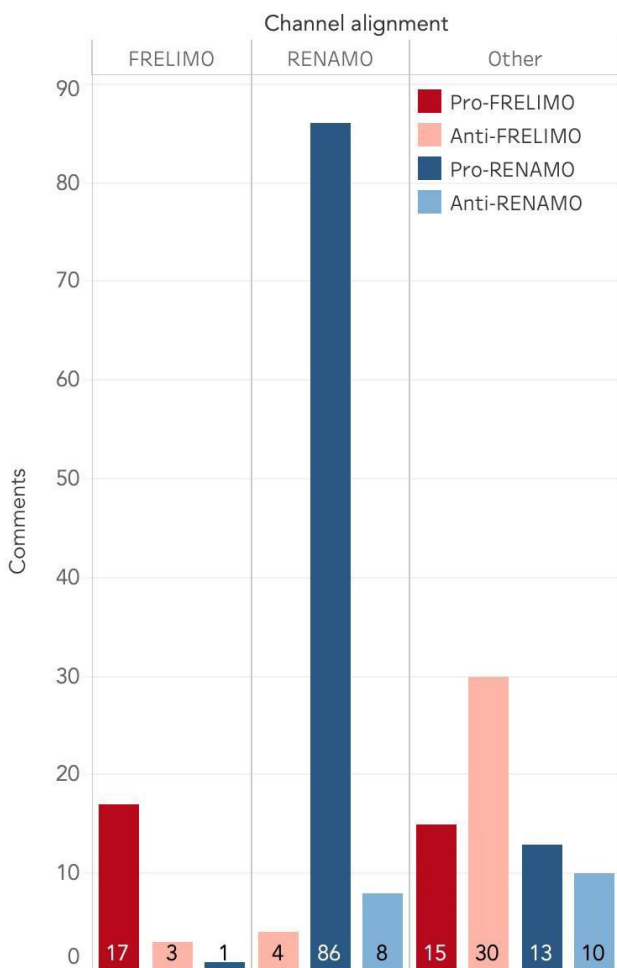


FIGURE 11.
COMMENTS ON CHANNELS BY ALIGNMENT

Figure 11 might not seem surprising; comment posted on pre-RENAMO videos tends to support that party, and vice-versa. However, it could also point to an effect of comment moderation and censorship. YouTube is a tightly controlled information environment – the owners of a channel have absolute powers to remove comments on their videos, without a trace. Furthermore, it is not possible to use YouTube’s API to count past deletions on videos, making censorship difficult to track. Even in this absence of proof, the numbers above paint a suspicious picture; given the low quantity of dissenting voice on openly partisan channels, it is likely that comments are being cherry-picked to show a supportive if low level public voice. This is supported by the fact that non-political channels received a much more balanced range of commentary; including comments on Mr Bow’s explicitly pro-FRELIMO video.

AREAS OF FOCUS

As in the Twitter study above, video titles and comments collected were searched for terms related to Cabo Delgado, gender and electoral violence. Due to our focus here on the output of five channels, only a small number of videos and comments were found using a keyword related to these themes. While this is likely to reflect a general unwillingness for official party accounts and channels to openly discuss these subjects, it is likely that these topics were being discussed elsewhere on YouTube; this analysis should not be taken as an exhaustive search of all relevant videos uploaded during the campaign. This also raises a general difficulty in analysing video - since the contents of the videos themselves are not available to this study en masse, it is possible that these themes are addressed as part of the narratives of the videos themselves.

Area of focus: Gender

None of the videos collected contained any of our search terms for gender in their titles, and only five comments were sent employing these terms. Of these five, three used the word ‘jovem’ to mean ‘youth’ in general, and two were short sentences judging the attractiveness of women appearing in the video.

While the official content produced by FRELIMO for their channel often use imagery of smiling women to make points about inclusion and policies designed ‘for all’, it seems that gender was not a specific focus for the party on YouTube.

Area of focus: Electoral violence

Though no video titles contained a key term related

to force or electoral violence, 24 comments used this language. These primarily employed the term 'força' (force) as a term of support. This use of language was used overwhelmingly by supporters of RENAMO candidate Manuel de Araújo, with 19 of the 24 comments praising the candidate for his perceived strength

Other relevant comments included allegations of violence by police, and reactions to the threats of Mariano Nhongo, the self-proclaimed leader of the RENAMO Military Junta to disrupt the elections by force.

Area of focus: Cabo Delgado

Only one video present in our collection mentioned the attacks on Cabo Delgado in its title. This was a news report, published by Miramar and viewed 65,562 times; the third highest count in our collection. The report focused approvingly on the ruling party's response to the attacks, showing footage of Nyusi at a summit, followed by clips of government forces firing rockets. As with much of the other footage reviewed from Miramar, the video paints FRELIMO in a positive light. Comments left on this video ranged from those applauding the use of force, to one user who mused in English that "we should do something about this government". Others called FRELIMO's military response out as a campaigning stunt.

Of comments left on all videos collected, five comments explicitly mentioned attacks on the area. These included claims that FRELIMO were using the violence in the area to promote an anti-RENAMO narrative. One commenter directly called for violence, inciting the assassination of Mariano Nhongo.



FIGURE 12.
VIDEO FROM MIRAMAR
REPORTING ON CABO
DELGADO

PLATFORM STUDY: WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is almost certainly the most widely-used messaging application in Mozambique, and was identified as a key vector for the transmission of political messaging and political organisation. It is not possible to analyse private groups on WhatsApp - and the scale of the network of users and groups in Mozambique is impossible to measure. Working with group administrators, however, researchers were given access to a handful of groups through which a partial view of how the platform was used during the election period could be developed.

- WhatsApp was used to report on the election as it unfolded, and was a major news source for its users.
- The platform was used to discuss and report on electoral malpractice, and to share advice on how to document and respond to it.
- A handful of 'super users' are integral to the coordination and distribution of news and information across the network.

DATA COLLECTION

In partnership with local partner, EISA, researchers were granted access to four public WhatsApp groups sharing news and political reportage during the election period. Messages were collected for a month-long period between the 26th September and 26th October. Across the four groups, users shared 4,442 messages at an average of nearly 150 messages per day, spiking to over 1,000 on the day of the election, shown in the graph below.

Based on this data, researchers set out to understand:

- Key uses of the platform during the election period
- Key voices in sharing information across the network.

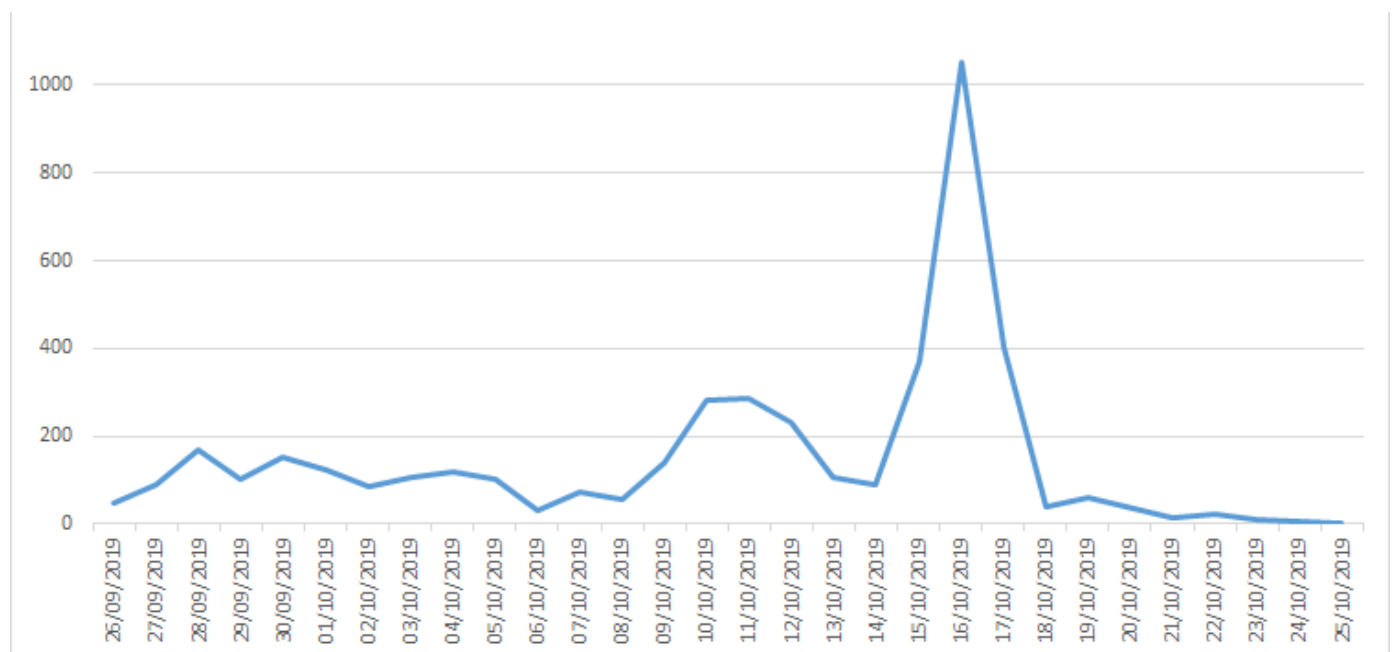


FIGURE 13.

WHATSAPP MESSAGES SHARED OVER TIME

MESSAGE THEMES

Analysts characterised the themes present in the conversations analysed by coding a sample of 150 messages taken from across the groups. Messages fell into six broad categories, providing an overview of the ways in which WhatsApp was used during the period. The results of the analysis are shown in figure 14.

The election was the primary focus of the conversation: the groups were most frequently used to share news and discuss the election. Alongside general conversation, messages were primarily focused on reporting on the electoral process, with a particular focus on corruption and malpractice and advice on how to counteract it.

News Sharing (33%)

News sharing emerged as the most frequent kind of messaging on the platform, making up a third of the messages analysed. Messages were split between first-hand news reportage from those observing the situation on the ground and the use of other media sources. Citizen journalism and the use of mobile phones to share images on election day were encouraged and shared through the platform.

Electoral Misconduct and Violence (14%)

31 messages in the sample reported and alleged examples of electoral misconduct and violence. This included reports of violence and vandalism carried

out by political supporters and reports of arrests for fraud and voting misdemeanours. A small number of messages discussed government action against election observers.

Voting Reportage (12%)

In the wake of the election, the platform was used to circulate results as they were announced.

Difficulties Voting (11%)

Alongside reports of electoral misconduct, a smaller number of messages focused on general problems voting. These reports related to polling stations being closed or opening late, mismatched lists and voting IDs and a dearth of credentials for voters.

Anti-Corruption (10%)

Groups were also used to coordinate and encourage anti-corruption activities. WhatsApp users shared photos of polling stations and ballot boxes, shared advice on how to report examples of electoral misconduct, and encouraged other users to call out corruption when they saw it.

Category	# Messages	% Messages
News Sharing	49	33%
General Conversation	31	21%
Electoral Misconduct and Violence	21	14%
Voting Reportage	18	12%
Difficulties Voting	16	11%
Anti-Corruption	15	10%

FIGURE 14.

CATEGORIES OF
WHATSAPP MESSAGES

KEY VOICES

Researchers set out to understand the role played by WhatsApp users in sharing information across the network. User IDs were anonymised, then the groups in which they were participating were mapped. This is shown in the map below.

Six users were active across two groups, and two users were active across three of the four groups that data was collected from. These users contributed 536 messages during the collection period, and three of these users were among the five most active users during the election. These six users were also responsible for 56 percent of news-sharing within the groups.

These so-called 'super users' act as coordinators and vectors for the transfer of news and information throughout the network. In building the capacity of civil society, increasing the number of these 'super users' will be integral to strengthening the networks of voices in the country.

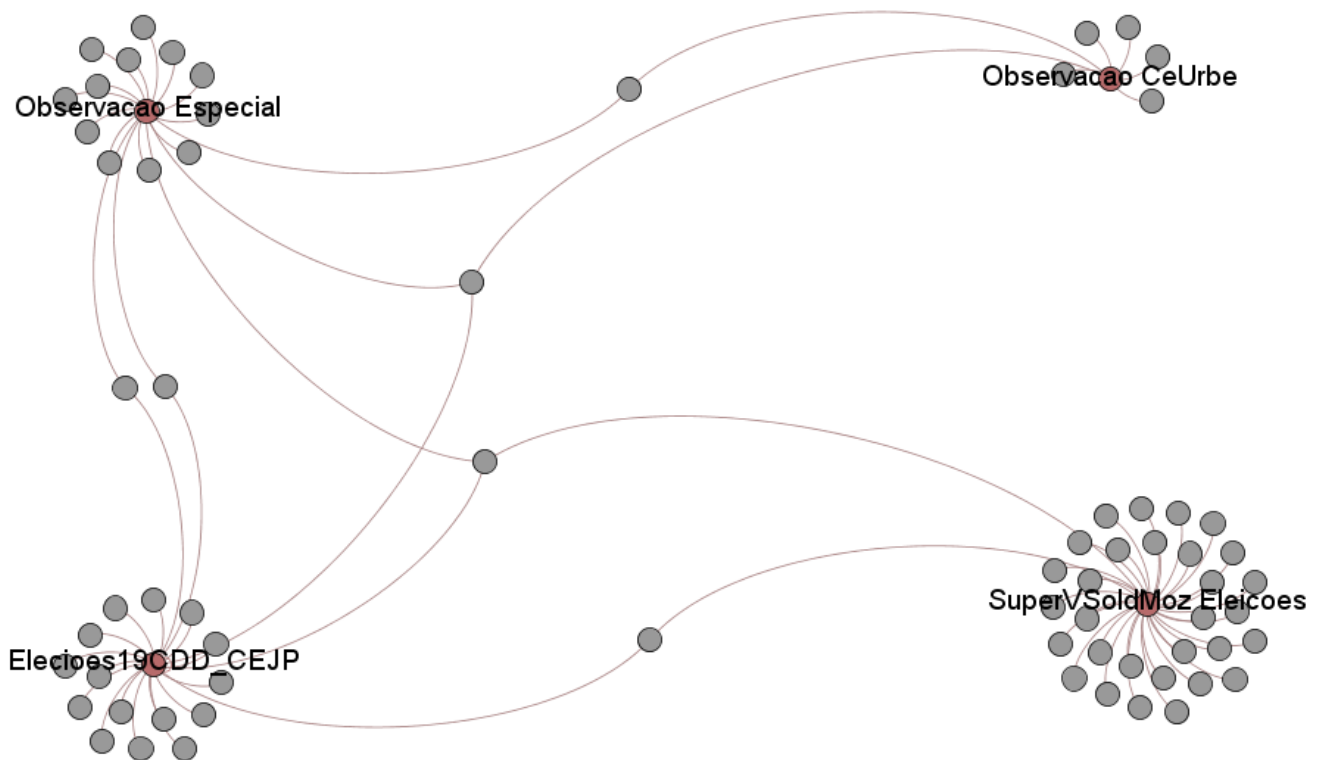


FIGURE 15.

KEY VOICES IN THE
WHATSAPP NETWORK

CONCLUSIONS

This report outlines the shape of the Mozambican online media ecosystem - how different platforms are used by political parties and citizens, and the key voices, networks and themes in the Mozambique digital landscape. There are also lessons to be taken from this on how the online media can be used to influence and communicate, both at a national media level and on the ground through less traditional channels.

While Twitter's penetration in Mozambique remains comparatively low, and foreign observers remain the biggest players in terms of Twitter engagement around Mozambican politics, there is evidence of an emerging community of domestic civil society leaders and commentators taking to the platform. There was still little first hand reaction to and discussion of issues like electoral violence or insurgency in Cabo Delgado, however, with engagement on Twitter still primarily focused in a narrow subsection of the Mozambican public.

Public engagement with political parties on Facebook remains relatively low for all parties - and the more professional approach from FRELIMO has not necessarily seen results, with similar levels of interaction on their page as on that of RENAMO, despite having four times the number of likes. None of the parties provided significant detail of any policy platform - in the main, all of them focused on FRELIMO - with FRELIMO expunging any mention of opposition parties on its page, and the opposition parties primarily focusing on allegations of corruption against FRELIMO.

Our analysis of Youtube content and viewership related to the election suggests there is a strong appetite for information not present on mainstream channels such as the public broadcaster TVM, with much wider viewership of videos relating to RENAMO than content relating to FRELIMO that can be found elsewhere.

We also found that the slick but repetitive videos published by FRELIMO struggled to break through

- though the same messages communicated more innovatively in Mr Bow's music video found a much keener audience.

WhatsApp shows great promise as a means of communicating with civil society leaders and the Mozambican public, and is already used to document cases of electoral misconduct and violence, and encourage anti-corruption practices - as well as sharing news and connecting people more generally.

Our analysis highlights the importance of a small number of highly engaged 'super users' contributing to multiple WhatsApp groups in co-ordinating and sharing information. Engaging with - and encouraging and increasing the number of - these 'super users' may be an effective way to influence and communicate with leaders and communities across Mozambique.

APPENDIX

Election Monitoring Keywords			
#ÉContigoQueDáCerto	@FNyusi	#OssufoMomade	@CDD_MOZ
#FRELIMO	@ArmandoGuebuza	#campanhaeleitoral	@CIPMOZ
RENAMO	@basiliomuhate	#candidatoRENAMO	@MarceloMosse
FRELIMO	@FilipeNyusi	#FilipeNyusi	@fatima_f2m
#EcontigoQueDaCerto	@opasonline	#Eleições2019	@lvoneSoares
#OndaVermelha	@OssufoMomad	eleição	@zenaidamz
#VotaNyusi	@DMachamale	Nyusi	@TxekaMoz
#EuVotoNyusi	@SolidariedadeM	#Mozambique	@derciotsandzana
Nhongo	@CIP_Eleicoes	#Mocambique	@borgesnhamirre
Momade	@FRELIMOSouEu	#Moçambique	@adelsonmz
#MeuVotoÉCerto	@adriano_nuvunga	@FRELIMONLINE	@tomqueface-

Gender-specific keywords	Electoral Violence Keywords
genero	violência
mulheres	força
feminina	violentas
menina	fraude eleitoral
garota	fraudes eleitorais
mulher	queimar
fêmea	incendiar
solteirona	
rapariga	
jovem	
filha	
moça	

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