ONLINE POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN PORTUGUESE SPEAKING AFRICA: A TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Based on the research premise that the online communication environment is essential within the knowledge based society for expressing organizational, political and societal characteristics, the paper focuses on the online political communication in African Lusophone countries, analysing the web sites of their legislative bodies. We briefly present the current political contexts in the five Portuguese speaking countries: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe. We further perform content and technical web site analyses, revealing technical aspects regarding site usability and efficiency. Although IT infrastructure is often less proficient in African countries, the study reveals the importance and global accessibility of the online environment and its advantages in political communication.

Keywords: Portuguese Speaking Africa, online political communication

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1. Introduction and theoretical framework

Portuguese speaking countries, also called PALOP (*Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa*) or Lusophone Africa – Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe –, with a total of over 46 million inhabitants (see Fig. 1), are a distinctive voice on the African continent. Sharing a common colonial history, but being at the same very diverse in their cultural expressions, they create new political and economic synergies, being nowadays members of international organizations, such as the African Union or the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (*Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*), an international organization whose main objective is fostering economic, political and cultural cooperation among Lusophone countries.

We start from the hypothesis that the online communication environment is essential within the knowledge based society. While it is obviously debatable whether these are indeed knowledge based societies – at least in the sense given to the term in the Western culture and academia –, it is nonetheless interesting to see how internet is used by the political institutions, in an attempt to ensure transparency and online communication with the citizens.

Lusophone Africa 2014 population and internet user statistics for Q2				
	Population (2014 Est.)	Internet Users	Penetration (% population)	1-year growth
Angola	19,088,106	4,286,821	22.5 %	17%
Cape Verde	538,535	201,950	37.5 %	14%
Guinea Bissau	1,693,398	57,764	3.4 %	16%
Mozambique	24,692,144	1,467,687	5.9 %	16%
São Tomé e Príncipe	190,428	48,806	25.6 %	16%
Total	46,202,611	5,881,273		

Figure 1. Internet usage in PALOP countries according to Internet World Stats; Source: www.internetworldstats.com

According to recent data from international sources, Portuguese speaking Africa accounts for almost 6 million of Internet users, representing an important community of ideas, opinions and, moreover, aspirations regarding different problems to be addressed by political elites, such as the members of parliaments. Our study focuses on the sites of PALOP parliaments, in an attempt to find the resources available to inform the constituents about the political activity.

Electronic communication means, such as web sites, have, in a knowledge based society, important advantages regarding their global impact and accessibility, which bring increased information relevance and public awareness. From Web 1.0 tools, comprising sites within the WWW system[1], electronic communication tools evolved, by means of information systems, towards improved interactivity and cooperation facilities, with social media facilities, like *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *My space*, etc., this framework being called Web 2.0[2]. As a consequence, an enormous quantity of data is nowadays available to analyse the impact of all online tools. Web site analysis, comprising both IT management perspectives defined by Andreica[3] and technical ones, according to Kaushik[4], are important tools to be applied in order to evaluate web sites efficiency, the way in which they achieve their goals and to design development strategies.

The working framework of this paper is given by Susana Salgado[5], who addresses the political evolution of Lusophone African countries and the way in which their characteristics are reflected in Web 2.0 electronic content:

> "Concerning the Internet and the online media, the situation in some of the Lusophone African countries seems to confirm the idea that the Internet is replicating these societies' status quo and the way politics is usually conducted, because the number of people with access is very limited and in many cases restricted to a small elite" (Salgado 2014: 113).

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[1] Andrew S. Tanenbaum, *Reţele de calculatoare*, Târgu Mureş: Computer Press Agora, 1997.

[2] Gwen Solomon, Lynn Shrumm, *Web 2.0: New Tools, New Schools*. Washington: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007.

[3] Alina Andreica, *IT Management*, Cluj-Napoca: EFES. 2009.

[4] Avinash Kaushik, *Web Analytics. An Hour A Day*. Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing Inc.

[5] Susana Salgado, *The Internet and Democracy Building in Lusophone African Countries*, Surrey / Burlington: Ashgate, 2014.

Within sections 2 and 3, we briefly present the five Portuguese speaking countries in Africa: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, focusing the role of the parliaments in the respective political regimes. Within section 4, we perform content and technical web site analyses, discussing technical aspects regarding site usability and efficiency. Although IT infrastructure is often less proficient in African countries, we reveal the importance and global accessibility of the online environment and its impact on political communication.

The paper addresses the impact of global electronic communication facilities in the level of democratization and freedom of speech in PALOP countries within an integrated analysis. Conclusions reveal the most important contributions of the paper.

2. Current situation in Portuguese speaking Africa

While we refer to PALOP as a whole, it is important to state that these countries are quite different among one another. All countries gained their independence in 1975, but their recent history shows considerable differences.

From the point of view of the decolonization process and the resulting societies that emerged from it, Patrick Chabal[6] classifies Lusophone Africa into three distinct categories: the first one comprises Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe, essentially creole societies, "more similar to the Caribbean", the second is Guinea Bissau, with a history closer to the countries such as Senegal, Guinea and the Gambia, and the third category refers to Angola and Mozambique, countries comparable in their political evolution with their neighbours Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. This classification helps us understand the divergences between the current political systems and the everyday reality in these five countries; while sharing a common colonial and cultural heritage, especially identified with the Portuguese language, the PALOP block presents obvious differences that we will try to present.

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[6] Patrick Chabal *et al*, *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana Press University, 2002, p. 33.

We start our analysis by comparing several indicators concerning the political regimes and the economy of these five African countries.

Economic and health indicators of Portuguese speaking Africa				
	GDP (US$)	*GDP per capita (US$)*	*Life expectancy*	*Mortality rate, infant (per 1000 births)*
Angola	124,178,241,815.7	5,170	52	102
Cape Verde	1,879,402,553.6	3,620	75	22
Guinea Bissau	960,778,479.5	590	54	78
Mozambique	15,630,302,814.0	610	50	62
São Tomé e Príncipe	310,684,635.7	1,470	66	37

Figure 2. Economic and health indicators according to World Bank. Source: www.worldbank.org

Freedom in Portuguese speaking Africa			
	country	*press*	*internet*
Angola	not free	not free	partly free
Cape Verde	free	free	—
Guinea Bissau	partly free	partly free	—
Mozambique	partly free	partly free	—
São Tomé e Príncipe	free	free	—

Figure 3. Freedom index according to *Freedom House*. Source: www.freedomhouse.org

If we look at some economic and health indicators, we observe that Angola, the country with the highest GDP – both in absolute terms and *per capita* – has the highest infantile mortality rate and scores very low in life expectancy. This paradox of an extremely rich country in natural resources, especially oil and diamonds, the two pillars of the economy, where most of the population barely survive made of Angola a "case study in the politics

of unsustainable development"[7]. With endemic corruption – according to John McMillan "In the first few years of this decade, corruption was so extreme that each year, more than US$1 billion of Angola's oil revenues reportedly were disappearing"[8] and an authoritarian long lasting regime[9], Angola's resources have enriched only a very small elite. The president's daughter Isabel dos Santos is the richest woman on the continent, with a fortune estimated at $3.3 billion by *Forbes Magazine*, she controls companies in key sectors of the Angolan economy, such as telecom, banking, cement, and diamonds[10]. The country is ruled by an authoritarian regime and a "kleptocracy", according to the long-time dissident Rafael Marques de Morais[11]. As we can see in the Freedom House reports, Angola is not a free country, while Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe are indeed free and Mozambique and Guinea Bissau are considered partly free countries.

Another Portuguese speaking country on the African continent that has made the news over the last years is Guinea Bissau. There is a lot of literature on the country's long lasting political turmoil (the latest *coup d'état* was in 2012, presidential and parliamentary elections being held last year in April). It is nonetheless noteworthy mentioning that it was declared by the United Nations as the world's first narco-state, being a key hub for the cocaine traffic from South America to Europe. According to an article published by Ed Vulliamy in 2008 in *The Guardian* "the street value of the drugs trafficked far exceeds gross national product" and "a quarter of all cocaine consumed in Western Europe — worth $18 billion on the streets —

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[7] Barry Munslow, "Angola: The Politics of Unsustainable Development", in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 3, *The New Politics of Corruption*, 1999, p. 551-568.

[8] John McMillan, "Promoting Transparency in Angola", in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2005, p. 155.

[9] President José Eduardo dos Santos announced that he would retire from "active political life" in 2018, after almost four decades of being in power, but Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, an Oxford scholar who specializes in Angolan politics, considers in a recent article published in *Financial Times* that "talk of Dos Santos's retirement is greatly exaggerated".

[10] For a more detailed portrait, see the article "Daddy's Girl: How an African 'Princess' Banked $3 Billion In A Country Living On $2 A Day" by Kerry A. Dolan and Rafael Marques de Morais for *Forbes.*

[11] See his intervention in a panel organized at the European Parliament on October 3, 2013: "The Angolan regime must be accorded the kind of diplomatic treatment reserved for kleptocratic regimes, for that is what it is".

passes through West Africa, most of it via Guinea-Bissau". A more recent piece by Antony Loewenstein written for *Foreign Policy*, states that the military are "complicit" in the drug trade, and despite the efforts of the international community – especially the European Union and the United Nations – the country remains an important hub for the cocaine trafficking. Moreover, this analysis addresses also the fragility of the state[12] in Guinea Bissau.

In the next section we will focus on the role of the parliaments in the five countries according to the main political text, the constitution.

3. Parliamentary power and semi-presidentialism

Let us look at the political systems from a constitutional point of view. All Portuguese speaking countries in Africa have a – more or less s*ui generis* – form of semi-presidentialism, the political regime adopted in Portugal. Although scholars do not define a "lusophone model of semi-presidentialism", there is the claim that some "family resemblance" does exist, due to the diffusion of the Portuguese political model[13].

First of all, Portugal's semi-presidential regime has its own idiosyncrasies as well; adopted in 1976, two years after the Carnation Revolution on April 25th 1974, Portuguese semi-presidentialism has evolved over the last decades, "from a competitive diarchy into a hierarchical diarchy in which the prime minister has played a more important role than the president"[14]. It is believed that the semi-presidentialism was diffused in Lusophone Africa by a learning mechanism "in which Portugal was the reference"; a

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[12] According to *The Fund for Peace*, the think tank that publishes the annual fragile states index, Guinea Bissau is placed under the category of *Alert* (Angola and Mozambique are in the *High Warning* category, while São Tomé e Príncipe and Cape Verde are included in the *Warning* category).

[13] Octavio Amorim Neto, Marina Costa Lobo, "Semi-presidentialism in lusophone countries: diffusion and operation", in *Democratization*, Vol. 21. No. 3, 2014, p. 434-457.

[14] *Op. cit*., p. 436.

learning process due to three main factors: the cultural ties from the colonial period – it is worth mentioning that Portugal was the last colonial empire, until 1975; the maintaining of Portuguese as the official language; the fact that Portuguese jurist played an important role in offering legal – and especially constitutional – consultancy to the lusophone African governments.

In Angola, the president can dissolve parliament, the *Assembleia Nacional de Angola*, if it approved a motion of censure to overthrow the government. While this hypothesis is highly improbable, since the MPLA, the party controlled by Jose Eduardo dos Santos, has had large majorities in the parliament (175 seats out of a total of 220 after the 2012 elections and 191 after the 2008 elections), this constitutional provision made the Angolan legislative body totally dependent on the presidential power. In other countries, such as Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe, the president can also dissolve the parliament, but within some time limits. In Cape Verde, and Mozambique, these restrictions are both temporal and political, as the constitution specifies both the time limits and political circumstances under which the president can dissolve parliament.

Angola made constitutional changes in 2010 in order to make room for a "multiparty democracy" (as per the preamble of the constitution). The president is no longer directly elected by the people, a key feature of the semi-presidentialism, according to one of the renowned scholar Robert Elgie: "A semi-presidential regime may be denned as the situation where a popularly elected fixed-term president exists alongside a prime minister and cabinet who are responsible to parliament"[15]. Instead, the Angolan president is the leader of the most voted party in the legislative elections, a situation that favours any leader of MPLA. Also, contrary to the previous constitution, adopted in 1992, the figure of the prime minister is totally eliminated, the president becoming thus the only head of government. Moreover, the president can only be removed by impeachment, which is also highly improbable in the current political configuration of the Angolan parliament. In fact, in 2010 a hybrid constitution was promulgated, neither fully presidential, as in Brazil, for example, nor parliamentary, as in the

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[15] Robert Elgie (ed), *Semi-Presidentialism in Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 13.

previous Angolan constitution; it created an "all-powerful president facing a relatively powerless parliament"[16].

In Cape Verde, following the establishment of multipartism in 1990, the constitution defines the powers of the three main political bodies of the country: the president, the government and the parliament. In order to prevent long lasting presidents, the constitution allows a maximum of two consecutive mandates. In case of political crisis, the president can dissolve the parliament. However, according to Vitalino Canas and Jorge Carlos Fonseca[17], defining the political regime in this country is not at all consensual among the political elites, since the president has almost no executive powers. In fact, according to Paulo Castro Rangel, it is a "temperate" or "moderate" parliamentarism[18].

Guinea-Bissau has perhaps had the most turbulent constitutional history of our sample of countries. The transition to multipartism that took place from 1991–1995 witnessed the promulgation of four constitutional revisions. Despite several attempts of revision so as to curtail presidential power, the constitution has been essentially unchanged since the 1990s. Some experts consider that the semi-presidentialism was in fact a source of political instability in this country, since the presidents acted especially as agents of conflict, instead of their ideal role as nation conciliators[19]. On the contrary, the *Assembleia Nacional* (the parliament), proved to be a place of political cohabitation.

In the case of Mozambique, a new constitution was promulgated in 2004, after a decade of negotiations by the two major parliamentary forces, National Mozambican Resistance (RENAMO, Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) and the Mozambican Liberation Front, (FRELIMO, Frente

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[16] *Op. cit*. p. 445.

[17] Vitalino Canas, Jorge Carlos Fonseca, "Cabo Verde: um sistema semi-presidencial de sucesso?", in *Negócios Estrangeiros*, Vol. 11.4. Especial, 2007, p. 123-133.

[18] Paulo Castro Rangel, "Sistemas de governo mistos – o caso cabo-verdiano", in *Juris et de jure.* Nos vinte anos da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade Católica Portuguesa – Porto, Porto, 1998, p. 723 and p. 740.

[19] Elisabete Azevedo-Harman, "O Semipresidencialismo na Guiné-Bissau: Inocente ou Culpado da Instabilidade Política?", in Maria Costa Lobo and Octavio Amorim Neto (org.) *O semipresidencialismo nos países de língua portuguesa*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2009, p. 139-170.

de Libertação de Moçambique). This new text stipulates the existence of a president, elected by direct vote, and of a prime minister, appointed by the former; while the prime minister "coordinates" the government, (s)he is not explicitly the head of the government[20]. In fact, the Mozambican semi-presidentialism is a presidential regime, since both the government and the parliament are controlled by the same party[21], its nature is essentially political and not institutional.

Considered a "success story" of the democratization process in Africa by Seibert[22], São Tomé and Príncipe organized since its independence four parliamentary elections and two presidential ones. In 2002, a constitutional revision was designed to reduce presidential powers. Since then the president no longer directs foreign policy or defence policy, with the government now in control of those policy areas[23]. The parliament remains a weak institution when compared with other political agents, as the president and the government[24], since the lack of training and knowledge does not allow the elected MPs to properly do their job.

However, the famous dichotomy between the constitutional text – *law in the books* – and the everyday practice – *law in the action* – should be taken into consideration when analysing the political regimes of the Portuguese speaking countries[25]. Political agents have been known to ignore the constitution, to apply it "creatively" or "electively" or to interpret it according to pragmatic and not normative criteria. These four aspect might explain most of the political instability of these countries over the last decades.

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[20] José Jaime Macune, "O semipresidencialismo (?) em Moçambique (1986 a 2008)", in Maria Costa Lobo and Octavio Amorim Neto (org.) *O semipresidencialismo nos países de língua portuguesa*. Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2009, p. 171-200.

[21] *Op. cit.* p. 196.

[22] Gerhard Seibert, "Semi-Presidencialismo e o Controlo da Constitucionalidade em São Tomé e Príncipe", in *Negócios Estrangeiros*, Vol. 11.4. Especial, 2007, p. 44-63.

[23] Amorim Neto and Costa Lobo: 2014, Op. cit. p. 446.

[24] *Op. cit.* p. 56.

[25] N'Gunu N. Tiny, "Teorizando o Semi-Presidencialismo – Angola e S. Tomé e Príncipe", in *Negócios Estrangeiros*, Vol. 11.4. Especial, 2007, p. 91-94.

In the next section we will focus on the technical analysis of the sites of the Portuguese speaking African countries, emphasising their role in the communication with the citizens and other stakeholders involved in the political process.

4. Content and technical analysis of PALOP parliaments' sites

Within this section, we analyse the websites of the PALOP countries parliaments:

− Mozambique: http://www.parlamento.mz/, last accessed on March 2016;

− Angola: http://www.parlamento.ao, last accessed on March 2016;

− São Tome and Príncipe: http://www.parlamento.st/, last accessed on March 2016;

− Cape Verde: http://www.parlamento.cv/, last accessed on March 2016;

− Guinea Bissau: http://www.anpguinebissau.org/, last accessed on March 2016.

The analysis pursues the guidelines that we define in "IT Management"[26], regarding both functional, content and technical analysis – traffic, web optimization / download speed.

4.1. Content analysis of the PALOP parliaments' websites

We address, in this section, the content analysis of PALOP Parliaments websites.

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[26] Alina Andreica, *IT Management*, Cluj-Napoca: EFES, 2009, p. 76.

4.1.1. Parliament of Mozambique website - content analysis

The Parliament of Mozambique website http://www.parlamento.mz/ - see Fig. 4 – has a clear and tidy aspect and structure and a logical main menu, containing the following options: *Parlamento* – about the Parliament; *Presidente* – about the Parliament President; *Deputados* – about members of parliaments; *Comissão Permanente* – about the Permanent Commission; *Comissões Parlamentares* – about the Parliamentary Commissions; *Gabinete Comissões Parlamentares* - about the Parliamentary Cabinets; *Secretariado Geral* - about the Parliament General Secretariat; *Legislação Básica* – communicates and legislative documents – see Fig. 4.

Supplemental options are available on the bottom side of the page: *Notícias* – news; *Actualidade* – News; *Comunicados* – communicates; *Galeria* – gallery; *E-mail*; *Legislação* – Laws and Law Projects; Estado da Nação – state of the nation; *Destaques* – highlights; *Entrevista Discursos - 9ª sessão* - Interview -Speeches 9th session; *Galeria de Fotos* – photo gallery.

Figure 4: Mozambique Parliament website home page http://www.parlamento.mz/

4.1.2. Parliament of Angola website - content analysis

The Parliament of Angola website http://www.parlamento.ao/ displays an elaborated content with a logical structure, a vertical main menu with drop-down submenus and news on Main page– see Fig 5. The Parliament of Angola website contains the following two-layer menu structure:

– Parlamento (Parliament): Apresentação (Representation), Estatuto e Eleição (Statute and Elections), Competência (Competencies), Processo Legislativo Comum (Common legislative process), Apontamentos Históricos (Historical aspects); Organização e Funcionamento (Organization and functioning principles); Comissão Permanente (Permanent Commission);

– Presidente (President): Início (Home), Biografia (Biography), Funções (Positions), Comunicados e Intervenções (Official reports and interventions), Multimédia (Multimedia), Gabinete (Cabinet)

– Deputados e Grupos Parlamentares: Introdução (Home), Deputados (Deputees), Grupos Parlamentares (Parliamentary groups), Mesa da Assembleia (Bureau of the Assembly), Estatuto dos Deputados (Deputee Statute);

– Comissões Parlamentares (Parliamentary Commissions): 1ª Comissão dos Assuntos Constitucionais e Jurídicos (1st Commission on Constitutional and Juridical Issues); 2ª Comissão da Segurança Nacional (2nd Commission on Security); 3ª Comissão de Relações Exteriores, Cooperação Internacional e Comunidades Angolanas no Estrangeiro (3rd Commission on External Relations, International Cooperation and Angolan Communities Abroad); 4ª Comissão da Administração do Estado e Poder Local (4th Commission on State Administration and Local Governance); 5ª Comissão de Economia e Finanças (5th Commission on Economy and Finances); 6ª Comissão de Educação, Cultura, Assuntos Religiosos e Comunicação Social (6th Commission on Education, Culture, Religious Matters and Social Communication); 7ª Comissão de Saúde, Família, Juventude e Desportos, Antigos Combatentes e Acção Social (7th Commission on Health, Family, Youth and Sports, Old Combatants and Social Action); 8ª Comissão de Ambiente, Ciência e Tecnologia, Trabalho

e Segurança Social (8th Commission on Environment, Science and Technology, Work and Social Security); 9ª Comissão de Mandatos, Ética e Decoro Parlamentar (9th Commission of Mandates, Ethics and Parliamentary Decency); 10ª Comissão dos Direitos Humanos, Petições, Reclamações e Sugestões dos Cidadãos (10th Commission on Human Rights, Petitions, Complaints and Suggestions of the Citizens);

− Círculos Eleitorais (Electoral Representatives): Apresentação (Presentation), Lista Nominal dos Deputados da Assembleia Nacional (Nominal List of Deputees of the National Assembly), Relação Nominal dos Secretários dos Gabinetes Locais (Nominal Contcts of Local Cabinets Secretaries) – see Fig. 6;

− Actividade Parlamentar (Parliamentary Activity): Início (Introduction), Intervenções e Debates (Interventions and Delates), Iniciativas Legislativas (Legislative Innitiatives), Diplomas Aprovados (Passed Laws), Perguntas ao Executivo/Requerimentos (Questions and Requirements to the Government), Petições (Petitions), Relatórios/ Estatísticas (Reports / Statistics);

− Diário da Assembleia Nacional (News of the National Assembly): Início (Home);

− Fiscalização Política (Fiscal Policy): Introdução (Introduction), Perguntas e Requerimentos (Questions and Requirements), Comissões de Inquérito (Inquiry Commissions), Petições (Petitions), Interpelações (Summons), Moções (Motions), Orçamento Geral do Estado (General State Budget), Apreciação de Decretos Lei (Appreciation of the Decrees of Law), Programa do Governo (Government Program), Relatório Interno e Externo (Internal and External report);

− Relações Internacionais (International Relations): Cooperação Interparlamentar (Inter-parliamentary Cooperation), Deslocações e Visitas Oficiais (Official Visits);

− Secretaria Geral (General Secretariat): Estrutura da Secretaria (Structure of the Secretariat), Secretário Geral (Secretary General), Estatuto do Secretário Geral (Statute of the Secretary General), Gabinete do Secretário Geral (Cabinet of the Secretary General), Contactar o Secretário Geral (Contact the Secretary General);

Figure 5: Angola Parliament website home page http://www.parlamento.ao/

– Conselho de Administração (Management Board): Apresentação (Presentation);
– Legislação (Legislation): A Constituição (Formation), Leis Orgânicas da Assembleia Nacional (Organic Laws of the National Assembly); Legis PALOP – link to PALOP legislative database http://www.legis-palop.org/bd - see Fig. 7.

Figure 6: Angola Parliament website Gabinetes locais page

Figure 7: Legis PALOP home page

We can notice that the President biography is missing (May 2015). The Photo Gallery is available in *Assembleia Nacional -> Presidente -> PAN IIIL -> Multimédia -> Galeria Fotográfica*. Quick links are also available on the bottom of the page: *Contactos, Correio do cidadão* – citizen newsletter, *Multimédia* - multimedia.

4.1.3. Parliament of São Tome and Principe website - content analysis

The Parliament of São Tome e Principe website http://www.parlamento.st/ - see Fig. 8- displays a vertical main menu with logical structure, news and calendar on the main page and A virtual media tour in the parliament building.

We can notice a good content in uploaded information and news and a feed-back form – see Fig. 9.

The Parliament of Sao Tome e Principe website http://www.parlamento.st/ displays the following menu: *Constituição* – Formation; *Sobre o País* – About the country; *Parlamento* – Parliament; *Presidente* – President; *Deputados* – Deputies; *Comissões* – Commissions; *Legislação* – Legislation; *BADAP-* Bases de Dados de Apoio Parlamentar – Parliamentary support databases; *OGE e GDP* (empty for the moment); *Processo Legislativo* – Legislative process; *Links*; *Diários da AN* – News of the National Assembly; *Gestão do parlamento* – Parliament management; *Contactos* – Contact; *Fale Conosco* – Contact us (talk to us).

Figure 8: São Tome e Principe Parliament website home page http://www.parlamento.st/

Figure 9: São Tome e Principe Parliament feedback form

4.1.4. Parliament of Cabo Verde website - content analysis

The Parliament of Cabo Verde website http://www.parlamento.cv/ - see Fig. 10 – displays a three column layout with: menu, news and quick links, including the Parliament agenda.

We can notice that some objects are not visible. Certain problems may also appear with the on-line parliamentary session viewing, because of the large multimedia information in respect with the existing communication infrastructure.

The site structure similar to the one of Angola Parliament: *Parlamento* – about the Parliament; *Presidente* – about the President; *Deputados* – rules about representatives; *Comissões* – about the Parliamentary Commissions; *Actividades Parlamentares* – Parliamentary activity; *Fiscalização Política* – Political control; *Relações Internacionais* – International relations; *Leis da República* – Republic laws; *Actas das Sessões* – Session activity; *Biblioteca e Arquivo* –Archive library; *Gestão do Parlamento* – Parliament management; *Redes Parlamentares* – Parliamentary networks.

Figure 10: Cabo Verde Parliament website home page http://www.parlamento.cv/

4.1.5. Parliament of Guinea Bissau website - content analysis

The website of the Parliament of Guinea Bissau Republic http://www.anpguinebissau.org/ - see Fig. 11 – displays a three column design, with vertical menu, calendar and news on main page. The structure is similar to the one of Sao Tomé e Principe website (section 3.1.3).

Figure 11: Guiné Bissau Parliament website home page: http://www.anpguinebissau.org/

A supplemental horizontal menu contains the following options: Página Inicial – home page; Auditoria – auditing; Fale com a ANP – feed-back, contact; Mapa deste sítio – site map; Correio – mail; Aceder – acceed.

4.2. Technical analysis of the PALOP parliaments' websites

The technical analysis of a web site provides important information regarding site proficiency, visitors' profile, most popular sections or sections that should be improved. Therefore, web sites should be systematically monitored by traffic and log information analysis in order to trace proficient and perfectible sections, as well as visitor information and means of improving the web site (Andreica 2009, 78)[27].

Traffic analysis is therefore very important for site popularity and evaluation; we present in this section the technical analyses performed on PALOP Parliaments websites. Nevertheless, because of the low ICT level in the region, PALOP parliaments websites are characterized by low traffic and few available information regarding traffic analysis. Download speed analysis is also relevant for site efficiency.

4.2.1. Technical analysis - Mozambique parliament website

The website traffic of the Parliament of the Republic of Mozambique http://www.parlamento.mz/ is very low, few traffic information can be found. Obviously, the site doesn't enter Alexa rank www.alexa.com.

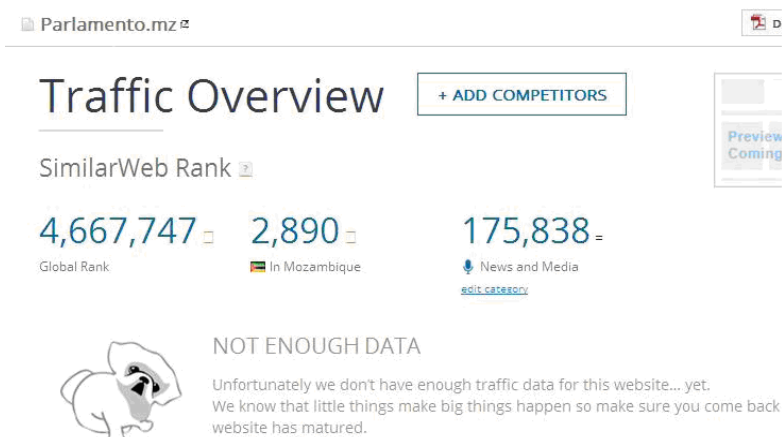[27] Alina Andreica, *IT Management*, Cluj-Napoca: EFES, 2009, p. 78.

Figure 12: Mozambique Parliament website traffic; Source: www.similarweb.com

Similarweb analyser www.similarweb.com – accessed May 14th 2015 provides the following results: global rank – 4,667,747; rank in Mozambique: 2890 and rank in news & media sites: 175,838 – see Fig. 12. No further information is available. We notice that the interest for the parliamentary site is not very high in the country and, naturally, the site ranks much lower in the global site hierarchy.

Download speed analysis is also very important for site efficiency: Weboptimization.com analyser: accessed May 14th 2015 provides the results shown in Fig. 13: the site has a dimension of ~898KB and is loaded, on a Gb connection, in 9.76s, a moderate speed.

We further present the detailed recommendations generated by the analyser. The analyser rates very good the: total number of HTML pages – 1, total number of external scripts – 2, HTML size – 12132B and the external multimedia files – 0 (nevertheless, this might appear as a content disadvantage). Warnings and improving recommendations are provided for: the number of total objects – 25, the number of CSS files – 7, total size of the page – 898308B, the total size of images – 562514B, the total size of external scripts – 293684B, the total size of CSS files – 29978B (>20KB). Caution and improving recommendations are marked for the amount of images on the page – 15. (Source www.weboptimization.com).

Web Page Speed Report

URL:	http://www.parlamento.mz
Title:	Assembleia da RepÃºblica - Destaque
Date:	Report run on Fri May 15 17:45:56EDT2015

Diagnosis

Global Statistics

Total HTTP Requests:	25
Total Size:	898308 bytes

Download Times*

Connection Rate	Download Time
14.4K	701.23 seconds
28.8K	353.12 seconds
33.6K	303.39 seconds
56K	184.03 seconds
ISDN 128K	59.83 seconds
T1 1.44Mbps	9.76 seconds

Object Size Totals

Object type	Size (bytes)	Download @ 56K (seconds)	Download @ T1 (seconds)
HTML:	12132	2.62	0.26
HTML Images:	408698	83.45	4.17
CSS Images:	153816	31.66	1.81
Total Images:	562514	115.11	5.98
Javascript:	293684	58.93	1.96
CSS:	29978	7.37	1.56
Multimedia:	0	0.00	0.00
Other:	0	0.00	0.00

Figure 13: Mozambique Parliament site download speed;
Source: www.weboptimization.com

4.2.2. Technical analysis – Angola parliament website

The website traffic of Angola Parliament http://www.parlamento.ao/ website is low, but much better than of Mozambique Parliament website. The site enters Alexa rank www.alexa.com on the 6,220,696 global position, rising from 8,176,738 three months ago (Source www.alexa.com, accessed May 2015).

Similarweb analyser www.similarweb.com – accessed May 14th 2015 provides the following results: global rank – 1,763,296; rank in Angola: 3200 and rank in law & government sites: 175,838 – see Fig. 14. We notice that the interest for the parliamentary site is not very high in the country and, naturally, the site ranks lower in the global site hierarchy.

Further information provided by Similarweb analyser www.similarweb.com is given below. Traffic sources information is provided in Fig. 15 and geographical access information – the locations where users access the site from – in Fig. 16.

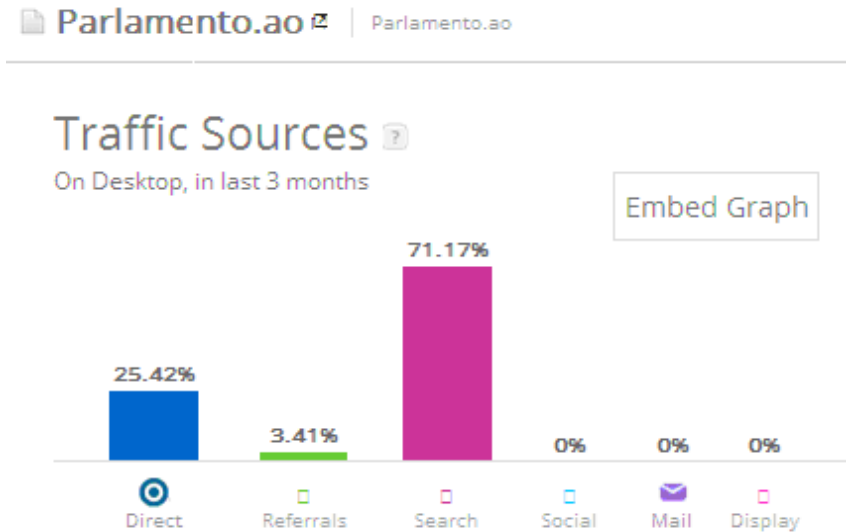Figure 14: Angola Parliament website traffic; Source: www.similarweb.com

Figure 15: Angola Parliament website traffic sources; Source: www.similarweb.com

Leading Countries ⓘ

Country	
🇦🇴 Angola	39.12%
🇧🇷 Brazil	18.53%
🇿🇦 South Africa	11.47%
🇵🇹 Portugal	8.14%
🇲🇿 Mozambique	7.52%

Figure 16: Geographical audience for Angola Parliament website; Source: www.similarweb.com

We notice that the site of Angola Parliament is the most accessed from Angola – 39.12%, followed by Brazil – 18.53%, South Africa – 11.47%, Portugal – 8.14%, Moçambique – 7.52% - see Fig. 16. Users' access is obviously motivated by economic reasons, Angola being rich in natural resources of economic interest (mainly oil and diamonds, but also iron, manganese and copper[28]).

Download speed analysis, performed using Weboptimization.com analyser, accessed May 14th 2015, provides the results shown in Fig. 17: the site has a dimension of ~568KB and is loaded, on a Gb connection, in 28.81s, a low speed.

We further present the detailed recommendations generated by the analyser. The analyser rates very good the: total number of HTML pages – 2, HTML size – 19537B and the external multimedia files – 0 (nevertheless, this might appear as a content disadvantage).

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[28] *Our Africa, Angola, Economy and Industry* http://www.our-africa.org/angola/economy-industry, accessed May 2015.

Web Page Speed Report

URL:	http://www.parlamento.ao
Title:	PÃigina Inicial - Assembleia Nacional
Date:	Report run on Fri May 15 17:31:27EDT2015

Diagnosis

Global Statistics

Total HTTP Requests:	129
Total Size:	567995 bytes

Download Times*

Connection Rate	Download Time
14.4K	466.02 seconds
28.8K	245.91 seconds
33.6K	214.47 seconds
56K	139.00 seconds
ISDN 128K	60.47 seconds
T1 1.44Mbps	28.81 seconds

Object Size Totals

Object type	Size (bytes)	Download @ 56K (seconds)	Download @ T1 (seconds)
HTML:	19537	4.29	0.50
HTML Images:	370276	75.80	3.96
CSS Images:	118863	45.29	22.23
Total Images:	489139	121.09	26.19
Javascript:	38392	8.45	1.00
CSS:	20927	5.17	1.11
Multimedia:	0	0.00	0.00
Other:	0	0.00	0.00

Figure 17: Angola Parliament site download speed; Source: www.weboptimization.com

Warnings and improving recommendations are provided for: the number of total objects –129, which delay the page; the total number of images – 118, quite high; total size of the page – 567995B, the total size of images – 489139B, the total size of external scripts – 38392B, the total size of CSS files – 209278B (>20KB). Caution and improving recommendations are marked for the number of CSS files – 5 and total number of external scripts – 4. (Source: www.weboptimization.com).

4.2.3. Technical analysis – São Tome and Principe parliament website

The website traffic of São Tome e Principe Parliament http://www.parlamento.st/ website is very low, even lower than of Mozambique Parliament website, and few traffic information can be found. Obviously, the site doesn't enter Alexa rank www.alexa.com (accessed May 2015).

Similarweb analyser www.similarweb.com – accessed May 14th 2015 provides the following results: global rank –5,262,763; rank in South Africa: 84,910 and rank in law & government sites: 45,586 – see Fig. 18. We notice that the site is more accessed from South Africa than from São Tome e Principe, the reasons being, most likely, touristic ones.

Figure 18: São Tome e Principe Parliament website traffic; Source: www.similarweb.com

Download speed analysis is also very important for site efficiency: Weboptimization.com analyser, accessed May 14th 2015, provides the results shown in Fig. 19: the site is very small ~35KB and is loaded, consequently, very fast: on a Gb connection, in 2.79s.

We further present the detailed recommendations generated by the analyzer. The site is very small, so it does not have any loading problems. The analyzer rates very good the: total number of HTML pages – 2, the total number of images – 4 (yet, this might be a content problem), the number of external multimedia files –1, the total page size – 36288B, the total number of external scripts –2, the total HTML size – 5225B, the total size of images –2296B (yet, this might be a content problem) and the total size of external multimedia files – 0. Caution and improving recommendations are marked for the number of total objects – 13, the number of CSS files – 4, the total size of external scripts – 14241B and the total size of CSS files – 13526B. (Source www.weboptimization.com).

Web Page Speed Report

URL:	http://www.parlamento.st
Title:	Assembleia Nacional de Sao Tom e Principe
Date:	Report run on Fri May 15 17:55:33EDT2015

Diagnosis

Global Statistics

Total HTTP Requests:	13
Total Size:	35288 bytes

Download Times*

Connection Rate	Download Time
14.4K	29.95 seconds
28.8K	16.27 seconds
33.6K	14.32 seconds
56K	9.63 seconds
ISDN 128K	4.75 seconds
T1 1.44Mbps	2.79 seconds

Object Size Totals

Object type	Size (bytes)	Download @ 56K (seconds)	Download @ T1 (seconds)
HTML:	5225	1.44	0.43
HTML Images:	2296	1.26	0.81
CSS Images:	0	0.00	0.00
Total Images:	2296	1.26	0.81
Javascript:	14241	3.24	0.48
CSS:	13526	3.50	0.87
Multimedia:	0	0.00	0.00
Other:	0	0.00	0.00

Figure 19: São Tome and Principe Parliament site download speed; Source: www.weboptimization.com

4.2.4. Technical analysis – Cabo Verde parliament website

The website traffic of Cabo Verde Parliament http://www.parlamento.cv/ website is fairly low, ranking between Angola and São Tome e Principe Parliament websites. The site enters Alexa rank www.alexa.com on the on 7,207,107 global position (lower than Angola Parliament), rising from three months ago (Source www.alexa.com, accessed May 2015).

Similarweb analyser www.similarweb.com – accessed May 14th 2015 provides the following results: global rank – 2,252,219 (lower than Angola's Parliament); rank in Cabo Verde: 961 and rank in law & government sites: 24,029 (considerably higher than Angola's Parliament) – see Fig. 20. We notice that the interest for the parliamentary site is higher in Cabo Verde than in other PALOP countries.

Parlamento.cv

Traffic Overview

+ ADD COMPETITORS

SimilarWeb Rank

2,254,219	961	24,029
Global Rank	In Cabo Verde	Law and Government > G...
		edit category

Figure 20: Cabo Verde Parliament website traffic; Source: www.similarweb.com

Web Page Speed Report

URL:	http://www.parlamento.cv
Title:	PÃgina Principal da Assembleia Nacional de Cabo Verde
Date:	Report run on Fri May 15 18:04:40EDT2015

Diagnosis

Global Statistics

Total HTTP Requests:	51
Total Size:	497139 bytes

Download Times*

Connection Rate	Download Time
14.4K	395.51 seconds
28.8K	202.85 seconds
33.6K	175.33 seconds
56K	109.28 seconds
ISDN 128K	40.54 seconds
T1 1.44Mbps	12.83 seconds

Object Size Totals

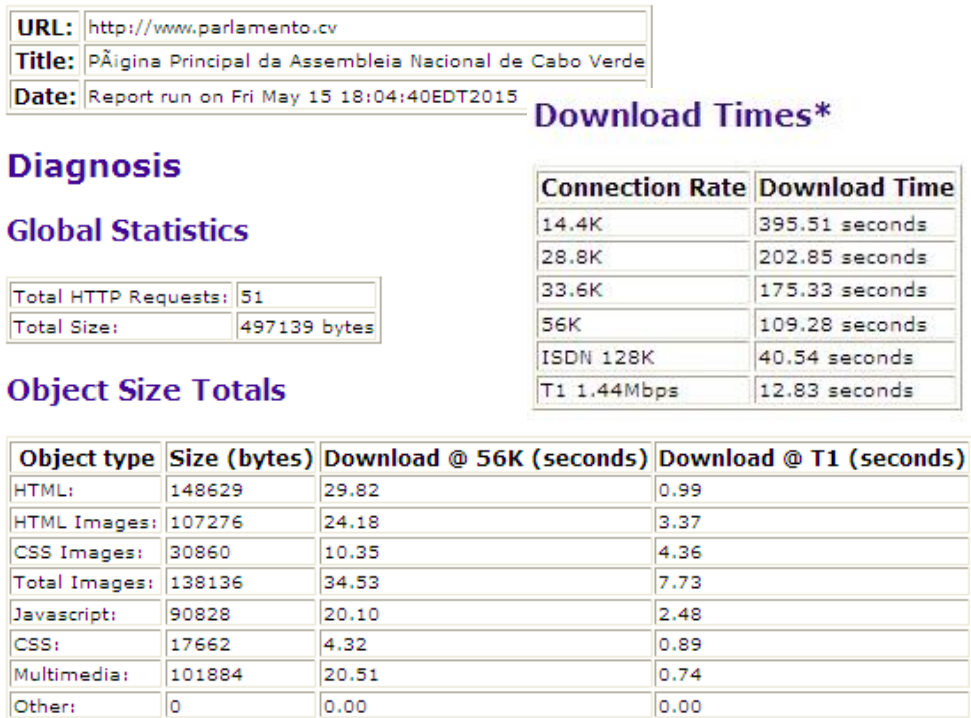| Object type	Size (bytes)	Download @ 56K (seconds)	Download @ T1 (seconds)
HTML:	148629	29.82	0.99
HTML Images:	107276	24.18	3.37
CSS Images:	30860	10.35	4.36
Total Images:	138136	34.53	7.73
Javascript:	90828	20.10	2.48
CSS:	17662	4.32	0.89
Multimedia:	101884	20.51	0.74
Other:	0	0.00	0.00

Figure 21: Cabo Verde Parliament site download speed; Source: www.weboptimization.com

Download speed analysis, performed using Weboptimization.com analyser, accessed May 14th 2015, provides the results shown in Fig.21: the site has a dimension of ~497KB and is loaded, on a Gb connection, in12.83s, a moderate speed.

We further present the detailed recommendations generated by the analyser. The analyser rates very good the: total number of HTML pages – 1 and the total number of external multimedia files –1. Warnings and improving recommendations are provided for: the number of total objects – 51, which delay the page; the total number of images –35; total size of the page – 497139B, the total number of external scripts – 10, the total HTML size –148629B, the total size of images –138136B, the total size of external scripts –90828B and the total size of external multimedia – 101884B. Caution and improving recommendations are marked for the number of CSS files –4 and the total size of CSS files –17662B, a moderate size (Source www.weboptimization.com).

4.2.5. Technical analysis – Guinea Bissau Parliament website

The website traffic of the Parliament of the Republic of Guinea Bissau http://www.anpguinebissau.org/ website is fairly low, ranking between Cabo Verde and São Tome e Principe Parliament websites. The site doesn't enter Alexa rank www.alexa.com (accessed May 2015) and few traffic information can be found.

Figure 23: Guinea Bissau Parliament website traffic; Source: www.similarweb.com

Similarweb analyser www.similarweb.com – accessed May 14th 2015 provides the following results: global rank – 3,572,583 (lower than Cabo Verdes Parliament); rank in South Africa: 43,943 and rank in law &

government sites: 34,192 (lower than Cabo Verde's Parliament) – see Fig. 22. We notice that the site is more accessed from South Africa than from Guinea Bissau, the reasons being, most likely, its touristic attractions and natural resources[29].

Download speed analysis, performed using Weboptimization.com analyser, accessed May 14th 2015, provides the results shown in Fig.21: the site has a dimension of ~497KB and is loaded, on a Gb connection, in12.83s, a moderate speed.

Web Page Speed Report

URL:	http://www.anpguinebissau.org
Title:	PÃigina Inicial â€" Assembleia Nacional Popular
Date:	Report run on Fri May 15 18:18:19EDT2015

Diagnosis

Download Times*

Global Statistics

Connection Rate	Download Time
14.4K	1674.11 seconds
28.8K	852.65 seconds
33.6K	735.30 seconds
56K	453.66 seconds
ISDN 128K	160.58 seconds
T1 1.44Mbps	42.43 seconds

| Total HTTP Requests: | 156 |
| Total Size: | 2119745 bytes |

Object Size Totals

Object type	Size (bytes)	Download @ 56K (seconds)	Download @ T1 (seconds)
HTML:	21463	4.68	0.51
HTML Images:	533775	110.98	7.43
CSS Images:	1267989	273.31	27.32
Total Images:	1801764	384.29	34.75
Javascript:	254138	53.05	3.75
CSS:	42380	11.65	3.42
Multimedia:	0	0.00	0.00
Other:	0	0.00	0.00

Figure 21: Cabo Verde Parliament site download speed; Source: www.weboptimization.com

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[29] African Development Bank Group, *Natural resources in Guinea-Bissau*, http://www.afdb.org/en/blogs/measuring-the-pulse-of-economic-transformation-in-west-africa/post/natural-resources-in-guinea-bissau-getting-it-right-from-the-start-13630/, accessed May 2015.

We further present the detailed recommendations generated by the analyser. The analyser rates very good the: total number of HTML pages – 2, the total HTML size –21463B and the total size of external multimedia files –0 (yet, this could be a problem from the content point of view). Warnings and improving recommendations are provided for: the number of total objects – 156, which delay the page; the total number of images – 126, quite high; the number of CSS files –16, quite high as well; the total size of the page –2119745B, very high; the total number of external scripts – 12, the total size of images –1801764B, very high; the total size of external scripts –254138B, high as well and the total size of external multimedia – 42380B (Source www.weboptimization.com).

4.2.6. Technical analysis – a comparison between PALOP Parliaments' websites

We present in Fig. 22 a comparison between PALOP Parliaments' websites traffic rank, according to data provided by Similarweb.com analyser, accessed May 2015: the best ranks Angola Parliament website, based on the countries natural resources (mainly oil and diamonds), with the global position 1,763,296; next ranks Cabo Verde Parliament website, based on the country's touristic attractions and higher freedom level, with the global position 2,254,219; next ranks Guinea Bissau Parliament website, based on the country's touristic attractions and natural resources; next ranks Mozambique, with the global position 4,667,747 and last, São Tomé e Principe, with the global position 5,272,703.
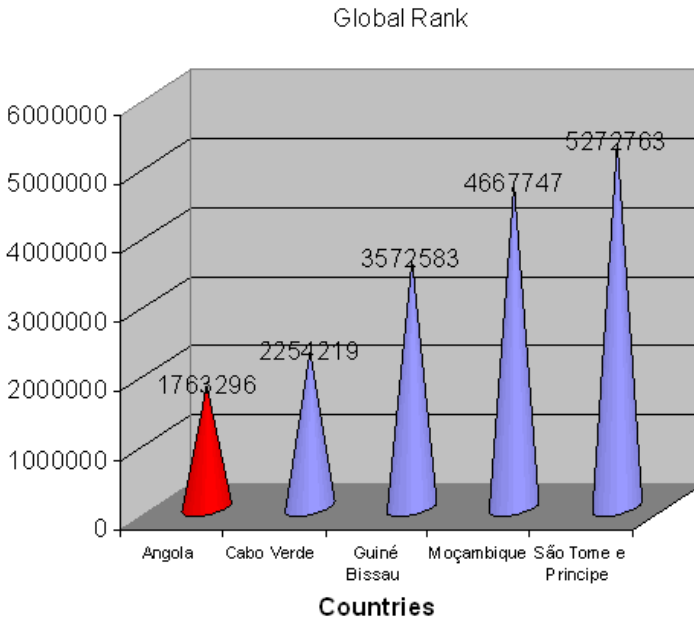
Global Rank

Figure 22: Comparison between PALOP Parliaments' websites traffic ranks –
based on data provided by www.similarweb.com

Fig. 23 presents a comparison between PALOP Parliaments' websites
download speeds, according to data provided by Weboptimization.com
analyser, accessed May 2015: first ranks São Tomé e Principe Parliament
website, with 2.79s, but since the site dimension is extremely small, we
consider that Mozambique Parliament website rank is better compared to
the other sites, with 9.76s, then comes Cabo Verde Parliament website, with
12.83s, then comes Angola Parliament website, with 28.81 and finally -
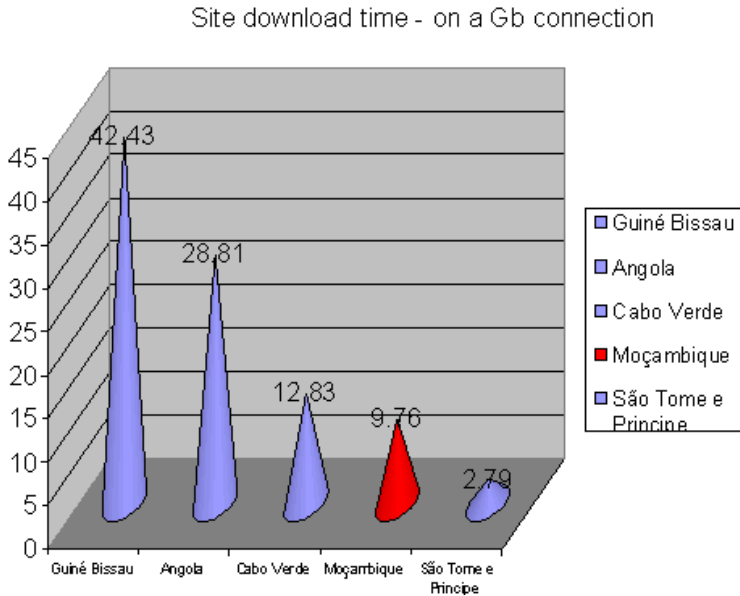Guinea Bissau Parliament website, with a very slow speed, 42.43s.

Site download time - on a Gb connection

Figure 23: Comparison between PALOP Parliaments' websites download speeds – based on data provided by www.similarweb.com

Conclusions

In our present knowledge based society, electronic media provides efficient online communication facilities; websites in particular, have become one of the most efficient organizational communication tool.

The electronic environment becomes a reflection of the freedom of speech and democracy in the countries where it is developed, this statement being applied – even if sometimes partially – for the five countries that form the Lusophone Africa. Within this framework, our paper analyses the online political communication by means of the sites of PALOP parliaments, in terms of accessibility and information available to users about the political process.

Consequent to a comparative analysis of PALOP countries political situation – both in terms of *law in the books* and *law in action* –, we performed an integrated analysis of the Parliaments' websites, comprising: website content analysis and website technical analysis – traffic, download time.

The studied websites are well structured and display a fairly good amount of content. The websites of Angola, Mozambique and Cabo Verde Parliaments display the largest content. Regarding the traffic rank, the most accessed site among the studied ones is the site of the Parliament of Angola, while the site of the Parliament of Mozambique is the fastest site (with a good content), with the highest download time.

We can conclude that e-media creates the image of a good communication in all five countries, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe and Guinea Bissau, even though sometimes there may be certain differences between the electronic image and the everyday practice. The impact among the citizen of the information shared on these websites is a related topic of interest to be addressed in future research.

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