

# Of the people, for the people? Attitudes toward sharing of resource revenues in Mozambique

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**Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 132 | Andreas Kopf and Thomas Isbell**

## Summary

Plagued by the dramatic implications of 15 years of civil war, widespread corruption, and natural disasters, Mozambique's social and economic development has long lagged behind that of many neighbouring countries. Although the nation has achieved significant economic growth since the end of its civil war in 1992, infrastructure development remains low and poverty high – indicators that many analysts blame on weak government performance and corruption (Guardian, 2013; Harrison, 1999). After years of dependence on foreign aid, large-scale international investments in coal, “heavy sands” (ore deposits), and natural gas during the past decade raised high hopes for economic gains (Ross, 2014; Hanlon, 2010). Yet almost half the population – and in some provinces far more – still live in poverty, and economic inequality has actually increased (World Bank, 2016). For many, the influx of investment in the mining sector has not translated into better lives but into displacement of local communities (Mail & Guardian, 2014).

This dispatch uses Afrobarometer survey data to explore public perceptions and attitudes concerning the sharing of revenues derived from Mozambique's natural resources. Not quite half of Mozambicans say the government is doing well in ensuring that ordinary citizens benefit from the exploitation of natural resources, although views differ significantly by province. Respondents who are poor, lack a formal education, or see themselves as worse off than other Mozambicans are least satisfied with the government's performance in ensuring equitable sharing.

The ruling party and the mining companies are most frequently seen as the greatest beneficiaries of resource wealth, and a substantial proportion of Mozambicans voice opposition to the displacement of families to make way for natural-resource exploitation.

## Afrobarometer survey

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. After five rounds of surveys between 1999 and 2013, results of Round 6 surveys (2014/2015) are currently being published. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of 1,200 or 2,400 respondents.

The Afrobarometer team in Mozambique, led by Ipsos Mozambique, interviewed 2,400 adult Mozambicans in June-August 2015. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Mozambique in 2002, 2005, 2008, and 2012.

## Key findings

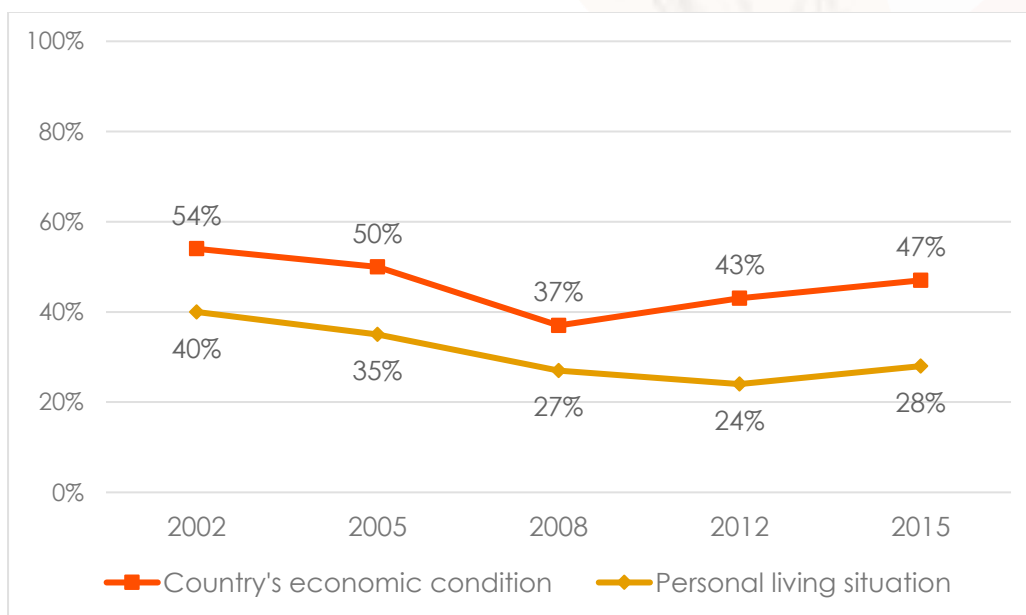
- A plurality (47%) of Mozambicans say their government has performed “fairly well” or “very well” in making sure that ordinary people benefit from exploitation of the country’s natural resources, though a substantial minority (37%) disagree.
- Assessments of the government’s performance on this issue are least favourable among poor, uneducated, and older citizens, as well as among those who consider themselves worse off than other Mozambicans and those who perceive high levels of corruption in government.
- Asked who benefits most from resource wealth, Mozambicans most frequently cite the ruling political party (37%) and the companies that exploit the resources (17%). About one in five say the greatest beneficiaries are “all Mozambicans in general” (14%) or the communities near natural-resources sites (6%).
- A plurality (45%) of Mozambicans say that families should never be displaced to make way for the exploitation of natural resources, even if this would help the economy. Three in 10 (31%) would not oppose such displacement.

## Is resource exploitation benefiting ordinary Mozambicans?

Mozambique’s recent natural-resource exploitation may be reflected in citizens’ assessments of the country’s economic condition: Almost half (47%) of respondents say the economy is doing “fairly” or “very” well, a gain of 10 percentage points since 2008 (Figure 1), placing Mozambique sixth among 36 African countries surveyed in 2014/2015.

But their assessments of their own living conditions are less rosy: Only about one-fourth (28%) of citizens describe their living situation as “fairly” or “very” good, a proportion that had dropped steadily, from 40% in 2002 to 24% in 2012, before beginning to rebound.

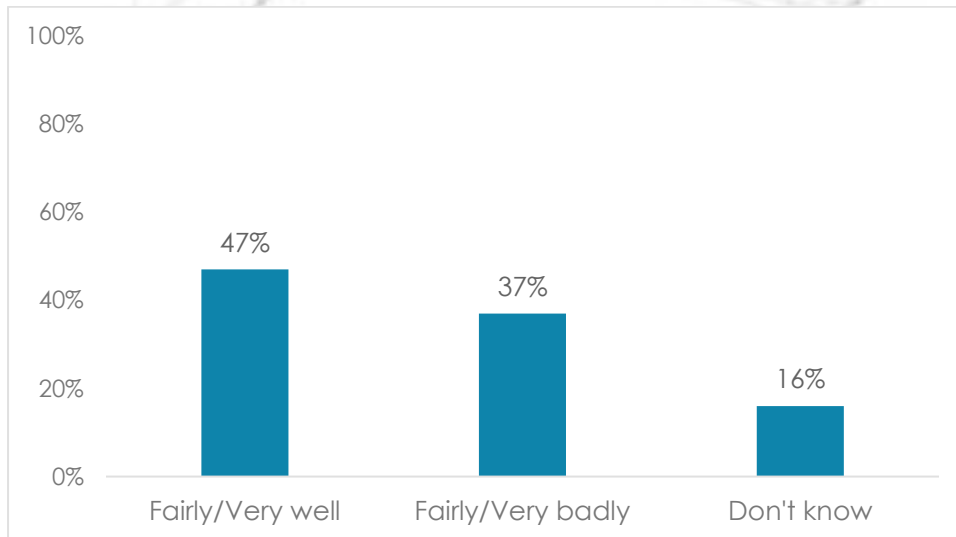
**Figure 1: Country’s economic condition and citizens’ living situation** | Mozambique | 2002-2015



**Respondents were asked:** *In general, how would you describe: The present economic condition of this country? Your own present living conditions? (% who say “fairly good” or “very good”)*

Against this backdrop, do Mozambicans feel that mining revenues are benefiting the population? Almost half (47%) of survey respondents say the government is performing “fairly well” or “very well” in ensuring that natural-resource exploitation is helping ordinary people, while 37% say the government is doing “fairly” or “very” badly (Figure 2). About one in six (16%) say they don’t know.

**Figure 2: Government performance in ensuring that citizens benefit from natural resources** | Mozambique | 2015



**Respondents were asked:** *How well or badly would you say the current government is doing to make sure that ordinary people like you benefit from the country's natural resources such as coal, gas, and heavy sands, or haven't you heard enough to say?*

Across provinces, perceptions of the government's performance differ widely (Figure 3). In six of 11 provinces, a majority of respondents say the government is doing well. The highest rate of approval comes from Cabo Delgado (65%), home to some of the country's largest unmined reserves of coal and natural gas as well as recent discoveries of graphite, gold, and precious gemstones and minerals (MacauHub, 2015; 2012). Second is Inhambane (58% fairly/very well), which holds major natural-gas and heavy-sands reserves (Club of Mozambique, 2016; Mining Weekly 2014). Conversely, in Tete, a province with considerable coal-mining activity and untapped reserves, residents are less satisfied, with only about four in 10 (40%) applauding the government's performance.

And Sofala and Niassa provinces, seven in 10 residents say the government is failing to ensure that ordinary people benefit from natural resources.

Comparing views of the government's performance on this issue across socio-demographic factors, a few contrasts emerge (Figure 4). The poorest citizens are least likely to say the government is ensuring that ordinary people benefit (43%, compared to 53% among the wealthiest).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, citizens with no formal education (37%) and those aged 56 and older (37%) are less likely to approve of the government's performance than those who are

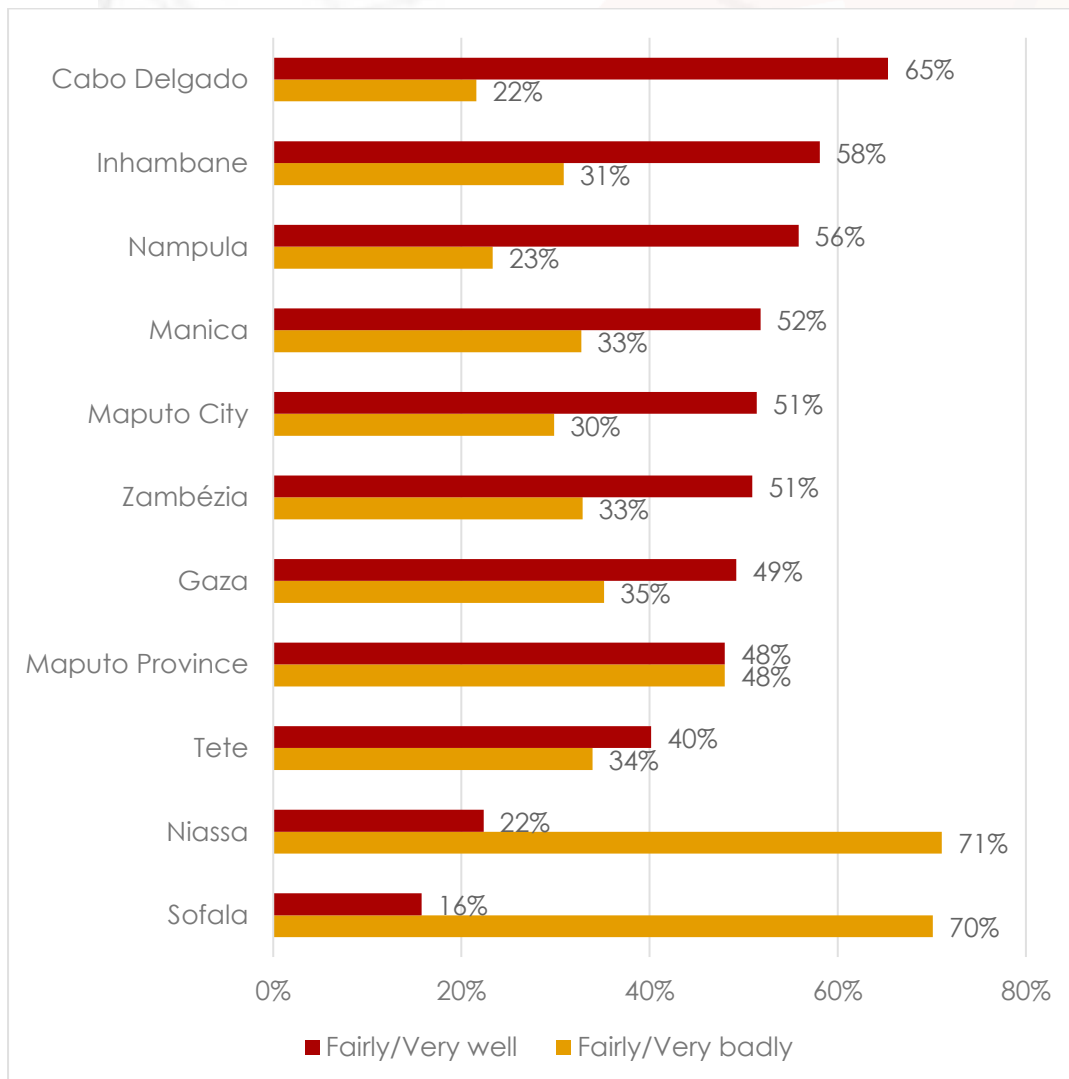
<sup>1</sup> Afrobarometer measures lived poverty by asking respondents how often they or their family members went without enough food, enough clean water, medicines or medical treatment, enough cooking fuel, and a cash income during the previous year. “No lived poverty” refers to full access to all five basic necessities, while “high lived poverty” refers to regular shortages of these goods and services. (For more information on the Lived Poverty Index, see Afrobarometer Policy Paper No. 29, available at [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)).

educated and younger citizens. But approval appears unrelated to gender and only weakly distinct by urban vs. rural residence.

In line with lower approval rates among poorer citizens, survey respondents who think they are worse off than other Mozambicans are less likely to praise the government's performance in making sure that natural-resource wealth is shared (31%) than those who think they are better off (60%) (Figure 5).

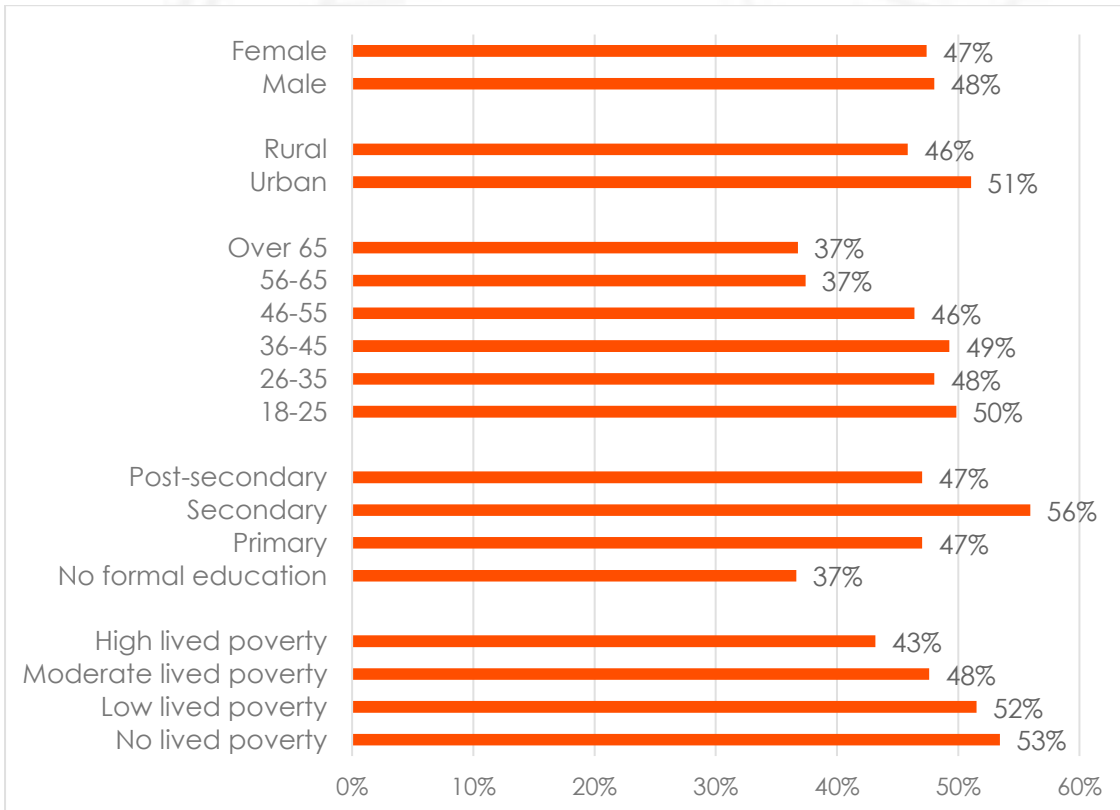
Mozambicans who see government officials as corrupt are more likely to disapprove of how well the government is ensuring that ordinary people benefit from natural-resource revenues (Figure 6). For example, a majority (53%) of respondents who say "all" officials in the prime minister's office are corrupt are critical of the government's performance, compared to 32% of those who say "none" of these officials are corrupt. The pattern is the same with regard to perceived corruption among government officials in general and among provincial governors.

**Figure 3: Government performance in ensuring that citizens benefit from natural resources** | by province | Mozambique | 2015



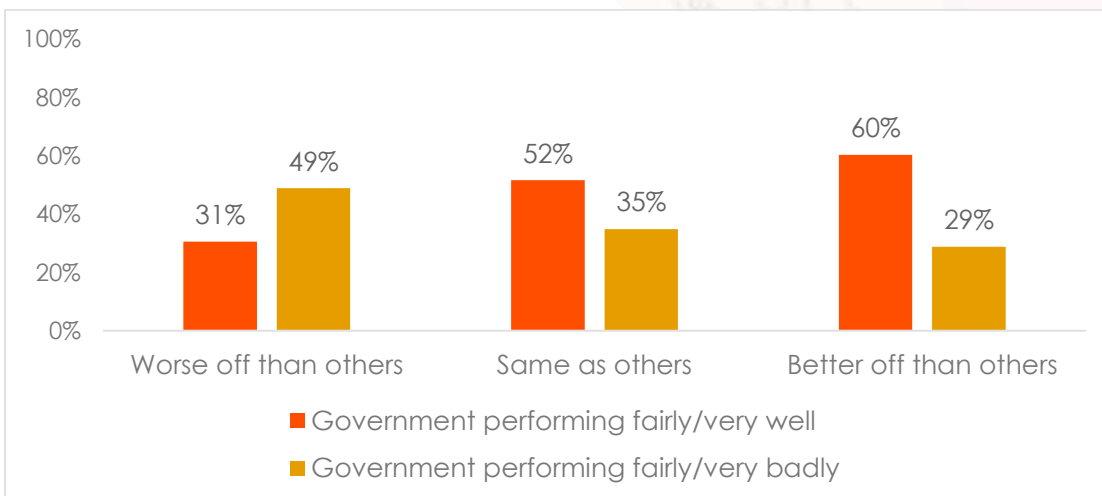
**Respondents were asked:** How well or badly would you say the current government is doing to make sure that ordinary people like you benefit from the country's natural resources such as coal, gas, and heavy sands or haven't you heard enough to say?

**Figure 4: Government performing well in ensuring that citizens benefit from natural resources** | by socio-demographic group | Mozambique | 2015



**Respondents were asked:** How well or badly would you say the current government is doing to make sure that ordinary people like you benefit from the country's natural resources such as coal, gas, and heavy sands, or haven't you heard enough to say? (% who say "fairly well" or "very well")

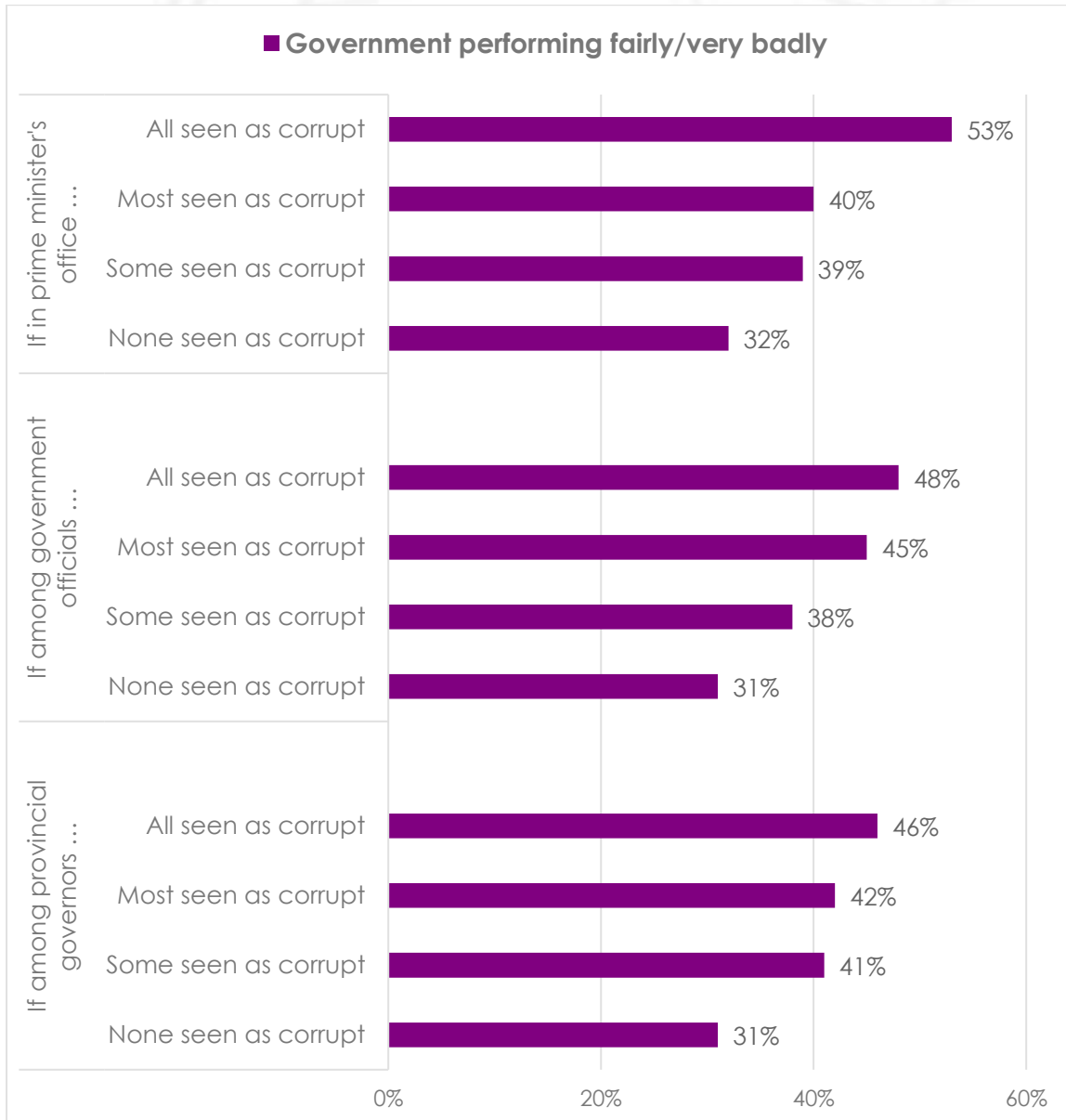
**Figure 5: Government performance in ensuring that citizens benefit from natural resources** | by perceived living situation compared to others | Mozambique | 2015



**Respondents were asked:**

- How well or badly would you say the current government is doing to make sure that ordinary people like you benefit from the country's natural resources such as coal, gas, and heavy sands, or haven't you heard enough to say?
- In general, how do you rate your living conditions compared to those of other Mozambicans?

**Figure 6: Disapproval of government performance in ensuring that citizens benefit from natural resources | by perceived levels of corruption | Mozambique | 2015**



**Respondents were asked:**

- How well or badly would you say the current government is doing to make sure that ordinary people like you benefit from the country's natural resources such as coal, gas, and heavy sands, or haven't you heard enough to say? (% who say "fairly badly" or "very badly")
- How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The prime minister and officials in his office? Government officials? Provincial governors?

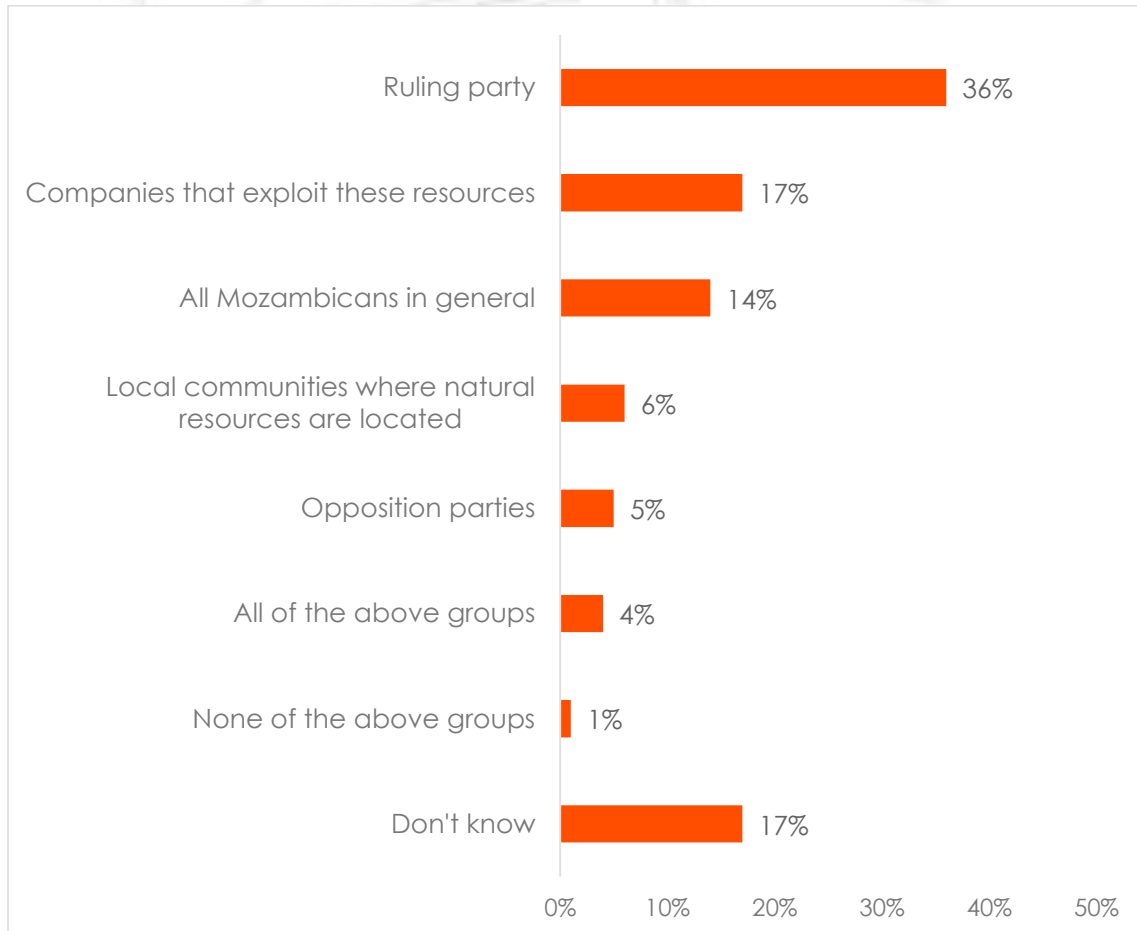
**Who benefits most from resource exploitation in Mozambique?**

When Mozambicans are asked who benefits most from the exploitation of the country's natural resources, the most frequent answer is the ruling political party, FRELIMO (cited by 36% of respondents) (Figure 7). Fewer than half as many respondents (17%) say it's the mining companies that benefit most. Only one in five respondents say that the greatest beneficiaries



are “all Mozambicans in general” (14%) or “local communities where the natural resources are located” (6%).

**Figure 7: Who benefits most from exploitation of natural resources? | Mozambique | 2015**



**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, which of the following groups do you think benefits the most from the exploitation of natural resources in Mozambique today, or haven't you heard enough to say?*

Contrasting responses by province shows differences in views of who benefits most from the country's natural resources (Table 1). The ruling party is most frequently seen as the greatest beneficiary by residents of Sofala, Zambézia, Manica, Gaza, Tete, Maputo City, Nampula, and Maputo City. In Cabo Delgado, Maputo Province, and Niassa, the most common response is companies that exploit the resources. Only in Inhambane do respondents most frequently report that all Mozambicans benefit most from these resources.

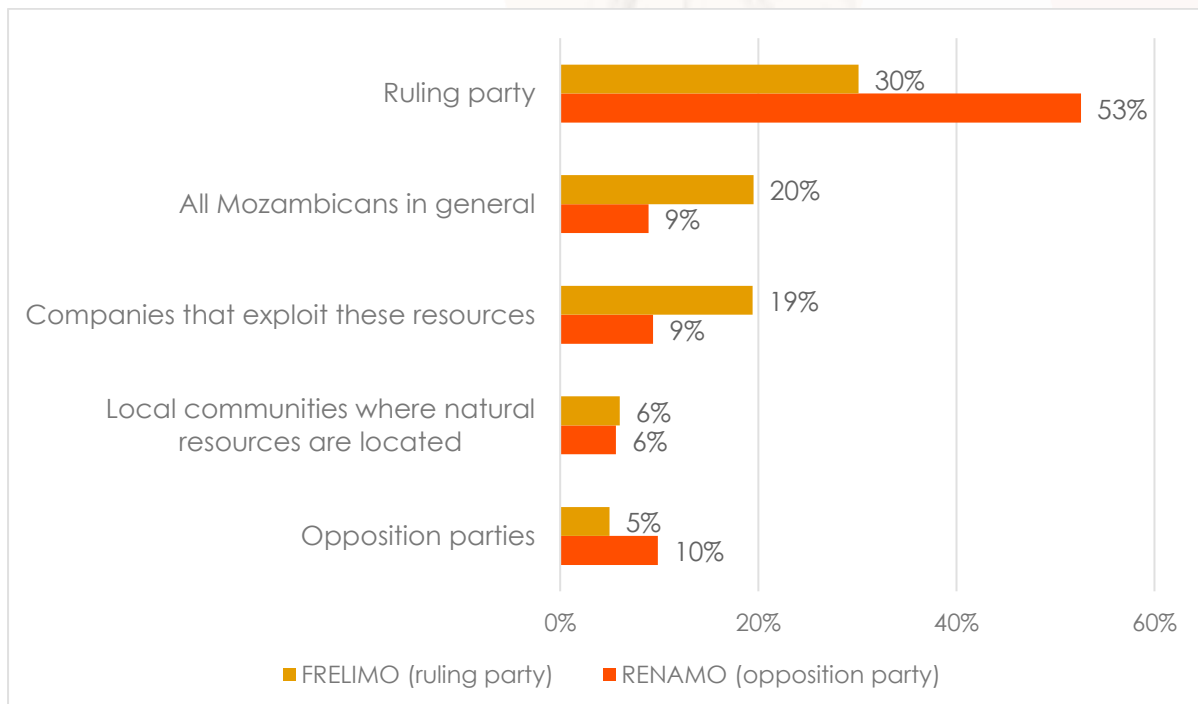
Mozambique's recent history is centrally defined by the conflict between the ruling FRELIMO and opposition RENAMO parties and their partisans. Contrasting party supporters' perceptions of who benefits most from the country's natural resources reflects the cleavage between the two groups, too (Figure 8). Among RENAMO supporters, more than half (53%) say the ruling party benefits most, while fewer than one-third (30%) of FRELIMO supporters agree – though that still makes it the most common response among FRELIMO supporters, too. FRELIMO supporters are more likely than RENAMO partisans to see all Mozambicans (20% vs. 9%) or the companies that exploit the resources (19% vs. 9%) as the greatest beneficiaries.

**Table 1: Who benefits most from exploitation of natural resources? | by province**  
 | Mozambique | 2015

	Who benefits most from natural-resource exploitation:		
	Ruling party	Companies that exploit these resources	All Mozambicans
Sofala	53%	12%	7%
Zambézia	51%	6%	12%
Manica	42%	15%	12%
Gaza	40%	11%	18%
Tete	35%	12%	5%
Niassa	30%	31%	9%
Nampula	29%	17%	14%
Inhambane	28%	14%	41%
Maputo City	27%	15%	24%
Maputo Province	25%	26%	17%
Cabo Delgado	20%	46%	11%

**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, which of the following groups do you think benefits the most from the exploitation of natural resources in Mozambique today, or haven't you heard enough to say: The ruling party? The companies that exploit these resources? All Mozambicans in general?*

**Figure 8: Who benefits most from exploitation of natural resources? | by political party affiliation**  
 | Mozambique | 2015



**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, which of the following groups do you think benefits the most from the exploitation of natural resources in Mozambique today, or haven't you heard enough to say?*

**To determine party affiliation:** *Do you feel close to any particular political party? [If yes:] Which one is that?*

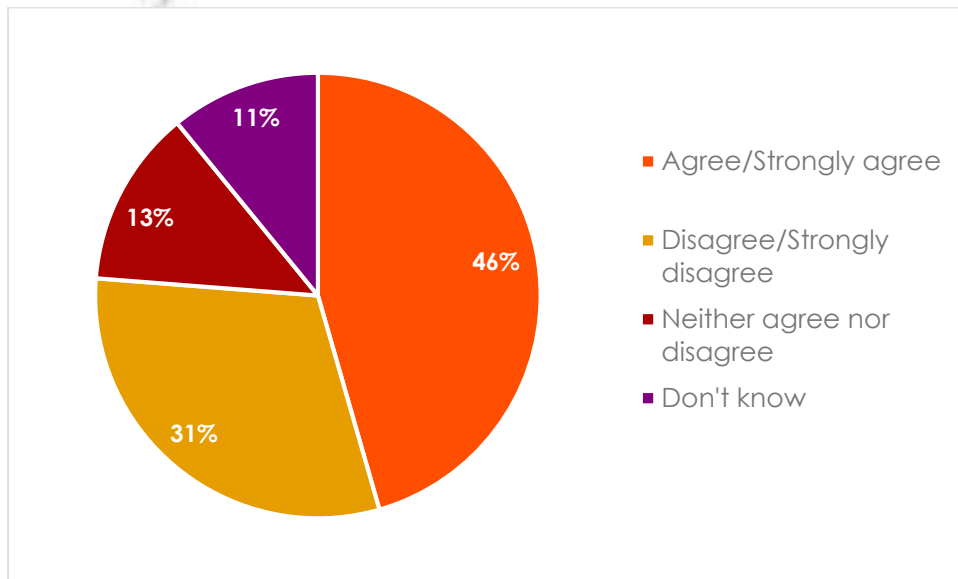


## Mining vs. community

The mining of natural resources often results in environmental degradation and major changes in local communities. In many cases, local populations are displaced. Many Mozambicans are critical of such dislocation: 45% “agree” or “strongly agree” that “families should never be displaced from their land in order to exploit natural resources, even if doing so would contribute to Mozambique’s economic development,” compared to 31% who “disagree” or “strongly disagree.” About one in four respondents neither agree nor disagree or don’t know how they feel about displacement to allow for resource exploitation (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Should families be displaced for exploitation of natural resources?**

Mozambique | 2015



**Respondents were asked:** For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't heard enough to say: Families should never be displaced from their land in order to exploit natural resources, even if doing so would contribute to Mozambique's economic development?

## Conclusion

After decades of turmoil, investments in the exploitation of Mozambique's natural resources have opened new avenues for economic development. In other African countries, resource wealth has often been captured by political and economic elites and foreign interests, with little “trickling down” to ordinary citizens. Mozambicans give somewhat favourable evaluations of their government's performance in making sure that ordinary people benefit from resource exploitation, but the ruling party and mining companies are most frequently seen as the greatest beneficiaries. Citizens also voice significant resistance to the idea of displacing families to make way for natural-resource exploitation.

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To further explore this data, please visit Afrobarometer's online data analysis facility at [www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis](http://www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis).

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**Andreas Kopf** is a PhD candidate at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji. Email: andreas.c.kopf@googlemail.com.

**Thomas Isbell** is a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Email: Thomas.isbell@gmx.de.

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