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VOTA MOÇAMBIQUE

PREPARED FOR:

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

[N.D.I]

BY:

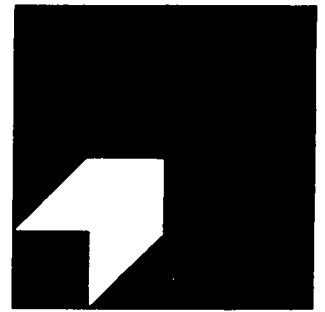


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SEPT./ 1994

CENTRO LATINO AMERICANO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO DE MERCADO

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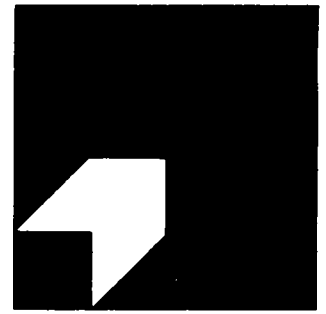


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INTRODUCTION

The NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS [N.D.I.] has followed and participated in every moment of the Mozambicans' fight for democracy. At each step, the N.D.I. has undertaken qualitative studies, evaluating the development of the Mozambicans' sensibility concerning the arrival of democracy in the country. For that matter, it organized in June of 1993 and April of 1994 sections of *focus groups* with in the population. In the first groups, it studied institutions, democratic concepts, and the educational campaign directed at the electorate. In the second groups, it studied their perceptions of and expectations regarding democracy, as well as their perceptions of the democratic process. In September of 1994, we were asked to investigate, using the same technique, what the Mozambicans really expect from their first elections, their level of knowledge on democratic principles, and to what extent they are prepared to vote.



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METHODOLOGY

The technique of focus groups serves to know, through meetings with selected groups, the way participants or the whole group make up their mind to assume certain attitudes towards the ideas proposed as themes for the meetings. Applying the technique of group dynamics, through interaction between participants, we tried to let all of them freely express their thoughts concerning the proposed themes.

In conformity with this technique, we organized five sections, each of them presenting the following characteristics:

CITY	STATE	N. PART.	CHARACTERISTICS
Maputo	Maputo	14 [17%]	Workers of graphic industry
Matola Rios	Maputo	25 [30%]	People living in reallocation projects
Xai Xai	Gaza	13 [16%]	Students in the last year at the center for preparing high school teachers
Nicoadala	Zambézia	21 [25%]	Students at the 11 th level
Inhaminga	Sufala	10 [12%]	"Régulos" ¹

Other characteristics of the group:

MEN: 52 [63%] **MARRIED:** 27 [52%] **WOMEN:** 31 [37%] **MARRIED:** 26 [84%]
SINGLE: 25 [48%] **SINGLE:** 5 [16%]

Medium of age: 34

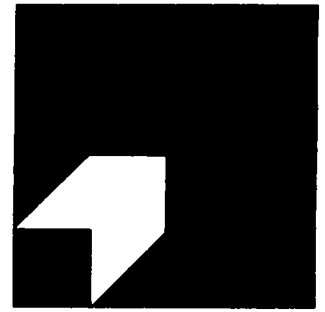
Medium of children: 5

¹ Leaders of religious groups.



Ethnicity of participants

Ronga	13 participants	Macua	1 participant
Changane	30 participants	Matsa	1 participant
Sena	19 participants	Machope	1 participant
Chuabos	9 participants	Zulu	2 participants
Bitonga	1 participant	Lomue	6 participants



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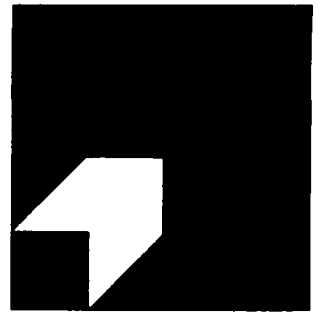
ANALYSIS

The moderators of the groups clearly perceived distinct and even antagonistic positions between participants from Inhaminga and participants from other cities. Thus, throughout the following analysis, we will emphasize the positions of the "régulos" in Inhaminga. We will also present our analysis following the proposed themes as they appeared in our scheme, in order to provide the reader with a better sense of the trajectory through which participants made up their minds.

ELECTIONS: The most transparent, strongest and clearly verbalized feeling is that "elections will consolidate peace and this peace will long." This statement, though made emphatically, does not represent a certitude. It represents a strong internalized hope in the mind and hearts of participants. Such hope can be felt by the force and lightness of their eyes, always present in their statements and in the way they expressed their general thoughts.

The aspirations of participants also include the following unanimous issues:

Free choice of their activities: "To be able to be whatever I want, a business person, an autonomous professional, a technician, an agricultural worker, to have my tillage, whatever I want," also including in these aspirations access to land possession and free market.



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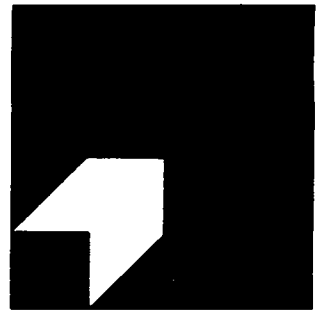
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The right to come and go: "Because of war, my whole family spread, running from the horror that this became. Now, with elections, I will be able to look for them, because under democracy nobody can stop me."

The searching for the lost dignity: "I do not want to live for free, I want to pay, buying or renting a house where I can live with my family," or the strong and courageous protest of a woman in Matola Rios, who received enthusiastic approval by clapping from other participants of her group. Afterwards, they sung in Changane a song for the coming elections: "I think that with these elections, I will not have to sell myself to the first man who offers a piece of bread to my children. I am not a prostitute, this happens to me and to her, to her and to her (pointing to other female participants), but my children will not die from hunger!"

Hunger: Hunger is seen as the result of war, and trough as punishment of God. "We made the war and God punished us with drought, which causes hunger. Elections will bring rain, and water will wash the blood of our brothers spread over our land. Then we will be able to cultivate our tillage and we will no longer starve."

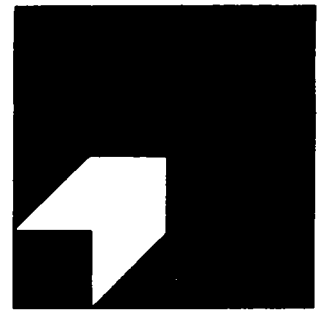
Problems that can occur along with elections will be centered around the positions of winners and losers after elections. Participants hope that the result does not cause a new war. All their fears are included in this hope.



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IN INHAMINGA: "Régulos" demonstrate attitudes of indifference and opposition towards elections. Their positions may be reflecting the varying forms of political, social and religious power that make, made or will make part of the context in which they are inserted. It is important to note that, during their meeting, participants do not speak of their preferences and experiences, or express their wills in the first person. Instead, each participant speaks as a group, trying to show a common and corporative feeling of unification. The following statements clearly demonstrate the level of involvement of this group with elections and with democracy: "If hunger is over, we accept anything," or "we think the old system for choosing the chief is the good one. We used to ask the people: This one will be the new chief ! Do you like him? and then we would say and choose," or "we do not know whether or not elections can end the war, but for sure hunger will bring a new war. "Their statements also demonstrate force and hidden threat, such as: "If someone comes here during elections, we will vote; if nobody comes, we will not miss anything," or more directly and incisively: "If a political party brings five vans full of food, we will vote; if not, nobody will vote.



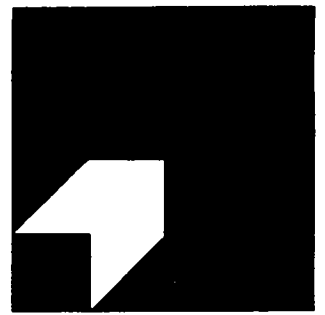
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LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE: With the exception of the group from Matola Rios, all groups demonstrate to reasonably knowing the varying steps the electorate will undertake to vote:

- ◇ They know **where** to vote
- ◇ They know **when** to vote
- ◇ They know the relationship between the registering of the electorate and elections
- ◇ They know how many ballots will be used

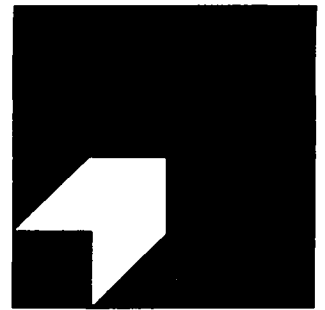
For all groups, the question concerning the number of parties running for elections creates polemic amongst participants. Some of them assure there are 11 parties. Others contest, saying that there are 12 or 13. Others assure there are 18. Few of them point out there is **parties' combination**. Those who mention this practice do not know how many and which parties are combined, as well as the name of their combination.



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WHO CAN VOTE: This question also creates conflicting opinions amongst participants. Although they know all rules regulating this issue, the vote of a blind person is very discussed. For them, the concept of **secret ballot** means that **nobody must know your vote**. This contradicts the rule that a blind person can vote with the help of a **trusting person**. By "nobody" they mean even their closest relatives, such as husband, wife, father, mother, brother, etc. Thus, "if even my mother cannot know my vote, how - can - a blind person vote with the help of someone else?" We will turn back to this issue in our analysis of the issue "TRUST AND SECURITY DURING ELECTIONS." It is also important to mention that from this discussion it emerges once again the searching for dignity, as expressed by a woman from Matola Rios: "For me, a deaf person should not be allowed to vote, because not being able to listen to the electoral campaign, he will not be able to choose his candidate. He will depend either on the image presented by the party's president or on another person's opinion, with whom he can communicate. He will also need a "trusting person"."



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IN INHAMINGA: All of them quickly point out the steps to vote and demonstrate to know these steps very well. There is no disagreement on the number of political parties. They all assure there are 8, and laugh in sign of agreement when one of them says: "There are 8 parties, but what interests us is that RENAMO wins, because then things will change!" This is the first and only verbal announcement of solidarity with a political party. In the analysis of who can or cannot vote, all participants from Inhaminga know and demonstrate to know the rules, except when a "régulos" proclaims: "Those who beg have nothing to lose and will vote for anyone who offers money to them." This explanation shows us that "régulos" also wish to restore dignity. It demonstrates that they have an ethos that makes sense as well.



HOW HAVE YOU OBTAINED INFORMATION ON ELECTIONS ?

In every city, RADIO is the most cited source of information, far away followed by NEWSPAPERS, which also appear in large advantage regarding the third and last source information - the CIVIC GROUPS. Another source was once mentioned by a student from Nicoadala: "I learnt (how to vote) from the representative of a political party who visited my house."

In Matola Rios, the level of lack of information is very high. During the focus group meeting, moderators perceived this situation and simulated a ballot. This simulation showed that they have little information on elections.

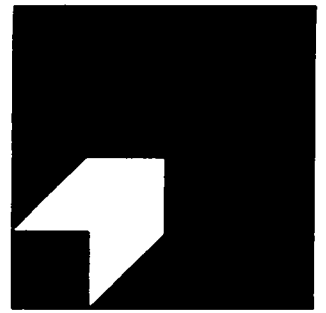
They do not distinguish between the number of ballots and how many times they can vote:

- ◇ They do not know the meaning of the different ballots' colors
- ◇ They do not know how to check their choice
- ◇ They do not know how to bend the ballot
- ◇ They do not know whether or not someone is allowed to help them

A participant textually declared: "There may be someone there to help me."

What they do know is that:

- ◇ They want to vote
- ◇ They know where to vote
- ◇ It is necessary to be registered in order to vote



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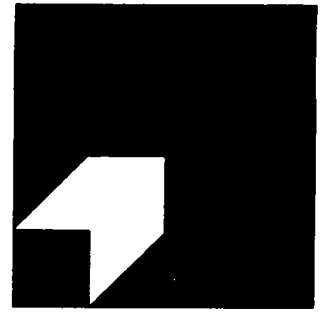
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IN INHAMINGA: "Régulos" unanimously reported it was N.D.I. who taught them how to vote. Asked about who N.D.I. was, they answered: "People like you, who come here to teach us." Indeed, all of them showed a high level of information, easily describing the necessary steps to vote.

SECURITY AND PREOCCUPATION: There is a general wish to vote. The only reason for that is: "to have freedom of expression." This shows that they look for what they never had. They believe the ballot will be secret due to two concepts they have internalized:

- ◇ "Nobody will force me to vote for whom I do not favor"
- ◇ "You cannot and should not reveal your vote to anyone else"

We clearly perceive that participants do not relate the concept of "*secret ballot*" to the impossibility of the state to recognize the vote of any elector. We also perceive that they were not informed about themes such as:



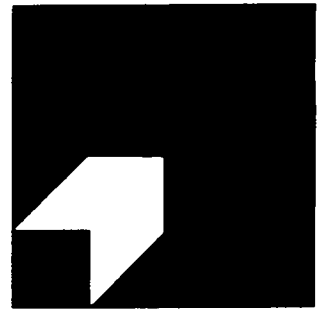
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- ◇ The possibility of fraud during the counting of votes;
- ◇ Criteria for the counting of votes;
- ◇ Rules regulating the invalidation of votes or ballot boxes;

Nobody mentions to fear or to know someone who fears participating in elections. They believe elections will happen calmly and without trouble. One of the oldest teachers from Xai Xai expressed the only verbalized preoccupation with this issue: "To date, I do not fear anything. I do not know anyone who fears either. But it will depend on what the presidents of the parties will say during the campaign. I will pay attention, because I may prefer to stay quite at home, taking care of my family."

IN INHAMINGA: We did not notice any sign of fear or preoccupation among "régulos". To some degree, this is explained by their clear demonstration of indifference towards elections, as well as by their natural prudence.

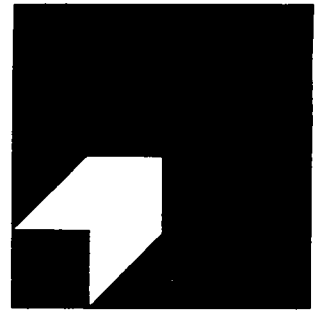


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CONDUCTION OF ELECTIONS: The NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR ELECTIONS - C.N.E. is recognized as responsible for the conduction of elections, with the exception of Inhaminga. According to "régulos", not only C.N.U. but also the United Nations are responsible for the conduction of elections. In some cities, we noticed participants devote a high level of credibility to C.N.E. Participants know the most important members of this commission and demonstrate respect for them.

FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS: Participants present incredible difficulty to define this concept. Even though the ballot is seen as a form of "expression of freedom" they refer to this concept only in the general sense of "being able to say anything once one has education." By "free elections" they mean: "Nobody can force me to vote for someone I do not favor, because the ballot is secret." It is impossible do define the concept of free and fair elections. For instance, nobody refers to elections without intervention of economic or political power. Due to the lack of any democratic practice, participants do not question legitimacy and/ or the taking office of elected candidates.

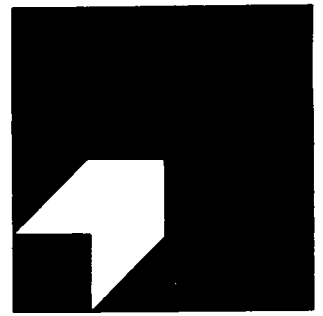


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IN INHAMINGA: When asked about who conducts the electoral process in Mozambique, "régulos" refers more to responsibility than to conduction. This position demonstrates an attempt to put N.U. as co-responsible for the outcome of elections: "Without the "régulos", with card and hunger, elections will lead to war." This is one of the hidden threats observed by the moderators. Given this fact, it is easy to also notice that participants prefer to define "free and fair elections" by expressing ideals such as "free are those who can eat; fairness is to provide food to people." They insist that "the political parties which lose elections will make a new war."

AFTER ELECTIONS: Participants of all groups cannot explain the meaning of multiparty system. Workers from Maputo offer the best definition: "A government that will allow the existence of other parties." This definition and the general difficulty to explain a multiparty system should be understood within the historical context of this population, who fights for the arrival of democracy. Their past is marked by colonialism or by an authoritarian regime, with only one party officially recognized or with a vision of a party as a militarist group. Accordingly, we should not be surprised by their impossibility of distinguishing between the role of the President and the role of the Congress. As they express:



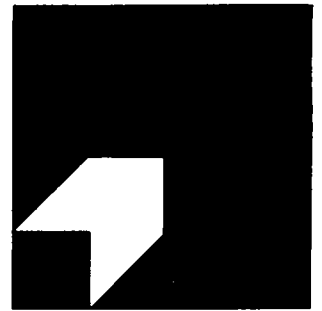
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- ◇ **The President must see what is the best for the people;**
- ◇ **The President is the one who must guide the future of Mozambique;**
- ◇ **The Congress must give advise the President;**

These statements clearly show that the concept of a paternalistic state is strongly attached to the population's beliefs. Such position seems to be comfortable for them, because throughout the past twenty years they have experienced a violent process that emphasizes it.

IN INHAMINGA: In this case, the oppositional position is stronger. Nobody can define the proposed themes, holding radical positions. Because they do not understand the possibility of a multiparty system, their opinions are directed at what they believe it has been the role of the President: "President means corruption. We are here starving, vans pass by full of food, but they do not stop, they go directly to Beira." Or they say that "every President is a dictator who only gives orders. We want someone who makes everything for the people, who gives food for the people!"



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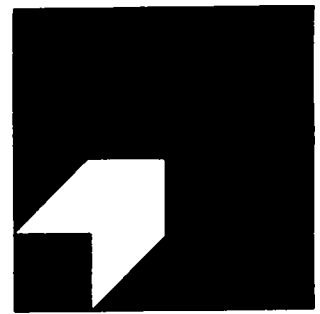
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DEMOCRACY: For all groups, the only definition is that "democracy is the freedom to say anything." In Nicoadala, a student added to this definition: "Unless we use bad words." It is also worthy to quote two definitions of teachers from Xai Xai:

- ❖ **Democracy means to be able to choose who will guide us**
- ❖ **It means the contrary to socialism**

It is evident that even at the conceptual level all participants' definitions are contaminated by their aspirations. They imagine or create definitions according to their most basic needs as human beings, expressing once again what they lack. This is the case because to date they have not experienced democracy. Besides, they have lacked better information or received distorted information. They do not know the meaning of "civil rights".

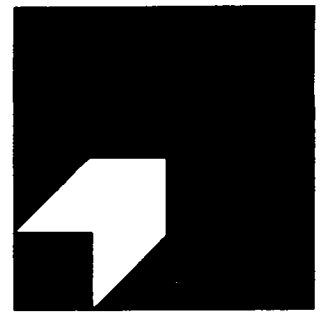
They even make mistakes about the meaning of these words, defining them as "the right of those who are not armed." Their recent past leads them to prefer to discuss their duties as imposed by democracy. These duties may or not be fair. Thus, it is contradictory to demand a definition of civil rights from those who have never had these rights, or from those who have received information on this theme attached to a political opposition to other models of society.



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IN INHAMINGA: The only definition of democracy is given in a comparative way: "Democracy means to have elections." But once again the assumption is that "to have elections with hunger is to go back to war," connecting then democracy to a new war. The position of this group is also evident in the following statement: "Democracy wants us to vote for whom we do not even know the face." It would be tragic, if not comic, to demand from this group the demonstration of any knowledge on civil rights.



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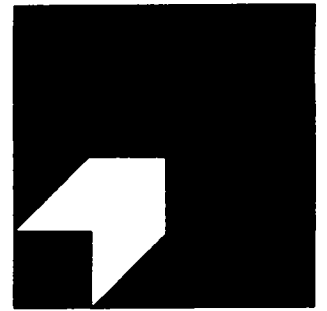
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CONCLUSION

Considering the exercise of voting as conditioned by knowledge on democratic principles, by a correct understanding on what democracy means, by the capacity of recognizing civil rights, by a larger definition of the limits and duties of each branch of the democratic state, by an evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of a multiparty system, then the results of our meetings with participants of the *focus groups* show us that Mozambicans are not prepared for the coming elections. We consider that the election of those who are going to politically and administratively represent the people is only one aspect of a democratic regime. Democracy needs to be experienced to be plain. This is the challenge of Mozambicans.

Certainly, there is a great risk, recognized by the whole international community involved with the democratic process in Mozambique. However, the consequences would be even more dramatic if elections were postponed. This statement is not based on any information on possible actions from the part of political parties currently in power or armed. It is based on our analytical conclusion about what elections represent there at this moment. Mozambicans conceive of elections as the possibility of turning ALL their dreams into reality, leading them to the closest level of unreality. The following quotes show the real dimension of the gravity of their internalized expectations regarding elections:

- ❖ **WHO KNOWS IF ELECTIONS WILL NOT BRING RAIN**
- ❖ **ALONG WITH ELECTIONS, WE WILL HAVE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**
- ❖ **ALONG WITH ELECTIONS, NEPOTISM AND CORRUPTION WILL BE OVER**



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- ❖ **ALONG WITH ELECTIONS, WE WILL BE ABLE TO COME AND GO WHENEVER AND WHEREVER WE WANT**
- ❖ **WE WILL BE ABLE TO FOLLOW OUR DESTINY AND TO BE WHATEVER WE WANT, AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, CATTLEMEN, BUSINESSMEN, WHATEVER WE WANT!**

What mostly worries us is how participants express these statements without any doubt. We do not envision the fulfillment of these expectations sooner or longer. It is necessary to consider this reality for future action. We must remember that the disappointment of the population is directly linked to their expectations. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid the emergence of a false, charismatic or mystic leader who may offer visionary alternatives to a disappointed people.

The position of "régulos" can be explained by their searching for the prestige they used to have in the past. However, it is important to notice that during our meeting with them, which took place in a public square, the N.D.I. organized the simulation of an election in order to teach the population how to vote. There were a lot of people listening to and participating in this training. These people were more involved with elections than "régulos". They seemed to efficiently repeat a lesson someone taught them and made them see as the best or the only way to solve their problems.

Finally, we can affirm that most participants demonstrate no fear to vote during elections. Once they receive correct training, they also demonstrate to know how to vote. The N.D.I. is largely responsible for this training, even considering the difficult conditions under which one can work. The strategy of using "guiders" is seen as the best by the population. It corresponds to the basic characteristics of a culture whose preservation and development rest mostly upon oral communication.