



# *Moçambique Para Todos (?)*

## *Mozambique and Political Violence*

### *The Opinions of the Opposition Youth*

by Michele Portatadino

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The warmth concedes a break on that afternoon of mid April. The interview is over at the lobby bar of Rovuma Pestana Hotel, Maputo. Sara<sup>1</sup> had chosen that bar for its proximity to the building of the Maputo City Council where she works. I assumed we had concluded our conversation and I was about to thank her for her time and leave. Yet, Sara was still drumming her long fingers adorned with elegantly polished nails, on the table. She had already asked what I was doing in Mozambique. My objects of interest were the politics, she understood that part, and still, she mentioned I might have been willing to know one more detail. We had already discussed plenty of politics for an interview that had lasted a little less than one hour, in her opinion there are positive ideas and visions, growing signs of improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> All names quoted in the paper are pseudonyms, except when explicitly specified. More information on the interviewees can be found in Appendix A



However, “I can tell you”<sup>2</sup> she affirmed quite peremptorily “This is not a democracy. Here at maximum we have a moderate political tolerance, yet many are scared of the consequences of belonging to an opposition party”. Member of the MDM group in the City Council of Maputo, Sara repeated a *leitmotif*, which would be overly recurrent in all the interviews conducted with the members of the MDM youth league in Maputo. Two months later, when the Renamo youth league was my research target, a very similar pattern of answers emerged. All data seemed to point to the suggestion that belonging to the political opposition in Mozambique is still as safe as the Russian roulette. Further, at the time, the brutal murder of Professor Gilles Cistac was still a top-trend of discussion in the local media. Yet, to myself at least, the most shocking was another event, occurred approximately two months after the conclusion of my fieldwork project, when Sara’s words remerged in my head as a powerful *memento*.

On the Facebook profile of the MDM Information Cabinet, on 21 December 2015, ten pictures of incontrovertible content were published. A man lying in fetal position, with his arms risen up to protect his face. With no use, however, since he is was burnt alive. This man, Sousa Matola, was the chief of Information for MDM party delegation in Tete city, central Mozambique. The pictures’ description refers he has been lynched by unknown attackers, in the *bairro* of Matundo, Tete city. The murderers attacked at dawn, firstly beat up the victim, poured gasoline on his body and set him on fire.

The mentioned event was not the only one of such tragic traits in 2015. As mentioned above, Eduardo Mondlane University Professor, Gilles Cistac, was murdered in Maputo on 3 March.<sup>3</sup> Less tragic, yet, as much remarkable, was the trial involving Professor Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco and newspaper *Mediafax* director Fernando Mbanze on 16 September 2015.<sup>4</sup>

It is not the purpose of the present paper to accuse anyone of any responsibility. However, the present case study might correspond to what Galtung describes as “cultural violence” degenerating into “direct violence” (1990: 291-305). Prompted by the events, the author decided to target young members of the two political youth leagues affiliated to the two main opposition parties in Mozambique: the *Liga Nacional da Juventude da Renamo* (Renamo National Youth League, LJR), and the *Liga da Juventude do Movimento Democrático de Moçambique* (Mozambique Democratic Movement Youth League, LJMDM), associated with the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM).

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<sup>2</sup> From the registration of all interviews, the interviewees’ words were transcribed and later translated from Portuguese to English by the author himself

<sup>3</sup> *O País* online, *Morreu Gilles Cistac*, opais.sapo.mz, 3 March 2015

<sup>4</sup> For more details, see: *Juiz João Guilherme absolve Castel-Branco e Fernando Mbanze e reforça os alicerces da Democracia em Moçambique*, www.verdade.co.mz, 17 September 2015



As far as 2016, in Mozambique the national political situation after the latest national elections (15 October 2014) is all but of political stability. Further, what emerges from the research data is an alleged attitude of discrimination by the ruling party directed against the opposition. As Galtung defines it, “structural violence” fomented by a “cultural violence”, perpetrated in terms of “marginalization.” (1990: 291-305)<sup>5</sup> Political tensions have been lingering on the edge of a new widespread deflagration of violence as late as 2016. In times of elections, and not exclusively, such political violence involves especially masses of youngsters with duties of political propaganda<sup>6</sup> for opposition parties running in the polls or organizing any kind of public initiatives. Therefore, the author conducted his fieldwork research among members of the above mentioned political youth leagues to investigate their personal reasons for participating in these youth leagues, notwithstanding the fact that their personal integrity might be endangered.

Better rephrased: Why do youngsters in Maputo city decide to participate in a political youth league affiliated to an opposition party, given the risks of political violence? Moreover, the author investigated what these youths’ considerations on the present climate of political violence are, and their opinions on the repercussions of political violence on their own youth leagues.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Mozambique has been quoted by the United Nations and the international community as a positive “test case” (1995: 105-123) of transition from a single-party regime to a multiparty democracy.<sup>7</sup> The UN mission for Mozambique (ONUMOZ) managed to avoid the failures occurred in other UN missions in Sub-Saharan Africa in the same years, moreover, the World Bank and the IMF included Mozambique within the world’s ten fastest growing economies of the last decade, with an average annual GDP growth of 7.7% (Bujones 2013: 4). Every five years since 1994, democratic national elections have been held without major concerns, although difficulties persist. Though the aftermath of the first democratic elections did not degenerate as it occurred in Angola, as remarked by Chris Alden (1996), elections *per se* do not guarantee democracy. Mozambique is still suffering from a plethora of flaws in its political system: no alternance of power between different political parties, electoral abstentionism, social inequalities, underdevelopment of public services, etc.

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<sup>5</sup> Given the circumstances, the present paper shall use the expression “political violence” whenever referring to what Galtung defines as “cultural violence”, due to the political nature of the latter in the present research case.

<sup>6</sup> Also referred to, in the paper, as “dirty work”

<sup>7</sup> On the peace process and transition to democracy see: Van den Bergh, L. (2009): *Porque prevaleceu a paz: Moçambicanos respondem*, AWEPA - European Parliamentarians for Africa



Further, a “cultural” political violence is rooted in some 28 years of almost uninterrupted conflict, political pluralism did not eliminate a feeling of mutual distrust between the ruling party and the opposition<sup>8</sup> which consequently established a structural violence degenerating in the present day in episodes such as those described above, and even more widespread direct violence. How this reverberates on the youth, however, might not be as clear since Mozambican youths hardly participate in the formal politics, as illustrated by a research study conducted by the NGO *Parlamento Juvenil de Moçambique* (Mozambican Youth Parliament, PJ).<sup>9</sup>

Nonetheless, such analysis is worthwhile for, at least, two reasons. First of all, youngsters, i.e. people between 15 and 35 years of age<sup>10</sup> are the majority of the national population, as confirmed by the latest statistics (*Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas* 2012) and still, they are excluded from the political debate. Even more systematically when they belong to the opposition. Secondly, as the cases described in chapter 1 might prove, such violence in Mozambique does not exclusively manifest as armed confrontation between regular and/ or paramilitary groups, but also as acts of political vexations against civilians, as members of opposition parties or even sympathizers of the political opposition. And since the youth leagues are typically responsible for “dirty job” for their parties at local level, and not exclusively in election times, these youngsters might as well be the targets of vexations or worse. What the author intends to emphasize is how these youngsters perceive such ongoing political violence and why they decided to do political activism for a Mozambican opposition party as members of their respective youth league. Further, considering their first-person experiences as politically active youngsters, the author was also eager to know their personal opinions on what such political violence is.

## 2.1 The Research Targets

### The *Liga da Juventude da Renamo* (LJR)

The LJR is the youth association representing the youngest members of the main political opposition party in Mozambique, Renamo. Renamo was originally a counter-revolutionary guerrilla army supported by Rhodesia and South Africa. When the civil war came to an end in 1992, Renamo had to re-organize itself in order to be able to compete in the first democratic national elections of 1994 as a proper political party. The foundation of a youth league was officially achieved in 1992<sup>11</sup> and documented in

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<sup>8</sup> See: Lalá & Ostheimer 2003.

<sup>9</sup> The PJ is a civil society politically *super partes* movement, advocating for proactive, creative and impartial participation of the youth in decision-making processes. For details on the study, see: *Parlamento Juvenil de Moçambique* (2014).

<sup>10</sup> All interviewees' age was within this gap at the time of the interviews

<sup>11</sup> Program and statutes, with the signature of Renamo's leader Afonso Dhlakama himself. The original name of Renamo youth league was *Juventude Nacional Moçambicana* (JNM)



the Renamo Party *Programa* and *Estatutos*.<sup>12</sup> Interview data confirmed that the youngsters of the LJR are on the frontline as elections' mobilizers and, in general, the senior party relies on them for any kind of "dirty work" such as leafleting *et similia*. Opinions collected among the interviewees showed a predominant impression of youngsters motivated by the claimed ideals of concrete democracy and freedom of expression that Renamo party and the LJR proclaim to embody, in contrast to a mere façade of political tolerance prompted by Frelimo. The interviewees also clarified that the denomination was changed to *Liga Nacional da Juventude da Renamo*, (Renamo National Youth League, LJR) during a Renamo party meeting in Quelimane, Zambezia province, in 2006. On 23 April 2008, the Mozambican Ministry of Justice recognized the status of juridical person to the LJR (Boletim da República: 2008). The current national President is the chief whip of Renamo parliamentary group, Ivone Soares,<sup>13</sup> since 2014.

#### The *Liga da Juventude do Movimento Democrático de Moçambique* (LJMDM)

In the history of the Mozambican multiparty system, the MDM might constitute a concrete breakaway from the traditional two-party rule. Yet, Mozambican scholars, such as Sérgio Chichava, highlight the lack of originality of its political message, program and orientation, confronted with those of the other two main parties, Frelimo and Renamo (Chichava 2010: 5-21). Furthermore, Nuvunga and Adalima stated that the MDM is "the same food that the Mozambicans are used to. The difference is that this food is served in new plates" (2011: 4-32).

Arguably, the definition of the youth as the MDM's greatest priority is one of the very few differences in the political program of this party (Chichava 2010), alongside with the fact that it is a party with no direct connection to the civil war or armed struggles. As it concerns the youth league LJMDM, its creation is stated in the MDM 2009 founding Statute, Section VII, art. 36.3 (*Estatutos do Movimento Democrático de Moçambique* 2009): "The *Liga da Juventude* (Youth League) is the party's organization oriented towards the promotion and mobilization of youngsters" and the appointment of the leadership of the league took place in Beira, Sofala province, on 17 May 2009 for the sectors: Mobilization, Information, Administration and Finances, Planning and Studies, Culture and Sport, and the League National Council chairman.<sup>14</sup> Officially, the LJMDM initiated its activities with its first national conference in Chimoio, Manica province, on 8 and 9 August 2010. Such national conference elected the current national President Sande Carmona as first LJMDM President for a five-year mandate.<sup>15</sup> Since 2011, the MDM initiated the establishment of Youth Political

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<sup>12</sup> *Programa e Estatutos do Partido Renamo*, Renamo Party Program and Statutes, A. Dhlakama, Maputo Eduardo Mondlane University African Studies Centre library archives, 1992.

<sup>13</sup> Real name.

<sup>14</sup> *O País* online: *MDM empossa direcção da sua Liga Juvenil*, opais.sapo.mz, 17 May 2009

<sup>15</sup> *O País* online: *Liga da juventude do MDM formaliza seu funcionamento*, opais.sapo.mz, 6 August 2010



Committees in the provinces with the aim of revitalizing the party in the provinces and at district levels (Nuvunga and Adalima 2011).

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As mentioned in chapter 2, Johan Galtung introduces the fundamental concept of “cultural violence” as any aspect of a culture used to justify or legitimize violence. In his representation, cultural violence is part of a “vicious violence triangle” along with “structural violence” as the process of violence implementation and “direct violence” as its concrete manifestation. He argues that when such triangle stands “on its direct and structural feet, the image invoked is cultural violence as legitimizer of the both”. Further, he lists political ideology among the forms of cultural violence, presumably the most suited for the present case study and the reason why the term “cultural violence” is substituted by “political violence” in the present paper (Galtung 1990: 291).

For the present case study, crucial is the research work by Jon Abbink (2005) on the issue of being young in Africa. Abbink presents a veracious situation of the youth in Africa, highlighting that African youngsters “do not seem to have the future in their own hands” and argue they are “marginalized in national state policies and have a weak legal position” (2005: 1-36). Abbink also clearly mentions the problems deriving from a culture of violence, although he mostly refers to violence perpetrated by youths in conflict or criminal contexts.

Hence, to the present study an insight on the repercussions of such phenomenon of political violence on the youth was also required. Towards such direction is the work by Alcinda Honwana in her book *O Tempo da Juventude*, where she addresses the specific case of Mozambique and its capital city. To elucidate the present condition of the youth of Maputo city, she introduces the concept of “suspended age” or “waithood” (Honwana 2013: 26). The situation she presents is of social problems<sup>16</sup> exasperating the majority of youngsters, who live in a sort of limbo where, despite their age, they are not recognized as adults, mostly due to the impossibility of economically maintaining themselves. Year after year, high unemployment causes more and more youngsters to be permanently trapped in such situation (Honwana 2013: 27-29). What is object of interest for the present case study is that Honwana also reports the opinions of youths militating in the political opposition and their discontent for the present political and social situation. Similar issues were investigated by the present case study. As it shall be further discussed below, in the interviewees’ opinions, the present social condition of most youngsters in the capital city (as much as in the rest of the country) is once again the reflection of a regime of political violence and discrimination promoted by the ruling party.

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<sup>16</sup> Especially unemployment and lack of social welfare in the urban areas



## 4. RESULTS

The present chapter contains the information extracted from the qualitative interviews<sup>17</sup> the author conducted during his fieldwork research. The results are divided into two blocks, and the answers are presented separately for each one of the two youth leagues. As it concerns the network of interviewees, it was built starting from 3 cell phone contacts<sup>18</sup> and successively by kindly asking further potential contacts, indistinctively men and/or women, to the interviewees, following the logic of the so-called “snowball method”. The author contacted personally each potential interviewee either through email, SMS, phone calls or Whatsapp and successively arranged a *vis-à-vis* meeting.<sup>19</sup>

### 4.1 Opinions on Political Violence & Personal Motivations

The author’s attention was firstly devoted to investigate what the interviewees considered as political violence. Most times they did not limit their answers to a definition of political violence, yet, frequently argued that such violence transcends politics and is promoted by the ruling party in almost all aspects of social life, including the labor market, in the form of a systematic discrimination.<sup>20</sup> Most interviewees also explained that such discrimination is also what motivated them to join and participate in their respective youth league despite the risks.

#### *The LJR*

LJR interviewees were particularly clear regarding their idea of political violence. Among the oldest of them, who admitted to have had military experience, such intolerance was described mainly in political terms. Typically, they blamed Frelimo for the ever-lasting political tensions in the country and accused the ruling party of a mere façade of accepting political pluralism. On the other hand, interviewed members

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<sup>17</sup> The research fieldwork was the Mozambican capital city Maputo, for its relevance as political center of the country and the high presence of delegations of the two opposition parties. Since the research required an assessment of on-the-spot opinions, amongst all qualitative methods at disposal on the field, the author opted for open interviews with the members of mentioned opposition political youth leagues. Towards such purpose, he relied on the guide to qualitative research methodology by Nouria Brikci and Judith Green. Besides the mentioned guide, the author recurred to qualitative methodological literature with practical advice on the use of interviews, such as the methodological study by Margarita S. Peredaryenko and Steven Eric Krauss, and the interview design guide by David W. Turner III. As a final remark, the entire process was thoroughly conducted in Portuguese.

<sup>18</sup> Kindly given by Mr Felizberto Mulhovo from the Embassy of the Netherlands in Mozambique and administration council member of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), to whom goes the author’s deepest appreciation.

<sup>19</sup> See: Appendix B for the questions asked to the interviewees

<sup>20</sup> Presumably what Galtung defines as “marginalization” (1990: 294).



under 30 years of age emphasized more the social aspect of the problem. In their description, Frelimo's politically invasive presence precludes job vacancies for anyone who does not belong to the ruling party and such situation is felt as a huge injustice fomenting unemployment and, hence, bitter frustration among the youth in general and such hard feeling is preponderant in the urban area of the capital city, a long-time Frelimo political bastion.

As ever-present pattern, all of them declared to be profoundly discontent with the current political *status quo* in the country, thereon, they matured the decision to join the main opposition ranks. Most of them claimed that Mozambican history does not account properly for Frelimo's authoritarian regime, which, in their words, was an oppressive dictatorship, a betrayal of the ideals of freedom represented by the struggle for independence. Therefore, they decided to join the ranks of the "fighters for democracy", even if in peaceful times, the fight they are continuing is done in peaceful terms. The female LJR interviewees also stressed quite consistently the issue of women's empowerment and discrimination in the politics, from league's national President Ivone Soares to low-level members. 22-year-old Mira, clearly stated she learnt how to valorize herself as a woman thanks to her membership in the youth league, from which she comprehended the value of girls scholarization, sexual education on premature weddings and pregnancies, etc. Further, she emphasized that the Renamo party and the youth league do not have women quotas, because such quotas are not considered by the party as reliable representation instruments. Mira affirmed that women either in the party or in the youth league have to prove themselves valuable if they want to make a career and that quotas do not grant effective women participation.

### *The LJMDM*

MDM youth league interviewees were the group who specifically highlighted the social repercussions of political violence. Moreover, they mentioned that the attention devoted to youth problems by their senior party was the main reason that convinced them to join. The President of the LJMDM in Maputo city, Sid, for example, mentioned that in 2009, the year when the MDM and its youth league were founded, Mozambican youth was poorly taken into consideration by the two main parties, either under the political, or the social point of view. Whereas, he remarked, what convinced him was the fact that the MDM stated immediately the value it attributed to the youth, confirming in this sense what Chichava (2010), Nuvunga and Adalima (2011) quote in their respective researches.

In the opinion of other interviewees of this group, political violence is not exclusively promoted by Frelimo, as a few of them had had a past experience in either one of the other two youth leagues. Tom, who had previously been a member of the Frelimo youth league,<sup>21</sup> expressed discontent for its alleged narrow-mindedness and

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<sup>21</sup> The *Organização da Juventude Moçambicana*, Organization of Mozambican Youth, OJM.





systematic intolerance for opinions diverging from the leaders', as Frelimo does not apparently allow much space for youngsters who attempt to bring new ideas. He argued that renovation is not encouraged, and those in favor of it are regarded as a source of problems. On the other hand, Ismael used to participate in the Renamo's side, however he decided to leave the LJR for quite the same motivations presented by Tom, namely intolerance for anti-conformism to the leaders' line and not enough concrete attention to youth problems. Quite to the contrary, in his and almost all others' words, the youth is the symbol of the MDM, and youngsters are entrusted by the party, there is much more transparency, democracy and freedom of expression.

Another interviewee, 27-year-old teacher Ricardo, declared that the ruling party has an interest in chasing away the youth from politics so that they would not see who those in power really are. Significant to this purpose is the slogan: "*E' a Frelimo que fez, é a Frelimo que faz*" ("It is Frelimo who did, it is Frelimo who does"). Thus an inefficient system of corruption, nepotism, deleterious management and so forth is protracted.

Similarly to the LJR interviewees, LJMDM members discussed the difficulties to find a stable job for any youngster affiliated to an opposition party. Words such as "discrimination" or "exclusion" recurred in all interviews with no exception. What all of them lamented was a more systematic almost institutionalized discrimination, to an extent that, as another interviewee, Marcos, expressed it: such discrimination generates fear of commitment to politics in the youth. Joining the political opposition may signify permanent unemployment; as for many job placements all that matters to employers is the (in)famous *Cartão Vermelho* (Red Card) as proof of affiliation to Frelimo. In Marcos's words, priorities for the youth in the city, as much as in the whole country, revolve all around money, hence, the only option left is acquiring the Red Card and all their concerns are resolved. Sara commented that when confronted with such risks, reluctance among youth rises and, considering the current levels of unemployment, such materialism is justifiable. Differently from LJR, female interviewees in the LJMDM group did not stress the issue of women's empowerment and discrimination in politics.

### *Comparisons*

LJR members' ideas of political violence showed quite a disappointment and frustration for a faulty political and social situation where anyone who does not belong to Frelimo party is, in their words, systematically marginalized. However, while for the oldest among them, in a few cases old enough to have fought in the civil war, such marginalization was emphasized in political terms,<sup>22</sup> the youngest lamented more a biased labor market where personal connections and party affiliation are more relevant than anything else. LJMDM members also expressed similar ideas; however, they definitely were the group who emphasized the social aspect of Frelimo-promoted marginalization the most. Further, they all specified that such attention towards youth

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<sup>22</sup>Mostly reminiscences of civil war rivalries.



issues is also the main driver behind their decision to join the MDM youth league. Their words seemed to confirm MDM party openness to youth issues, as much as what assessed theory reports. Almost all of them blamed the other two parties and respective youth leagues for being too “ancient” in their messages and not concretely directed to the youth in their policies. Furthermore, they explicitly accused the other two sides of tendency to authoritarianism in their hierarchy, with no tolerance for any member who attempts to express a different point of view than that of the leaders’, sometimes even presenting life experiences as proof.

#### *4.2 Challenges of Political Violence in Maputo city & Consequence on the Youth*

The present paragraph presents the recurrent patterns on the interviewees’ opinions concerning the challenges their own league is facing in the city due to political violence. Most interviewees did not restrain their answers to a discussion of their own league’s problems at city level. They referred to their members’ problems at national level, to the entire Maputo city youth and also difficulties that Mozambican youth in general is suffering due to this problem.

##### *The LJR*

Discussing challenges proved to be quite a stimulus for LJR members. Answers became more heartfelt when the discourse moved from political violence in general to their own members and youth’s challenges. For the latter category, within the lexicon used by interviewees, one word was quoted once again, more or less explicitly, more than any other: discrimination. Quite a few LJR interviewees openly admitted to have suffered unpleasant situations themselves due to political violence in the city as, in their words, the mere fact of being a Renamo youth league member, or, more in general, supporting the Renamo party, is enough as justification to be socially excluded. Among LJR interviewees, João declared that Maputo city is politically dominated by Frelimo and anyone affiliated in any way to Renamo is still considered the enemy to an extent that most members are forced to recur to “moonlighting” membership, i.e. Renamo youth league members often refrain from identifying themselves, be it in public or during a job interview and the reason, he explained, is simple. Whether they do identify themselves, their party affiliation is enough as an excuse to be rejected or, in the case they are already employed, to be fired. Susana lamented that the greatest challenge for LJR youths in Maputo is undoubtedly such lack of opportunities, since all that matters is party affiliation.

Mira explained that, among the several difficulties the LJR youth has been facing, the greatest is to convince the public to accept the fact that Mozambique is for everyone and Renamo is now an institutionalized political party. Dealing with discrimination at the workplace, she affirmed that in any job interview the first thing a person is asked is to which party he or she is affiliated. And should that person answer



something different from Frelimo, what the job interviewer replies is basically a threat of rejection whether that person does not change his or her affiliation and does not provide a *Cartão Vermelho* as proof. Mira also mentioned such discrimination is not unusual in university institutions as well. She mentioned that selection procedures tend to privilege students with an affiliation to Frelimo or even personal contacts with the ruling party's influent members, even if the entrance exams results or their grades are lower than other students', thus precluding possibilities to someone else with more merit. Consequences of such discrimination may degenerate in much worse than losing a job vacancy or a university scholarship. Whoever wears a shirt with the Renamo logo in the wrong *bairro*, may risk a lot, from being looked at suspiciously, to being insulted or even lynched. Although she mentioned Mozambicans in general are still not prepared to accept Renamo as a Mozambican party, in her words the situation in the capital is actually improving.

João argued that today, in the capital city, there are more organizations dealing with politics than even a few years before and it is normal for the youth to have discussions about politics. In João's words, the city youth is very sensitive to socio-political issues: unemployment, housing, low levels of education quality, faulty public services and health are their favorite trends of discussion. However, as he specified, despite the commitment to discuss, such enthusiasm does not always translate into facts. Results are emerging, nonetheless. Most LJR interviewees agreed with the ideas expressed by João, although in some cases the emphasis was put more on one of the mentioned problems than the others.

Cam, LJR President for Maputo city, was amongst the most straightforward on this matter. In his opinion, most difficulties originate from an imperfect separation of the State, the Government and all public institutions from the party, which are intertwined to a confusing point. Though in different words, all other LJR interviewees had no doubts such statement corresponds to the truth. Some went even further; declaring explicitly that the Government promotes political violence. Behind the façade of open-mindedness and acceptance of political pluralism, there is no real acceptance at all. Hence, in the political debate, youngsters who are in fact interested, keep their opinions to themselves in their own house, at bars, as chatting with friends in the minibuses *chapas*, and do not discuss where they are supposed to do so. He quoted, as example, debate roundtables offered by organizations such as the PJ.

Ms Ivone Soares was more inclusive in her answer. She underlined how much necessity there is for more space for all youngsters, even those belonging to the opposition. The Frelimo's façade of benevolence toward political pluralism falls when confronted with the reality of mass unemployment, especially tragic for youngsters who are not affiliated to the ruling party.

### *The LJMDM*

Data collected from the responses of LJMDM interviewees resembled quite as much what emerged in the LJR group, at least as concerns challenges due to political



violence in the city. The LJMDM interviewees were the most pessimistic. They admitted that the main challenge posed by intolerance is a socio-political situation which leaves much to be desired, including in the capital city. First of all, Frelimo's discrimination strategy against anyone who thinks differently from them. Secondly, job requirements based on party affiliation. Thirdly, a deficit in political education. As a consequence, critical skills among the youth are deficient, which is useful to the elite in power who will keep its power.

Amongst the most negative opinions, Tom was the most concise. As he saw it, most Mozambican youngsters do not care at all about politics, their only interest is to find a job and, supposing they do not succeed, they lose passion for anything else, including politics and even their own studies. Luiz explained that unemployment rates for people under 35 years of age are, in his words, catastrophic. He blamed 40 years of false promises made by Frelimo, also in the labor market. As a result, he argued, youngsters in the capital city are disillusioned and exclusively think with their wallet. They do not believe in politics at all, with generally any distinction among political colors. Since Frelimo has told them nothing but lies for so long, they believe everyone involved in politics is basically a liar.

His dismal assessments dovetail with those uttered by all other LJMDM members, though they mostly used milder terms. Job was not as tragic; however his description of what the current situation causes to most Maputo city youngsters was quite ruthless. He mentioned that youngsters adore delegating responsibilities to anyone else, being it the rich, the Government or the Almighty. They stroll around with a bottle of beer in their hands, surrounded by problems, such as lack of sanitation services, trash in the streets, car accidents, unemployment, yet they think it is not up to them but to someone else to find solutions. The youth is the most fragile age group and it remains fragile, even though they are the majority. They lack critical vision and they are positive their vote will not change anything. In Job's opinion, such way of thinking is already a psychological defeat. One feature shared by almost all of these interviewees is how frequently those youngsters who aim at political participation, they do so for opportunism. Even in party participation, all they are interested in is having their names in an electoral list, whereas in the day-by-day activities, they are not as serious. The idea of a future political career is very appealing, yet, as most LJMDM interviewees defined it, envisioning a future career as MP, governor, or City Council member for the sake of the career itself is wrong. It is a distorted portrayal of political participation. As Job declared, what is missing is a personal acknowledgment of ideals at the basis of participation. As he called it, "mutilated participation".

All interviewees affirmed being a member of the opposition involve personal endangerment and the risks vary from discrimination at the workplace to more serious vexations, such as burnt party flags, insults and, as the cases presented in chapter 1 might prove, physical violence. Abovementioned responses were largely agreed in their content by most interviewees in this group, however, some optimism on future perspectives was not so inexistent as it might be presumed. Albeit a minority, a few points of view are less gloomy. Sara affirmed something is changing, in the capital city at least. She admitted that, a few years ago, any Mozambican youngster asked about



politics would not have known what to answer. At least nowadays youngsters ask questions and have their own opinions. They are more interested and demand to receive answers. To summarize, she concluded, they are more integrated now in the political life of the country than before.

### *Comparisons*

In terms of challenges that political violence is posing to their own youth league, the two groups of interviewees present several similarities. They abundantly discussed the social difficulties faced by youngsters in the city, from education to transports, drug and alcohol abuse, a few interviewees also mentioned unsustainable costs for housing and, one above all, chronic unemployment. They heavily blamed the invasive Frelimo presence in the labor market, which, in their words, precludes any possibility to all those youngsters who are not Frelimo affiliates and typically made reference to the party Red Card as symbol of the dispute.

Even harsher criticism targeted public institutions accused of bias in favor of the ruling party. Bias, which frequently degenerates into discrimination in various sectors. As they described it, job interviewers tend to privilege applicants who possess the Red Card and thus can prove their loyalty to Frelimo, bypassing any other merit or even a candidate with a good resume simply because he or she is not affiliated to Frelimo. Mentioned discrimination is merely the tip of the iceberg. In a Frelimo political bastion as the capital city, the sole fact of being a member of the opposition is a sufficient justification to suffer personal endangerment, such as vexations or physical violence.

LJR members unilaterally blamed the political violence promoted by Frelimo governance. Moreover, they argued, youngsters would theoretically be interested in politics, however, due to the difficulties they face on a daily basis, especially if they are affiliated to the opposition, they prefer to fend for themselves and concentrate on their own survival. When they mentioned their own youth league, LJR members were confident the reason why many Maputo city youngsters are reluctant to join their league is to be found within above-mentioned causes.

On the other hand, the LJMDM group was the most pessimistic under all points of view. Their responses followed the discrimination pattern already emerged for LJR members; yet, their judgment on other youths was definitely the most severe. The descriptions of the LJMDM members resemble the portrait of a "lost generation" suggested by Honwana, lost in selfishness and apathy, however, these interviewees also blamed the socio-political flaws of Frelimo's governance. Further, although most opinions on this matter were quite negative, a few LJMDM interviewees did admit the general situation, at least in the capital city, is slowly improving.

As conclusive remark, firstly, members of the two opposition youth leagues advocated for a more concrete inclusiveness, since from their accounts, they are confronted with systematic marginalization based on political bias. It may be surprising therefore that these youngsters would consciously choose to participate in



the opposition and a probable answer might be the improvements they are advocating are a driver stronger than fear of discrimination.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The author intended to cast some more light on what motivates members of youth leagues affiliated to the two main Mozambican opposition parties to participate in a political youth league, considering that they may put their personal safety at stake and investigate why youngsters in Maputo city decide to participate in a political youth league affiliated to an opposition party given the risks of political violence. To summarize the results, the general picture emerging from fieldwork data indeed shows examples of youth associations committed to their duty despite all the risks.

As members of opposition youth leagues, the interviewees frequently quoted, as expressed by Galtung, “cultural violence” in the form of political discrimination promoted by Frelimo in all aspects of national politics and beyond. The LJR members argued that both politically and socially, anyone who does not belong to Frelimo party is, in their words, systematically marginalized. Nonetheless, the oldest among them referred mostly to the political aspect, reminiscent as they are of the civil war rivalries; while the youngest lamented more a biased labor market where personal connections and party affiliation are more relevant than anything else. As it concerns their motivations, LJR members are mainly driven by a feeling of bitterness and the desire to see concrete implementation of multiparty democracy, while they claim that at present status, anyone who does not belong to Frelimo is systematically excluded and discriminated in politics and beyond. At the basis of such bitterness there is also the aim for a more equal society where public services function properly and youth unemployment is tackled seriously.

LJMDM interviewees responded quite similarly when asked to define the aspects of intolerance. However, they definitely were the group who emphasized the social aspect the most. Moreover, their decision to join the MDM youth league was declared to be the attention given by the MDM party towards the problems of the youth. Thus, their words agreed to a certain extent to what assessed theory reports on the MDM party and its vision on the young generations. Almost all these interviewees considered the other two parties and respective youth leagues to be out of date in their own visions and not concretely directed to the youth in their policies. Further, LJMDM interviewees defined the other two main parties as tending to authoritarianism in their hierarchy, with no tolerance for any member who attempts to express a different point of view than that of the leaders’, sometimes even presenting life experiences as proof.

Also in terms of challenges that political violence is posing to their own youth league, the two groups of interviewees present several correspondences. They abundantly discussed the social difficulties faced by youths in the city, from education to transports, drug and alcohol abuse, a few interviewees also mentioned unsustainable costs for housing and, one above all, chronic unemployment for which



they blamed the influence of Frelimo in terms of party bias on the labor market, which, in their words, precludes any possibility to all those youngsters who are not Frelimo affiliates and typically made reference to the party Red Card as symbol of the dispute.

LJR members clearly qualified the attitude of Frelimo as political violence, specifically in those areas of the country where the ruling party is politically dominant, such as the capital city. As a consequence, youngsters who would be interested in politics prefer to fend for themselves and concentrate on their own survival. On the other hand, the LJMDM group was the most pessimistic under all points of view. Their responses followed the discrimination pattern already emerged for LJR members, yet, as they saw it, the problem is an *a priori* materialism among the youth. Yet, a few LJMDM interviewees did admit the general situation, at least in the capital city, is slowly improving. Generally speaking, the two groups demanded a more concrete inclusiveness, since, from their accounts, they are confronted with systematic exclusion based on political bias.

To conclude, all data collected for this research seem to point to one specific culprit for the present climate of political tension in the country. As a matter of fact, the same violence, which is causing political turmoil in Mozambique, may as well be responsible for those cases described in chapter 1. However, it is worth repeating, it is not the intention of the author to investigate responsibilities. All that may be argued is that, notwithstanding the long and perilous way Mozambicans have gone towards the consolidation of democracy, Mozambican multiparty democracy is still flawed. Further, for the last two years the national situation has been on the edge of disaster. And yet, these youngsters accept such risks and participate in the political opposition. Be it a sincerely expressed devotion to their ideals or the chance to do some publicity for their own youth league and political party to the detriment of Frelimo, their conviction may be more solid than fear of personal endangerment.

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## APPENDICES

### *Appendix A. The Interviewees.*

The present Appendix contains more information on the interviewees. In total, the number of interviewees for each of the two youth leagues was the same: 15. Nonetheless, those mentioned here are exclusively those who are mentioned in the paper, presented in order of appearance. A capital letter, between brackets next to the pseudonym, indicates whether the interview is a man (M) or a woman (F).

#### *Renamo Youth League (LJR)*

Average age M (10): 32  
M percentage: 67%

Average age F (5): 26  
F percentage: 33%

#### ***Ivone Soares (F):***

- **Age:** 35
- **Year of affiliation:** 1998
- **Position:** Renamo parliamentary group chief whip, Pan-African Parliament vice chairperson and Renamo youth league national President (2014 - ...).

#### ***Mira (F):***

- **Age:** 22
- **Year of affiliation:** 2014
- **Position:** LJR member in Maputo city branch.

#### ***Susana (F):***

- **Age:** 26
- **Year of affiliation:** 1999
- **Position:** LJR President for Maputo urban district Ka Mavota (2014- ...).

#### ***João (M):***

- **Age:** 29
- **Year of affiliation:** 2007



- **Position:** Member in LJR Maputo city branch.

**Cam (M):**

- **Age:** 35
- **Year of affiliation:** 1999
- **Position:** LJR President of Maputo city branch (2013 - ...) and responsible for communication and transports.

*MDM Youth League (LJMDM)*

Average age M (9): 31

M percentage: 60%

Average age F (6): 29

F percentage: 40%

**Sara (F):**

- **Age:** 25
- **Year of affiliation:** 2009
- **Position:** Maputo City Council member for MDM party and LJMDM Finance Department chief (2009 - ...).

**Sid (M):**

- **Age:** 34
- **Year of affiliation:** 2009
- **Position:** LJMDM President of Maputo city branch (2011 - ...) former President of the LJMDM nucleus in Eduardo Mondlane University, UEM, (2009 - 2011).

**Tom (M):**

- **Age:** 31
- **Year of affiliation:** 2010
- **Position:** LJMDM Mobilization Department deputy-chief for Maputo city branch.

**Ismael (M):**

- **Age:** 33
- **Year of affiliation:** 2009
- **Position:** Provincial Mobilizer for LJMDM Maputo city branch (2012 - ...).



**Ricardo (M):**

- **Age:** 27
- **Year of affiliation:** 2012
- **Position:** Information Department deputy-chief for LJMDM Maputo city branch (2013 - ...).

**Marcos (M):**

- **Age:** 30
- **Year of affiliation:** 2012
- **Position:** Cadre Education Department chief for MDM party branch of Maputo city (2014 - ...).

**Luiz (M):**

- **Age:** 28
- **Year of affiliation:** 2009
- **Position:** Organization Department chief for LJMDM branch in Maputo city.

**Job (M):**

- **Age:** 33
- **Year of affiliation:** 2009
- **Position:** MDM party national Information and Organization Department chief; former Information and Propaganda Department chief for LJMDM branch in Maputo city (2011 - 2013).



*Appendix B. Questions.*

The present Appendix contains the original questions (in Portuguese) asked to all interviewees.

**Q.1:** *Qual é a sua experiência pessoal na LJR/LJMDM?*

**Q.2:** *Por quê você decidiu se juntar à LJR/LJMDM?*

**Q.3:** *Qual é a sua opinião sobre o atual clima de violência política em Moçambique e, mais especificamente, na cidade de Maputo?*

**Q.4:** *Quais são, na sua opinião os maiores desafios postos pelo atual clima de violência política à LJR/LJMDM na cidade de Maputo?*

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**Michele Portatadino** has a Research MA in African Studies at the Interfaculty Institute African Studies Center - Leiden University (the Netherlands), where he also worked as Research Assistant, as expert of Mozambique. His first academic publication was: "The Aftermath of Mozambican Peace", September 2014 for *Quaderni Asiatici*, Centro di Cultura Italia - Asia Guglielmo Scalise, Milan, Italy.

[michele.portatadino@gmail.com](mailto:michele.portatadino@gmail.com)