OMR
Observatório do Meio Rural

OBSERVADOR RURAL
Nº 133
January 2023

SPACES FOR PARTICIPATION AND EXERCISE OF CITIZENSHIP, IN THE VOICE OF ASSOCIATIVE LEADERS IN THE PROVINCE OF CABO DELGADO

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RESUMO:

O texto descreve os obstáculos históricos ao desenvolvimento de organizações da sociedade civil (OSC) em Moçambique, que conheceram um cenário mais acolhedor na Constituição de 1990. Mecanismos de apoio à sociedade civil capacitaram líderes locais, tornando-os melhor conhecedores de dispositivos legais, capazes de reunir evidências e de exercer impacto junto das populações.

Contudo, as organizações enfrentaram problemas internos, relacionados com a ausência de recursos financeiros, com a capacitação dos seus membros e com problemas de transparência e rotatividade. O sistema de ensino desenvolve poucas competências de cidadania activa e o Estado desconfia de iniciativas de consciencialização das populações em direitos fundamentais ou em mecanismos de participação cívica. A manutenção de uma cultura política de súbdito foi funcional à penetração do grande capital na exploração de recursos naturais. As OSC enfrentam obstáculos à participação, relacionados com a forte politização da sociedade, com a desconfiança governamental em relação ao escrutínio público, proibição de manifestações públicas e receio das suas lideranças, particularmente após o início do conflito armado.

A proliferação de conflitos nas áreas da indústria extractiva e a inexistência de canais formais de participação e de acesso à justiça foram agudizaram tensões, habilmente capitalizadas por grupos violentos. A guerra dispersou os membros de OSC que timidamente floresciam nos vários distritos, retirando-lhes capacidade organizativa, de advocacia e pressão social. A chegada de organizações humanitárias internacionais em resposta à emergência pouco incluiu as associações locais, reproduzindo relações assistencialistas e de dependência.

O texto demonstra a urgência de identificação de líderes locais, (re)capacitação das OSC e criação de fóruns de participação social, invertendo a crença de que a violência constitui a forma possível e legítima de participação.

ABSTRACT:

The text describes the historical obstacles to the development of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Mozambique, which experienced a more welcoming scenario in the 1990 Constitution. Mechanisms to support civil society empowered local leaders, making them better knowledgeable of legal provisions, capable of gathering evidence and making an impact on the population.

However, the organizations faced internal problems, related to the lack of financial resources, the training of their members and problems of transparency and turnover. The education system develops few competencies of active citizenship, and the State is distrustful of initiatives to raise the awareness of the populations on fundamental rights or on mechanisms of civic participation. The maintenance of a political culture of subject has been functional to the penetration of big capital in the exploitation of natural resources. CSOs face obstacles to participation, related to the

strong politicization of society, government distrust of public scrutiny, prohibition of public demonstrations and fear of their leadership, particularly after the beginning of the armed conflict. The spread of conflicts in extractive industry areas and the absence of formal channels for participation and access to justice intensified tensions, which were skilfully capitalized on by violent groups. The war dispersed the members of CSOs that were timidly flourishing in the various districts, taking away their organizational, advocacy and social pressure capacity. The arrival of international humanitarian organisations in response to the emergency included local associations, reproducing relations of assistance and dependency.

The text demonstrates the urgency of identifying local leaders, (re)empowering CSOs and creating *forums* for social participation, reversing the belief that violence constitutes the possible and legitimate form of participation.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Mozambique is marked by the persistence of high levels of illiteracy, by poor market integration and by the distrust of the state towards civil society organisations that are independent of the ruling party. The existence of a fascist colonial regime and, in the post-independence period, of a one-party system, was guaranteed at the expense of violence and intolerance of alternative voices. From the 1990s onwards, efforts were made to democratise society, opening spaces for several organisations from society, which marked the process of humanitarian aid, support for entrepreneurial activities and, more recently, the monitoring of public policies. In recent years, the penetration of large plantations and the extractive industry, which do little to promote local employment, generate inequalities and have adverse environmental impacts, has caused growing conflicts. In areas where large capital penetrates, questions arise about the existence of spaces for participation by the affected populations, where they can exercise their citizenship rights and influence public policies, rebalancing the game of social forces.

After analysing the transformations of the spaces for social participation in Mozambique, this text aims to assess the difficulties faced by civil society organizations in Cabo Delgado Province. Finally, the intention is to analyse the existing channels of participation and the obstacles that the associations face in their relationship with the authorities.

1) SPACES FOR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN MOZAMBIQUE:
A LONG WAY TO THE EXERCISE OF CITIZENSHIP

The concept of citizenship is defined as a social situation of participation in the political, economic, social, and cultural relations of a given State (Castles, 2000: 22). In the strict sense, the concept translates a condition of belonging to a State. However, in a broad sense, it translates the enjoyment of constitutionally defined rights, as well as the existence of public spaces for participation, where citizens can act individually or together. The concept implies knowledge of civic, political, and social rights, but also equal opportunities in access to information or access to decision-making spheres.

Although the concept of civil society is older, its use gained popularity in the 1980s as a result of its use by activists in Eastern Europe and Latin America in reaction against authoritarian regimes (Lyons, 2009: 71). The success of these activists popularised the concept in other latitudes, among social scientists, development agencies and by the World Bank. In the process, the concept acquired a normative dimension, becoming something to be encouraged in development policies alongside other concepts such as democracy, good governance, and anti-corruption (Lyons, 2009: 71). The term came to be used with different meanings, referring to the emphasis given to associative life, to the dissemination of values of tolerance, social justice, and equality, but also to designate the public sphere of debate and the spaces for participation (Edwards (2004). In this text, civil society organisations are defined as the spaces in society, outside of the family, the market, and the State, where citizens associate to achieve their objectives (Heinrich, 2007). Within this scope, organized and non-profitable social groups are considered, which include humanitarian organizations, religious organizations, trade unions or professional associations, among others.

Over the last century Mozambique has been marked by authoritarian forms of administration and by mistrust to the emergence of civil society organizations (CSOs) independent of political power. The establishment of the New State and the emergence of a corporate and dictatorial fascist State resulted in the creation of obstacles to the emergence of critical and intervening organizations. The opening of media organs was closely conditioned to political authorisation, and censorship was instituted, applicable to any type of publication (Sopa, 1996: 92). The *Mocidade Portuguesa* and the *Federação Nacional de Alegria no Trabalho*, among other organisations created by the New State, had the clear objective of building a corporative and nationalist State, avoiding the formation of class antagonisms and social destabilisation. The organisations created in Mozambique were strongly supervised and controlled by the regime, mainly directed towards religious, cultural, sporting, or recreational purposes, but also towards economic activities, such as, for example, the cotton production cooperatives (Isaacman, 1987: 65). Acting violently, the *Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado* (PIDE) (International Police for the Defence of the State) actively controlled any movement misaligned with the guidelines of the New State (Mateus, 2004: 103-122).

Despite the repressive scenario, in the main Mozambican urban centres (in Lourenço Marques, Inhambane, Beira or Quelimane) some associative movements, dynamised by local African elites, emerged. Supervised by the Director of Indigenous Business Services, the African Guilds were used with the objective of controlling the populations, although they related with the colonial system in a suspicious manner, generally acting through petitions and complaints to the colonial authorities (Hedges, 1999: 203).

In the 1960s, there was a strong dynamism in the creation of dissident African movements, founded in neighbouring countries, in particular UDENAMO, MANU and UNAMI[1], which eventually merged into the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front). Faced with the impossibility of negotiating the independence of Mozambique through diplomatic

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[1] MANU's objectives were almost exclusively to improve the conditions of the residents of Cabo Delgado. UDENAMO, although smaller, was composed of Mozambicans from various provinces, such as Tete, Gaza and Maputo, and had a *"broader vision of the problems of the Mozambican peasants and workers"* (Hedges, 1999: 249). UNAMI was even smaller than UDENAMO and its support was based in Tete and southern Zambezia.

channels, Frelimo adopted a military strategy in 1964. As a result of alliances and dissent within Frelimo, other movements were founded, in particular COREMO.

The Protestant Churches played an important role in the emancipation of the African populadtions[2]. Despite the concordat established with the New State, the spread of the armed conflict led several Catholic sectors - namely the Bishops of Beira[3] and Nampula[4] or the White Priests[5], Combonians, or the Spanish Burgos priests – to openly criticising the colonial system, denouncing social injustices and massacres in the overseas province.

Proclaiming itself as the "*leading force of the State and society*" after Mozambican independence, Frelimo transformed itself into a hegemonic political institution, seeking to absorb the various spheres of society. Frelimo dissidents and founders of rival political organisations to the liberation movement were captured and murdered after revolutionary trials (Ncomo, 2003). In the second half of the 1970s, 12 re-education centres were created, invariably in remote areas, into which around 10,000 individuals were forcibly relocated without the chance of a defence or a court decision, including political dissidents, suspected of links to colonial power, undocumented citizens, prostitutes, alcoholics, traditional authorities (traditional leaders and healers) or Jehovah's Witnesses, among others (Thomaz, 2008: 190).

Ethnically based organisations were prohibited and relations between the clergy and the State were tense. Despite the survival of some religious institutions, formal Mozambican civil society was largely confined to the so-called mass democratic organizations. In this context, institutions such as the *Organização da Mulher Moçambicana* (OMM), *Organização dos Trabalhadores Moçambicanos* (OTM), *Organização da Juventude Moçambicana* (OJM) or *dos Continuadores*

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[2] The pedagogical methods used in the Protestant churches were based on the concern to form youth with a self-responsible spirit and the capacity for self-management and leadership, capable of replacing the foreign missionaries. In this sense, the Protestant churches constituted one of the few spaces in colonial society where Africans had access to positions of leadership, such as that of teacher or pastor. On the other hand, the schools of the Protestant missions were among the few spaces where the local populations had the opportunity to discuss their ideas, creating the conditions for Mozambicans to criticise colonialism (Silva, 1991: 35).

[3] Throughout his time as bishop, Dom Sebastião Resende (Bishop of the Diocese of Beira between 1943 and 1967) was highly critical of the Portuguese colonial action, criticising the abuses that were committed against the local population, publicly defending the abolition of this status. In favour of the emancipation of Africans, the Bishop questioned the labour relations existing in Mozambique which, for the prelate, were the key to the future of Mozambique and of the Portuguese settlers. From 1964 onwards, the movements of the Bishop of Beira were monitored by PIDE. On Dom Sebastião Resende see, for example, the works by Gulamo Tajú (1989: 149-176) or Pedro Brandão (2004: 116-140).

[4] Manuel Vieira Pinto was Bishop of Nampula between 1967 and 1974, when he was expelled from Mozambique by the colonial government and called a traitor by the Portuguese settlers. In several ambiguous speeches, the Bishop defended the dignity of workers, the end of torture and arbitrary imprisonment, and the right of association. Bishop Vieira Pinto publicly denounced the social inequalities and racism in Mozambique. Carefully monitored by PIDE, the Bishop of Nampula represented one of the most relevant situations of conflict between the Catholic Church and the New State (Brandão, 2004: 144-166).

[5] The *Sociedade dos Padres Brancos* (White Priests' Society) constantly denounced situations of forced labour and ill-treatment of black people and, from 1964, of atrocities committed by the Portuguese army. Having settled in 1945 in the central region of the country, the Society was expelled from Mozambique at the end of the 1960s (Thomaz, 2001: 47-48). The Burgos´s Fathers gave information about the Wiryamu massacre to the English White Priest Hastings who, later on, published it in the newspaper The Time, with great international impact.

were created. Under the Ministry of Information, these organisations were responsible for promoting ideals related to national unity, involvement in production, the promotion of equality, the emancipation of women or the struggle against all forms of exploitation (Isaacman, 1983: 112). Through the creation of *Grupos Dinamizadores* [6], Frelimo constituted cells in all economic, work, and residential units. Despite an effort to control all spheres of society, many cultural and sportive organizations, founded in colonial times, continued to persist, even though adopting new designations. In Cabo Delgado province, the *Associação Muçulmana de Pemba* changed its name to *Associação Primeiro de Maio* and the *clube Vasco da Gama* changed its name to *Estrela Vermelha*.

From the second half of the 1980s onwards, a number of institutions began to be formed which guaranteed their independence from Frelimo as a Party-State-Society. Following the Economic Rehabilitation Plan (PRE) and the debate on the future of the cooperatives in a market economy, the idea of creating a national movement of cooperatives, independent of the party and the State, was developed, having resulted in the National Union of Peasants (UNAC).

After the conclusion of the General Peace Agreement and taking advantage of the space created by the 1990 Constitution (which guarantees freedom of association, expression and of the press), a set of new organizations[7] proliferated, initially acting in humanitarian emergency situations, related to the return and resettlement of war refugees, to medical and food assistance, and to the prevention of diseases such as HIV-AIDS, cholera or malaria. This NGO network has filled in the weakness of the State in providing services to citizens as a result of the 16-year war and the effects of the PRE. Although they often operated in an uncoordinated manner, these organisations played an important palliative role, alleviating the problem of poverty, even though they fostered a culture of dependency on the external world, both on the part of the assisted population and on the part of the respective professionals[8]. In the 1990s, trade unions independent of the Frelimo party emerged, as did the *Comissão de Trabalho das Associações* (CTA) [Labour Committee of the Associations], as a coordination forum for the business community to interact with the government and induce the adoption of public policies that would create a better business environment, later becoming the current *Confederação das Associações Económicas de Moçambique* (CTA) [Confederation of Trade Associations of Mozambique].

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[6] Created during the Government for Transition to mobilise the population and support the policies of the new government, the *Grupos Dinamizadores* played political and administrative roles. Composed of untrained citizens, during the 'legal vacuum', these groups acted as people's courts in many parts of the country (Newitt, 1995: 467). Encouraged by slogans related to "*permanent vigilance*" or the "*neutralisation of the enemies of the people*", the *Grupos Dinamizadores* interfered - often with virulence and disregard for economic reality - in the direction and management of companies.

[7] The First National Census on non-profit institutions conducted in 2004/5 (INE, 2006) showed that more than 40% of the associations were created following the constitutional revision of 1990. About a quarter of the organizations surveyed had been established prior to independence, in particular religious associations.

[8] However, it is important to put into perspective the idea that the managers of these organizations receive high salaries in foreign currency. The INE census enumerated 138,604 individuals involved in non-profit organizations. Of this population, 75% were volunteers, 18% were remunerated (in which case less than a third were women) and 6% were clerics. Only 1% of the formal civil society organizations concentrated more than 40% of the total revenue of civil society organizations and employed around one third (32%) of the human resources (INE, 2006: 56-65). Despite the foreign and national NGOs representing less than 5% of the total of formal CSOs, the fact that they concentrate more than half of the human and financial resources provides this minority of organizations with enormous visibility, at least in comparison with the remaining organizations, without the same proximity to the decision-making centres, without the same capacity for advocacy and access to the media, as well as for political pressure on central bodies.

In Cabo Delgado province the beginning of the 1990's was accompanied by the emergence of some associative movements, largely composed of provincial government employees, among which associations of natives or friends of determined places (such as the island of Ibo); organizations for the prevention of HIV-AIDS, of development or environmental organizations (such as Umocaze, Associação Kaeria, Associação Progresso or Associação Amigos da Terra, among others); or branches of organizations of national scope [9]. In 1998 the Cabo Delgado NGO Forum (FOCADE) was created, with the objective of coordinating the efforts of the different organizations of the province, stimulating the action of civil society. The organizations faced difficulties in accessing funding, which led to intermittent activities, depending on the support obtained.

At the entry of the new millennium and accompanying the political stabilization of the territory and the suspension or change of funding, there was the disappearance and transformation of various groups, as well as the emergence of a new generation of organizations or forms of action, with a less assistance-oriented approach and more directed towards entrepreneurial efforts. In a scenario that is presented as "neo-liberal"[10], concepts such as "*empowerment*" or "*community participation*" become commonplace. It is within this scope that various organisations begin to stimulate the association of small producers or the constitution of micro-businesses, aiming at increasing agricultural production and food security. Numerous producer associations have arisen, within the scope of the " *sete milhões*" initiative or seeking to allocate DUATs for agro-farming activities, generally more motivated by exogenous factors (the existence of funds to distribute) than by the needs of the members themselves. According to the last update carried out by the National Union of Peasants (UNAC), in 2020 there were around 5,000 peasant associations affiliated, involving 150,000 members (60% of whom were women), spread across all provinces and 100 district unions. These peasant organisations aimed not only at productive organisation, but also at the defence of their respective corporate interests.

More recently, as a result of the penetration of capital into rural areas, and the respective effects on population displacement and resettlement, namely socio-environmental impacts, new organisations have emerged, concerned with a set of constitutional and legal rights of the populations, related to access to land, information, or participation in resettlement processes. Although based in the respective provincial capitals, but with the capacity to act in rural districts, these organisations tend to act in terms of legal assistance for populations affected by the penetration of economic projects. Led by more educated individuals, these initiatives seek to stimulate active citizenship, increasing the participation and monitoring of citizens in relation to governmental actions. In Cabo Delgado province, the action of CSOs based in Maputo, with emphasis on CTV, Sekelekani and Justiça Ambiental, had a positive action at the level of advocacy and of inclusion of the themes in the media sphere, with national and international projection.

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[9] One could mention the *Associação de Deficientes de Moçambique* (ADEMO), the *Associação de Deficientes Militares de Moçambique* (ADEMIMO), or the *Associação dos Moçambicanos Desmobilizados de Guerra* (ADOMEG) - with many members in a post-war scenario - or the Human Rights League (LDH).

[10] Often used, the slogan 'neo-liberal' has proved inappropriate to describe a strongly protectionist political-economic regime of a political elite close to the sSate (Pitcher, 2003), with neo-patrimonial characteristics, as well as the economic obstacles often created to individuals politically misaligned with power.

In Cabo Delgado province, the process of timber and gemstone exploitation is accompanied by the emergence of new organizations focusing on the themes of natural resource management, transparency, and human rights. Inspired and encouraged by a new Pope Francis´s encyclical (which stresses the complementarity of pastoral action and political action), segments of the Catholic Church in the province, for example, through the Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace, have been producing a set of reflections and public pronouncements (GRI, 2018), around issues such as land conflicts, political-military tension, electoral frauds, poverty and economic crisis, as well as the reduction of citizens' freedoms, setting up reflection groups, training of animators, legal advice and monitoring of public policies.

There is also a proliferation of media organisations. While in 1991, before the liberazitation of the press, only five journalistic publications were operating in the country (Mogekwu and Namburete, 2000: 25), in 2002 230 written press organs and 43 radio stations were registered in the Mozambican Information Office (Namburete, 2002: 84), increasing in 2018 to 451 newspapers and magazines and 95 community radios, of which 50 are part of the Forum of Community Radios (FORCOM). Although an important part of the written press is inactive, in the main provincial capitals small electronic newspapers are published, distributed by email or through WhatsApp groups and with Facebook pages. The lack of means of transport, which makes travelling to the field difficult, the volunteer work or lack of training do not prevent these media from reporting on a range of political, economic, and social issues. Using informants scattered in the field, these local media are often the first to report incidents related to the illegal exploitation of natural resources, cases of corruption and embezzlement in public bodies, work stoppages or protests by the population. With regard to the radio media, the role of the radio stations integrated in FORCOM, and the Catholic Church should be highlighted. As Bussotti and Fonseca (2019) analyse, these bodies tend to broadcast information independent of government power, constituting an important alternative to the more unofficial information conveyed by local government, clashing with the interests of district administrators, but contributing to a more informed society. By establishing partnerships with various non-governmental organisations, these bodies provide their contribution to the building of democracy, to transparency and community participation, to advocacy on human rights, domestic or gender violence, among other fundamental rights.

At the same time, the increase in external investment and job creation translates into an increase in the number of union workers in various branches of activity. This phenomenon does not fail to contribute to the improvement of the respective knowledge about labour rights and duties.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The text aims to understand the dynamics of the functioning of civil society organizations and the obstacles faced in the North of Cabo Delgado at the level of the exercise of citizenship. In specific terms, it was intended to: 1) identify leaders and civil society organisations in the province; 2) analyse forms of socio-political participation and obstacles faced; 3) analyse reactions of the political power to forms of social contestation.

In pursuit of these objectives, 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted with leaders of civil society organizations, seeking to vary the interviewees by scope of activity and district of operation. Thus, eight leaders of community development organizations, four producers' organizations, three religious organizations, three media bodies, two youth organizations, two teaching and research organizations, one trade union organization and one political party were

selected. It should be noted that this categorization is not precise, since some of the interviewees are members of various organizations, as in some cases they are also involved with political organizations (of the ruling party or in the opposition).

The sample is predominantly urban. Out of these organizations, 15 are based in Pemba, but operate in various districts of the province, three operate in Montepuez district, three in Pemba, two operate in Mocímboa da Praia and one in Chiúre district. The interviews were conducted during the month of April, in 2021 and in 2022, in the districts of Pemba, Montepuez and Chiúre.

In order to better understand the social reality of the province, the results of the interviews were cross-checked with various secondary data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE) and the Community Information and Communication Support Centre

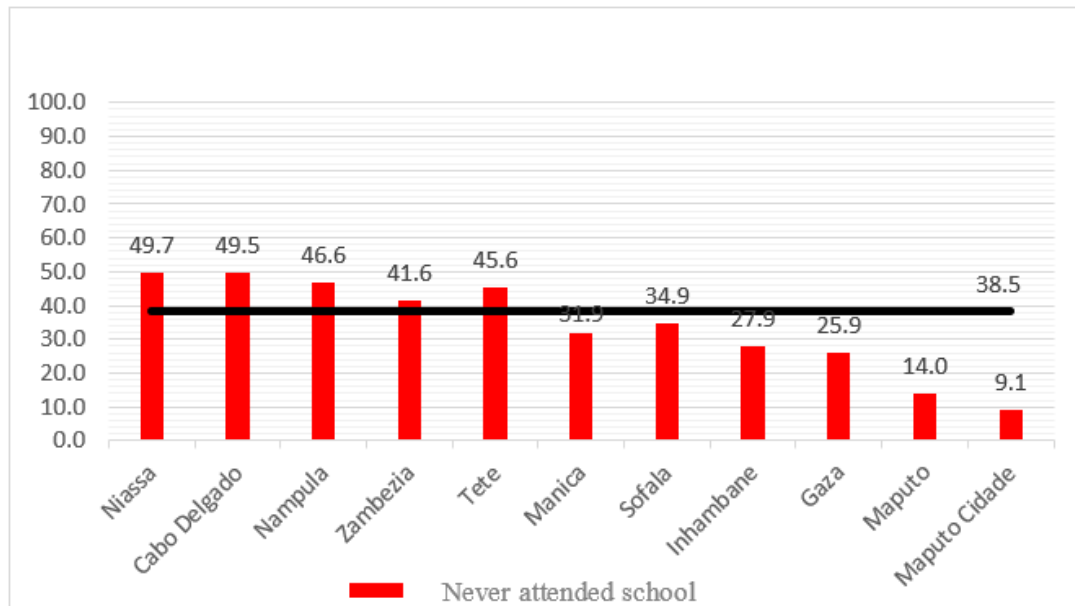## 3. DIFFICULTIES OF ASSOCIATION AND CITIZENSHIP EXERCISE

The interviewees referred to various obstacles encountered in associative life, related namely to i) illiteracy and access to knowledge for the formation of an informed citizenship; ii) material and financial limitations; iii) bureaucratic obstacles; iv) organizations´ problems of internal functioning and with patrimonialist forms of management; and v) absence of opportunities for the younger people.

3.1. Difficulties in access to information and lack of informed citizenship

a) Access to education

INE data shows that the highest illiteracy rates in Mozambique persist in the North of the country. According to the 2017 Census data (Chart 1), almost half of the individuals in Niassa (49.7%), Cabo Delgado (49.5%) and Nampula (46.6%) provinces "*never attended a school*", numbers well higher than those found in the southern provinces - Inhambane (27.9%), Gaza (25.9%), Maputo province (14%) or Maputo City (9.1%) - as well as the national average (38.5%). As in the other provinces of the country, the percentage of the population in Cabo Delgado that never attended school was clearly higher in rural areas (54.6%), compared with urban areas (35.9%), especially in the municipality of Pemba (24.6%), Ibo (27.7%), Mueda (30%) and Montepuez (33.2%).

**Chart 1: *Percentage of Mozambicans who "never attended a school",
by province (2017)***

Values shown: Niassa 49.7, Cabo Delgado 49.5, Nampula 46.6, Zambezia 41.6, Tete 45.6, Manica 31.5, Sofala 34.9, Inhambane 27.9, Gaza 25.9, Maputo 14.0, Maputo Cidade 9.1, with 38.5 shown at right.

Legend: Never attended school

Source: Census 2017

According to data provided by the Provincial Directorate of Education of Cabo Delgado, in the year 2017, in 9 of the 16 districts of this province (Palma, Mocímboa da Praia, Quissanga, Ibo, Metuge, Mecúfi, Namuno, Balama and Muidumbe) there was only one secondary school for the whole district. Higher education facilities are still confined to the urban centres of Pemba and Montepuez. The 2017 population census showed that the percentage of the province's population that completed general secondary education (second cycle) was only 5.3%, with a residual (0.7%) of those who completed the university degree level, slightly below the national average (respectively 6.3% and 1.2%). The rates of completion of secondary education were clearly higher in urban centres (13.7%) than in rural areas (2.2%).

As in the rest of the national territory, there are problems in the quality of education, marked by overcrowded classes, automatic passing regardless of the skills learned, high dropout rates, low qualification, and motivation of the teaching staff, as well as low or null capacity to inspect and evaluate the teaching staff, especially in the more remote districts. The reduced absorption of local employment by the large projects (demanding locally scarce qualifications) and the existing opportunities in the illegal sector of the economy (cutting wood, ivory, trafficking, etc.), which provide access to significant, albeit uncertain, income, divert many young people from school to furtive activities. School dropout rates are also high in coastal areas, where fishing and trade guarantee a quick monetary return, alleviating situations of poverty (Feijó *et al.*, 2022: 8). In this scenario, the emerging reference models do not include young people who have successfully completed formal education, with skills that could be useful for associative life, but rather the fortunate young people who have been successful in mining or in furtive activities. These factors interfere on the way the local population understands and interferes in the surrounding socio-political reality, affecting the exercise of their citizenship. The situation worsened with the armed conflict, with the destruction of dozens of educational institutions and massive population

movements to the south of the province, overwhelming the school facilities[11]. As in the rest of the country, COVID19 preventative measures paralysed education in the province, compromising the education of an entire generation:

- *Our system is terrible, terrible. It's only maths A and B, that´s all. No teacher is prepared to discuss, even higher level there is not yet… we need to change totally so that people know that they are not being trained, just to be robots; but citizens who will be able to contribute* [to] *the country. Imagine in that resumption of classes where it's only twice a week. The teacher just has to run to meet the syllabus target* (…) *and there's no time anymore to look at what the other extracurricular subjects are"* (interview 16).

- *"they don't believe in the system. But they also don't have references. That is a big problem* (…) *I can even say that they do have references. But they are not the ones, the desirable, someone who, for example, went out, did primary education, secondary education, college and came back, and contributed to the development of their community. And the references are people who, for example, went to artisanal mining* (…) *the idea that the young person has in the countryside is that he has to look for an easy way to have money. But this is because, for a long time, he was educated like this. He started to understand that, no; here in the community, for you to have quick money, you have to practice gold mining or activities outside the law"* (interview 14).

Due to the greater educational offer at secondary and higher levels in the two main municipalities of the province - in Pemba and Montepuez - some changes in the scenario are observable. The expansion of the educational offer and access to information in these urban centres is propitious for the emergence of a group of young people who are more informed and participative in debates, taking advantage of the greater urban cosmopolitanism and the lower capacity for social control. Although some higher education institutions have invested in training in the areas of law, human rights or ethics, promoting an impact on the awareness of young students of fundamental rights[12], there is a predominance of a training offer that is essentially technical and professional, aimed at the needs of the labour market and not at socio-political areas that stimulate reflection on the political economy of the region.

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[11] Field observations at the primary schools in Chiúre or Montepuez, close to the IDP centres, show a doubling of the school population and an increase in class sizes. By way of example, the number of pupils enrolled in the primary school attached to the Katapua IDP centres increased from 1,024 in 2020 to 1,739 in 2022. Similarly, at the Mapupulo primary school, which assists the IDP centres in Expansão, Namputo and Ntele, there was an increase from 600 enrolments in 2019 to 2,200 in 2022 (Feijó *et al.*, 2022: 2-3).

[12] In this field, the School of Ethics, managed by the Diocese of Pemba, but affiliated to the Faculty of Political Sciences of the Catholic University in Quelimane (with which it had pedagogical subordination), stands out. Over almost a decade, the school has organized a honours degree course in Ethics, Citizenship and Development, as well as a Centre for Research and Social Observatory (CPOS), operating in the areas of research and extension. In partnership with several civil society organizations, several conferences and debates have been held, bringing together experts and researchers in politically sensitive areas, such as the effects of large projects on local populations. More recently, the UCM organized legal caravans for displaced populations, helping to issue identification documents and to defend the fundamental rights of the affected populations.

- "Now there is a generation of young people in the city of Pemba who are already at the Catholic University. The Catholic University has another mentality, the ISEG, Lúrio University (…), among others. These universities are full of young people who already have a different mindset. When there are debates, they even ask directly, openly (…) 'what war is this? Who is it?' (…) but this in the city. In the first district in Metuge and Mecufi you no longer see that, because, there, people are easily identified who is who, what he said, what" (interview 20).

- "We did a small study in Pemba when we wanted to implement civic incubator and we talked with young people from the academia (UCM, Unilúrio), young people from the neighbourhoods, teachers and among others. We asked them what they thought about governance, citizenship, and participation. They simply gave us short and brief answers, that they had no interest, that they were afraid of reprisals and that they had no knowledge". (Interview 21)

In general terms, the education system still does not contribute to the development of a critical spirit and civic intervention on the part of citizens, reproducing a political culture of subject.

b) The media

In addition to the meagre education on offer, the media are fragile. In a province with high illiteracy rates, the presence of the **written press** is residual and is limited, above all, to the circulation of the official daily newspaper *Notícias* through the State offices, particularly in the municipal areas or in some district headquarters. The press independent from the government, generally published in Maputo, has a very restricted circle of readers, generally confined to the provincial capital, who buy the periodicals from the only newspaper shop in the city, opposite the Hotel Cabo Delgado.

Similarly, the percentage of the population of Cabo Delgado province with access to **television** [13] is 11.1%, being concentrated in urban areas (36.8%), in clear contrast with rural areas (4.3%). The city of Pemba, where 63.1% has access to television, clearly distinguishes itself from the rest of the province, especially from the districts of Namuno (1.8%) and Balama (2.9%), but also from Palma (7.5%), the epicentre of investment in gas projects.
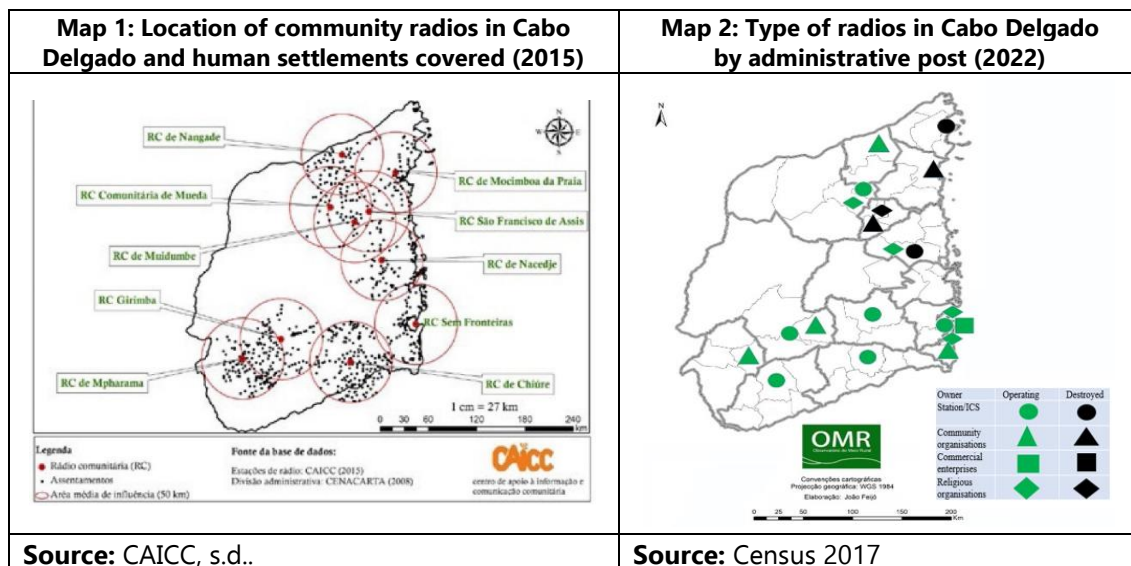
Radios constitute the media with the greatest power of diffusion, particularly local radios. Although there are no in-depth studies on the audience of community radios, several reports (Chilengue, s.d.: 5) suggest that the total number of listeners may be higher than the listeners of Radio Mozambique channels[14]. By analysing the reach of each community radio signal and the human settlements within that radius, a CAICC study (Chilengue, n.d.: 21) concluded that the average areas of influence of community radios in Cabo Delgado covered 767 human settlements with 1 432 775 potential listeners, representing at the time more than three-quarters (75.7%) of the province's inhabitants. The level of outreach was the fourth highest in the country - behind Sofala (87.1%), Maputo Province and City (82.1%) and Inhambane (78.7%) - and higher than the national average (70.2%) (Chilengue, n.d.: 21).

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[13] Although there are no audience studies, it is safe to say that, as the private channels depend on the existence of a decoder, TVM is the channel most watched by viewers.
[14] According to a CAICC report (Chilengue, sd.: 5), the average radius of local radio broadcasts was potentially more than 18 million inhabitants, spread over 7,561 human settlements spread over all provinces of the country, which represented more than two thirds of the Mozambican population.

Radio signals were concentrated along the coast, in the south of the province, and especially on the Mueda plateau (see Map 1). Map 2 shows that before the conflict, with the exception of Meluco, Quissanga and Ibo, there was a local radio in all districts of the province, managed by the Institute for Social Communication (ICS), religious or community organisations. Cyclone Kenneth and the armed conflict were responsible for the destruction and closure of radio stations in the Northeast of the province, namely in Macomia, Mocímboa da Praia, Muidumbe and Palma.

Map 1: Location of community radios in Cabo Delgado and human settlements covered (2015)	Map 2: Type of radios in Cabo Delgado by administrative post (2022)
Source: CAICC, s.d..	**Source:** Census 2017

Although they have not played an active role in the dissemination of political and security content and debates, community radios have had an important impact on primary health prevention for the population. With the support of international organizations (such as Helvetas or UNICEF, among others), several community radios have broadcasted content on safe water and sanitation, nutrition and maternal and child health, cholera prevention and sexually transmitted diseases. According to journalists from these community radios, audience studies carried out by them (promoted by donor agencies) revealed that about 60% of the surveyed population listened to the community radios.

In addition to the problem of availability of information, some interlocutors add the lack of demand for information on issues affecting the public sphere, revealing a preference for entertainment programmes from Tanzania, where the most attractive cultural and media news come from:

- "when I arrived here, in 2007, there weren't many televisions yet and even less widespread were those digital antennas on which the person has so many channels (...) And each house there was a DVD, a television set and one is watching Tanzanian films, only Tanzanian films. People here know even better; they have more information about Tanzania than what's going on... I won't say in the country, what's happening even in the province itself (...) It is difficult to see someone with a radio listening to a 30-minute news report, it is difficult to see. In many houses that you go to at news time the soap opera is on" (interview 11).

Anyway, over the last decade, some transformations have taken place in the field of information supply. The arrival of private television stations had an impact on the way of making media in the province, particularly in the city of Pemba, with the emergence of a new way of producing news,

in which reporters began to circulate through the streets of the city and collect the opinion of citizens, often on socio-economic issues that were embarrassing to the authorities. On the other hand**, social networks** nowadays provide a greater involvement of citizens in the production and dissemination of information, often becoming citizen reporters and essential sources for journalists of community radio stations and non-governmental organisations. Communication began to circulate more horizontally, transforming the social networks into a vehicle for the spread of information, often unfiltered, and therefore for the dissemination of rumours and misinformation, especially at times of greater social alarm.

Due to its huge socio-economic impact on the province, the war has significantly increased the demand for information. Given the limited access of journalists to the field, social networks became an important alternative. Mastering information technologies, several young journalists of community radio stations, living in the district headquarters villages, became skilled in the production of news, strengthening their network of local contacts and creating WhatsApp and Facebook groups (including Pinnacle News), through which they can access and disseminate information, although not always with great journalistic accuracy. With the outbreak of the conflict, these reporters became correspondents for media outlets based in Maputo or abroad, to which they send news content, disseminated nationally or internationally, including by the population of the province, especially in urban centres and district headquarters towns. However, access to social networks is limited to access to the Internet and smartphones, largely concentrated in urban centres or district headquarters towns, thus increasing socio-spatial asymmetries in access to information. Although it is recognised that the populations seek news content that is more critical of the authorities, the people interviewed consider that in rural areas there is a predominant lack of information, deeply limiting the exercise of their active citizenship:

- *"In the cities, in the urban area there is a lot of information. It's prepared. There are many international channels. There are channels that publish at will. They can see what happens. There is Lusa, VOA, which is very international. People get information from those ... through Facebook, through the social networks. Now, in the districts, as such, nothing. In those places it's difficult. If someone familiar doesn't call you, you have no information. These days, people get informed via communication. Calling ́it happened this, it happened that. The local media... forget it"* (interview 23);

- *"If we take a look, here in the city, if we don't denounce, if we don't do... I know it's not for lack of knowledge. We know very well, we have access to the Internet, we have radio, we have television, we have newspapers, we have many channels of information. But the one who is there, on the other side, doesn't have ́them. So, it's that citizen I'm talking about ... that's not easy"* (interview 18);

- *"They want spicier information ... that administrator is demanding. The population is not here to applaud, to polish boots. The population wants real information"* (interview 23).

The local population's lack of information made it quite vulnerable during the process of penetration of the extractive industry. The increase in conflict was accompanied by the emergence of a set of mainly urban CSOs (originating from Maputo[15], or centred in the provincial capital),

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[15] At this level, the Centro Terra Viva, Sekelekani or Justiça Ambiental stand out for the work they have done in Palma district, but also more recently the actions of MASC, CESC and CDD, in capacity building for civil society organizations, among other entities.

which put much more pressure for access to information. A set of initiatives were promoted by these organizations, namely training of local populations on legal provisions (namely the Constitution of Mozambique, the Land Law, the Mining Law or the Access to Information Law), monitoring of the process of channelling the revenues of the extractive industry for development of the local communities, or even mediation of conflicts between the extractive companies and the local populations. These are mainly initiatives of civil society organizations, and not so much of the Mozambican Government, which has shown itself to be not only incapable, but even reluctant, in disseminating legislation on fundamental rights. The Government's attitude was generally marked by mistrust of CSOs, which were often called "*agitators*" or "*associated*" with opposition groups.

- *"the transparency mechanism in the governance process has not yet reached the levels it wanted. For example, even for those where there are websites available there, we will see* [that the] *background information is not there. And if it has anything, it is non-updated information. So, the access is not what you would want because you wouldn't always need to go to a government department to request information. (...) Today, we have the information and communication technologies that make it easier. It should be available, and it is about the management of the public property"* (interview 17);

- '[We had the training] *in Maputo. So, I and two other colleagues went. We stayed for 15 days. We were trained* [on] *the law on the right to information. Then we came here, trained other members, and started to work in those communities. But on the part of the Government or any other institution, no one thought of training that community first. So, whatever happened, the community couldn't say anything or do anything. It was normal. They always said* 'we can't do anything, it's the government. We can't do anything, it's the government' " (interview 3);

- *"You go to the community; someone says* 'this school is like this because there is no money'; *nobody will accept that there is no money. But it's because nobody has access to the budgets, nobody has access to the plans. That process is very closed (interview 7);*

The interviewees highlight the affected populations' lack of knowledge about their own constitutional rights or about the channels for social participation and access to justice. The situation hinders the development of an informed citizenship, reproducing parochial and subject-based political cultures[16], where fear towards the authorities predominates:

- *"There are few who know the channels. Because if I'm unfairly treated, the first door I go to is the police station. You see? Anything that I suffer, I go to the police station, and the police station is the one that follows up the process there. Even the complaints are sporadic and depend on the person who experienced it and how they experienced it (...); so, it is difficult"* (interview 18);

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[16] Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) defined three types of culture in terms of political participation: *parochial, subject and participatory.* The first type occurs in power structures marked by the weak presence of the state in the day-to-day life of politically decentralized populations. Without a clear idea of their citizenship rights, individuals tend not to get involved in political-administrative processes. The *subject* culture takes place in authoritarian and highly centralized political structures. Individuals are aware of the normative framework imposed by the State, but do not get involved in decision-making processes, nor do they have expectations of participation. In this subject culture, social actors adopt passive and obedient attitudes towards the laws. *Participatory* culture is characteristic of democratic systems, where individuals are more politically active and participatory. Citizens recognize their citizenship rights and the duty of the State to submit to the general will.

'[it's a population] *that has no notion, no information, no training. They don't know what's happening and, even if they do, at some point* 'ah! the owners know'; *so, it's this citizen that worries me, at least*" (interview 18);

- '[the young gold miners of Namanhumbir] *May have* [channels of participation] *but not be aware of them; which would be, in my opinion, even those spaces, like the consultative councils. They have some committees, they have the management committees, they have others where they can negotiate. But I feel that either they are not enough, or they are not known, or they don't find spaces*" (interview 7, CCM).

3.2. Material and financial limitations

In a reality of high poverty rates, the dynamics of the associations end up reflecting the economic reality of the province. The great majority of the associations have no sources of income, depending mainly on their members´ fees, the majority of whom come from the timid local middle classes. Thus, the organisations face several operating problems, namely access to headquarters, furniture and equipment, administrative staff and circulating means, as well as lack of funds to cover travel costs and vehicle maintenance. The extension of the territory, the poor quality of access roads, the lack of means of transport, in short, the poor integration of markets makes work at the provincial level problematic, especially when the headquarters are located in the city of Pemba, far from the reality of the members it intends to represent. The associative leaders are unable to travel to the areas of greatest penetration of the extractive industry, where the greatest conflict points are located, to the detriment of assistance and support for the respective members, making them particularly dependent on support from third parties:

- "*Vehicle, we don't have at the moment; by the time that German partner came through, well, that's how we stayed, that's how we stayed*" (interview 1);

- "*many things that happen, happen in the communities. And, as the associations have no sustainability… So, one of the problems is how to go to the communities to listen to those concerns, those worries and those needs, priorities of the communities*" (interview 3).

The civil construction, timber, and mining unions (SINTICIM), operating on the basis of the income from their members' subscriptions, experienced an improvement in their financial conditions with the installation of the extractive industry. Despite the difficulties in accessing information from companies in the sector, the provincial secretary of SINTICIM predicted that by 2019 there would be around 7,000 workers in these areas, of whom around 3,000 were union members. The provincial leaders had the financial conditions to travel to the districts most affected by the extractive industry, holding talks and training sessions with workers or mediating labour conflicts. However, COVID19 and the beginning of the armed conflict led to the paralysis of various activities, resulting in numerous dismissals and salary cuts and a consequent reduction in membership fees. According to the interlocutors, from a monthly contribution of 200 to 220 thousand meticais, which guaranteed the renting of premises, payment of employees and travel, by the beginning of 2021, income had fallen to unsustainable levels:

- "*with the members´ fees that we received, a somewhat enough, we were able to get a car from that rent-a-car to go and live* [the reality], *without having to beg from anyone* (…) *And we were able to leave from here* [and] *go to work in Palma. There, we had no working hours, no, whatsoever. Just work, work, work* [in] *Palma, Mocímboa. So, going up to Balama, Montepuez*

Ruby; [in] *two days we managed to cover, and we were doing that* (…) *But now the union is decreasing because of the war* (…) *as you are seeing all this paperwork; it came in from the day before yesterday until yesterday. All this that I'm talking about termination of contract* (…) *all workers were suspended; receiving 25% of salary, 70% of salary, automatically… see the evidence. We, in the Balama graphite factory, used to receive 78,000 meticais per month and now, I don't know, since last year,* [we are] *receiving seven thousand meticais, seven; it's not even enough to pay the rent of this house. It's not enough*" (interview 9).

While the majority of the civil society organizations in the province operate in conditions of great financial precariousness, strong asymmetries are being noted, in particular between those concentrated in urban centres and their counterparts dispersed in rural areas, and between national organizations headquartered in Maputo (and operating in Cabo Delgado), on the one hand, and those with a provincial base, on the other. Composed of decapitalized members, often dispersed in remote locations with difficult access, far from the main media organizations, with reduced access to and mastery of information and communication technologies (ICT), the organizations based in rural areas have less media visibility and consequently greater difficulty in accessing financial support. But in the cities of Pemba and Montepuez some CSO can be identified with capacity for using of ICT and media coverage of their respective activities, and thus with greater capacity to attract funding:

- "*It was easy and a little difficult because the funder* (…) *followed our activities through the social networks; in this case, some stories that were published outside the country; the story managed to reach outside the country through a France 24 news report and the funder saw the story; then when he wanted to implement some activity here in Mozambique, he contacted us directly*" (interview 22);

The international media attention given to the armed conflict in Cabo Delgado had an impact on the generation of resources for the province, not only in humanitarian aid, but also in support to CSO oriented to research, prevention of violent extremism, and defence of fundamental rights or humanitarian aid. In a scenario of competition for access to funds and evidence, the relationship between these (inter)national organizations and local associations is not always structured in a collaborative way. Without great media visibility and organisational capacity, local mutual-aid associations have often been replaced by others of (inter)national scope, with greater capacity to attract funding, raising questions about the local content of the humanitarian industry[17]. Once again, local young people feel overlooked in recruitment and selection processes, reinforcing feelings of being unprotected and threatened from the outside (Feijó *et al.*, 2022; Sekelekani, 26.10.2018: 8). As the leader of a local association put it.

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[17] Local content corresponds to the proportion of national production factors applied in the production of a good or the provision of a service. The concept became common in Mozambique as a result of the penetration of large economic projects and the expectation (subsequently frustrated) of creating relations with the local economic fabric, despite the characteristics of the capital-intensive investment. The penetration of external humanitarian organizations and the consequent migration of international technicians or those from the capital, ignoring the existence of local resources, ended up reproducing the logic of penetration of the large economic projects.

- "and also, there is a lack of that communication between [(inter)national] *NGOs and small associations. So, in my point, if an NGO wants to work in a certain province, in a district, city,* [it] *should first look if* [there are] *small associations that do the same work and* [if] *they can help those young people, or even hire, or even ask for young people volunteering; instead of bringing people from outside to do an activity that we, here, in the city, have staff to do. So, this also makes the young people a little frustrated seeing NGOs that come with international volunteering while in Pemba city we have many young people who are doing the same work"* (interview 21).

In other situations, the process of arrival and implementation of international organisations was facilitated by the interaction with local organisations. This interaction had a positive impact on the institutional development of collectivities in the province, namely in terms of access to premises, training of human resources, capacity to implement projects and access to financial resources. Functioning as intermediaries between external funds and local CSO, organizations such as the Civil Society Support Mechanism (MASC) and the Civil Society Learning and Capacity Building Centre (CESC) created various programs for the development of local organizations, which improved their capacity for representation of citizens, the impact and visibility of their actions, as well as recognition by local government. The expansion of the network of contacts and the creation of links with international organisations have provided local associations with greater protection, especially those that focus on more sensitive issues related to the defence of fundamental rights, which are particularly uncomfortable for the defence and security forces.

However, having more experienced staff to make diagnoses, to identify funding opportunities and to conceive and manage projects, with a wider range of contacts, with greater capacity to systematise information, mediate and advocate, the organisations of national scope present themselves more skilful in attracting funds. Thus, unequal relationships were established, namely at the level of the possibility of formulating problems, controlling resources, and implementing projects or communicating with government bodies. The organisations of local scope reveal themselves to be quite dependent on the support of their partners, tending to act according to the interests and priorities established by the latter:

- "[Local organisations] *even do small actions, but these are actions that are not* [big things] ... *sanitation of the environment, cleaning the market, and I don't know what. These are small actions that end up not being able to progress because they are waiting for that funding that comes in order to be able to take actions that have relevance. Many organizations at district level are organizations that are represented in Pemba, in Chiúre, in institutions. They are representative organizations. The grassroots organisations are only used as a means to reach the communities. I mean, they support us, they establish partnerships to penetrate and then, when we leave, they continue in the same way"* (interview 21);

- *Sometimes they do what the funder wants, not always what they think they should be doing, and often without much capacity to negotiate spaces to satisfy the funder's interest as well as the interests of the association"* (interview 17).

Despite their intention to strengthen local organizations, the dynamics of the CSO reproduce the existing socio-spatial inequalities in Mozambique. Funding programmes for civil society organizations distinguish between those at *"national"* level (which in practice are those based in Maputo, but with a scope of action throughout the territory) and those at *"local"* level, with very

unequal support limits [18]. The programmes to support CSO have a paradoxical impact: while advocating decentralization and capacity building of local authorities, they continue to concentrate a large part of the resources in the capital, reproducing inter-institutional asymmetries. The different institutional capacity and access to resources are reflected in the relationship and capacity to put pressure on provincial and district governments. Instead of constituting themselves as central partners of the government, as representatives of local citizens, local organizations tend to be overlooked and relegated to secondary functions, following behind external organizations, affecting their capacity for political pressure and representation of the interests of the local population:

- "*these organisations always go to the administrator to make some kind of complaint, among others; but on the part of the administrators, I also don't know if I can say that there is a contempt or an ignorance; I don't know which term I'm going to use. But they value more who is bringing in money than the local son. (…) there is a lot of clash with local organisations, compared to a coming organisation, which is bringing in money. So, I witnessed a scenario in one district 'ah! you only complain; so, go and get funds so that you can implement these things that you are complaining about'. It's the administrator talking to a grassroots organisation in those terms (…) they might schedule a hearing with an administrator and the administrator will be here for 5-6 hours to attend, because he's attending to an American organisation, because he's attending to an organisation… because it is bringing humanitarian aid. And so, in terms of priority, they end up losing that feeling of belonging, that we are from here, we are dealing with issues here, because of this fragility. I believe that it is fragility and this fragility also makes them vulnerable and marginalised*" (interview 21).

3.3. The bureaucratic obstacles

A third type of obstacle faced by civil society organisations has to do with the bureaucratic procedures. The process of formalising organisations involves the preparation and submission of documentation that a large part of the population has not up to date because of the distances and financial costs involved. On the other hand, the drafting of formal statutes often requires legal support which is difficult to obtain. In addition to this is the slow processing of documents and the high costs of registering an association, leading many organisations to remain informal for decades, without publication in the Government Gazette, including those with greater local visibility, difficulties in opening bank accounts and accessing information:

- "*Even many associations have only been created but still lack their definitive legalisation; but thankfully some have already been. The others are already at a more advanced stage. It is the case of our association that is already in a more advanced phase; what we still lack is the publication in the Official Gazette (…) what always makes it difficult for us are financial resources because everything is on the basis of funding that one can legalise or publish an association*" (interview 2);

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[18] As an example, in December 2021, the Centre for Learning and Capacity Building for Civil Society (CESC: 2021) launched the "Rights and Democracy" programme, called the *Programa IGUAL*, with the aim of supporting civil society organizations in the promotion of actions in defence of human rights and democracy. The programme distinguished between collectivities of "*national scope*" and those of "*local scope*", stipulating different financial limits according to this range of action. While the former had a ceiling of 300,000 Euros for a maximum of 3 years, the latter had a ceiling of 80,000 Euros for a period of 2 years.

- "It is difficult. It is difficult, because just for us to publish in the Official Gazette, just for an association to be legal, it may cost around 50 or 60 thousand. Just to publish in the Official Gazette it costs about 38 thousand meticais. So, if we are a non-profit association, of course we won't be able to legalise these associations. Therefore, we have a greater number of associations that are not legalized in Cabo Delgado but are carrying out activities" (interview 22).

3.4. Problems of internal functioning: patrimonialism and participation of young people

One of the problems of association management is related to the internal organisation of the organisations, particularly the type of leadership. The reports show a low rotation of leadership, particularly among farmers' organizations, in which the founding leaders end up being confused with the association itself, generating conflicts with the remaining members over problems of succession. One-man show style leadership is formed, in which the leader is seen as the "*owner*" or "*father*" of the organisation, concentrating all the responsibilities. Sometimes, the leader brings to the organization the political or economic power that he/she holds in the region, undermining democratic participation and the rotation of power.

- " How do the grassroots organisations function? Francisca [fictitious name] *is the coordinator, she's financial, she's administrative. I am the organization. So, they depend a lot, a lot on the father; so, if the father is not there, they have no way to operate. But they exist"* (interview 21);
- "(...) we have associations that, since it was founded, the president is the same. And this has also been a great challenge because most of the associations in which the president is the same, if the president is not dynamic, the association may not be dynamic either (...) there is a significant number of associations with lifelong leadership" (interview 10).

This leadership tends to be accompanied by neo-patrimonial management practices [19]. Often, the association's resources are confused by the leader as being her/his own. In the same way that various leaders use their own facilities for the operation of the association, they then also make private use of the collective equipment. According to reports, there are numerous episodes of manipulation of reports and diversion of resources, in scenarios that lack transparency and, inevitably, conflictual:

- "Firstly, there was the issue of misappropriation of resources of the district union itself (...) mainly the president wanted to get hold of the motorbikes and the motor pump; [but] these are not individual assets; they are assets of the district union (...); [then] we have had situations, how can I say, speaking frankly of triumphalist reports, let's say so, nê? Reports that are not in accordance [with] *reality"* (interview 10);

- "Conflict arises when the benefits start to appear 'ah! because I was the founder; ah! because you came now'. *This has usually happened, but all the discussions have ended up in the provincial union"* (interview 10);

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[19] Coined by Max Weber (1983: 110-135), the concept of patrimonialism seeks to designate phenomena in which organisational resources and administrative positions (and, consequently, the profit opportunities created by occupying such posts) are transformed into private patrimony under the aegis of dominant groups.

- "they get the goods, and it doesn't reach the recipient. That is exactly what is happening here. The partners bring the products, deliver them to the secretaries of the neighbourhood and they don't channel. Firstly, they take them, do their business and then they give a part to the people. And they don't even give it to the people who have the right to have those products" (interview 13).

Another problem that runs through the organisations is related to the lack of youth representation and the existence of latent generational conflicts. The youngest, who make up the majority of the population of the province, face obstacles to participate and to access to leadership positions in the associations and decision-making spaces. Paradoxically, despite being an important part of the active population and contributing economically to the province's domestic product, this section of the population tends to find a public sphere monopolized by older, established generations, losing space for negotiation. More passive and disbelieving attitudes develop regarding their possibility of intervention in the political-social sphere:

- "young people are excluded. They are not given that attention to be able to contribute to the process of political or socio-cultural development of the city because they are excluded. Only the older people are worth for ideas. Young people, their ideas, you can say 'look, I have this idea '(...), nobody will want to hear you, nobody will want to listen to you. And many end up feeling excluded or forced to exclude themselves through these treatments and behaviours" (interview 12);

- "automatically there is an exclusion of young people from participation. So, young people don't participate in these spaces because they are not invited in order to belong. The spaces belong only to the elders and the young people resign themselves. The owners will know how to solve it. As you can see when you go to the communities, in the markets it's the young people... there are no old people, they are young people. But if there is a meeting, the people who go to the meeting to discuss some community issue are the old people. Automatically there is a contradiction. The young don't feed the old and the old don't feed the young. So, there is no dialogue, no exchange of knowledge, opinions, etc." (interview 14).;

- "we have a project linked to citizenship [and] we realized that many young people, that factor that was being put here about exclusion, they were excluded for a long time. And you, when you go to the field, you sit down with them, [and] you feel that they don't open up, they don't talk about the problems they have in their entirety, because they were never given space" (interview 14).

4. CHANNELS AND OBSTACLES FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The spaces for political participation are quite heterogeneous, ranging from more formal channels (periodic forums with the Government, requests for hearings to present certain issues, sending letters and public petitions, public conferences to discuss specific problems or organising marches on the public highway), but also less solemn spaces, such as social networks, football matches or informal markets.

4.1. Formal channels for participation

4.1.1. Local councils and collective meetings

The governance process provides for the existence of a set of mechanisms for citizen participation and for listening to local organisations in the implementation of socio-economic programmes for local development. In this context, Articles 110 to 114 of Decree No. 11/2005 of 10 June 2005 (Regulation of the Law on Local State Organs) define various forms of community organisation at the level of the district, administrative post, locality or village, including: (i) the Local Council *("a consultative body of the local government authorities (....) in which the community authorities also participate"); ii)* the Local Forum *("civil society institution that aims to organize the representatives of the communities and local interest groups to enable them to define their priorities"); iii)* the Community Committees *("forms of organization of the people to enable the communities to mobilize for the identification and search for solutions to their problems, being able to channel other concerns to the relevant public sector structures"); and iv)* the Community Funds, geared towards the interests of the respective communities, duly communicated to the head of post.

Article 117 stipulates that community participation and consultation is done through Local Councils (at the district level; administrative post; locality; and village), with the Administrator being "responsible for institutionalising the local councils at the district and lower levels" (Article 117). Article 118 defines that the local councils include *"the community authorities, the representatives of economic, social and cultural interest groups chosen by the local councils",* and the recognition of the community authorities is done by the competent representative of the State (Article 115).

The functioning of the local Councils is also regulated at the level of their periodicity (at least twice a year, according to Article 120) and their respective functions (Article 122).

The interviewed voices highlight the existence of other local forums that provide for the involvement and participation of the populations. We highlight the existence of civil society platforms - namely the Forum of Cabo Delgado Organizations (FOCAD) and others at district level - Community Development Committees (where the reports of the Economic and Social Development Plans are discussed, among other aspects), Natural Resource Management Councils and various community consultations. Often in networks, these organisations sought to monitor government action, discuss, and publicly present problems resulting from artisanal mining, land conflicts, population resettlements, or informal trade, seeking to assume themselves as advisory and pressure bodies to the Government, presenting resolution proposals, or mediating the relationship between the State and local populations:

- *"I personally participated in the creation and strengthening of CDCs* [community development committees] *and creation and strengthening of civil society platforms, district civil society platforms. I also had the honour of being part of the FOCAD´s governance thematic group. I feel that today we have created participation structures or spaces for political participation, for civic participation everywhere"* (interview 7);

- "at district level there is a civil society platform that is in coordination with the organisations, platforms that are here in the province. And we worked together, where we would go out and meet with the government to understand who is there, how they are and so on. The government knew all the work was being done (…) We would find out what was happening in the community and bring it to the table (…) If it is artisanal mining, it's artisanal mining, if it's a land conflict, it's a land conflict, if it's (…) an internal conflict between communities… We would sit down with the government, raise the concerns, and discuss them together. And at some point, we found some solutions, because there were proposals and solutions. (…) We, as civil society organisations, simply complemented the government because, on its own, it is not possible to cover everything" (interview 18).

4.1.2. Requests for hearings and private meetings

Secondly, some interviewees referred to requests for a hearing with State organisations, generally made by social actors with greater political capital and proximity to the decision-making centres:

- "it was me who contacted him; I even asked the contact of the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy that 'look, I have a proposal that I would like to talk to someone well placed in Total' *and the Minister said:* look, I will put you in touch with the president; I will send you the contact" (interview 19).

- "there was a moment, because even we had to schedule an audience to put certain issues that afflict the society, the community, for a certain resolution, obliging the government to see if it could resolve certain issues. We would always go closer. So, there was also a time when the government itself had already adopted with us; and also invited us to other meetings" (interview 5);

4.1.3. Sending letters and petitions

Thirdly, petitions were sent, as legally provided for in Article 79 of the Constitution (Right to petition, complaint and claim). This is a resource used by more independent organisations or in opposition to the Government, usually after exhausting other negotiation mechanisms, sometimes seeking to mediatise the process of protest and social pressure:

- "After 2018 the money, when it came out, what we had decided was not done. So, when the communities made a document to the governor about that amount. So, when we left in 2019, we went to Namanhumbir to meet with some people and there were leaders with the administrator who was transferred to here" (interview 3);

- "So, I had to write to the administrator to see the issue that this should not happen, if this happens it is for all of us" (interview 5).

4.1.4. Public conferences and spaces for reflection

Of a less frequent and strongly elitist nature, but with the capacity to attract media attention and even pressure from the central government and the international community, various public conferences have been held over recent years, mainly at the premises of the Catholic University of Mozambique. Bringing together religious leaders, researchers, and leaders of civil society organisations, with the presence of the Government, controversial issues related to the penetration of the extractive industry, violence against artisanal miners, population resettlements,

causes and manifestations of violence, humanitarian needs and the role of the Government were discussed at various conferences. Almost always with press coverage, the various meetings resulted in some concrete reform proposals. Other organisations (such as Helvetas) organised informal reflection spaces where topics chosen by the respective participants were discussed, with less capacity for media coverage, but attracting several young people from Pemba:

- *"and, that same year, we also had to hold another inter-religious seminar on the campus of the Catholic university, in the main hall, where dozens of religious leaders and religious confessions also participated at various levels, at various levels at the level for province"* (interview 12);

- *"there, at the Catholic university, it was very good... then there was the open terrace (...) it was a space where you exposed your problem or, before having an open terrace, you said 'look, I would like to talk about this theme on the next terrace that will take place'. So, it was spread (...) the open terraces were seen as the ones that 'hey, that's the controversy' right?*

4.1.5. Public marches

Another form of participation verified were the public marches, legally recognised in Article 51 of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique (Right to Freedom of Assembly and Demonstration). Based on the interviewees' reports, some marches were held in the province, organized by different organizations and with different objectives. On the one hand, marches were held to commemorate the International Day of Peasants' Struggle (17 April), involving dozens of farmers in various districts of the province, such as in Palma (2016), Ancuabe (2017), Metuge (2018), Pemba (2019) and Namuno (2022). During these events, the peasants conveyed a set of corporate messages, drawing attention to the right to land, or the need for public policies to support agricultural activity. This type of march was interrupted when the State of Emergency was proclaimed, together with the respective preventive measures of COVID19.

Secondly, the marches to celebrate the first of May, organized in partnership and under close monitoring by the Provincial Government, where some slogans in defence of workers' rights were presented.

Thirdly, there were some initiatives to condemn the military conflict, almost always led by organizations close to the ruling party. Similar attempts by more politically independent youth organisations came up against lengthy authorisation procedures or police intimidation. Such type of march was only possible under the coordination of religious organisations, in celebration of the International Day of Peace on 1 January 2019.

Fourthly, some protest marches were held against specific situations, for example related to the resettlement of peasants due to the installation of the Pemba logistics base, which resulted in strong police repression:

- *"Before the pandemics, we had our celebrations where we held marches but, because of the pandemic, we can no longer do marches"* (interview 10).

- "Often these cases we have complained about every year on the first of May. We present this and everything that we think is necessary to present to the governor. In the case of the governor, we have an appointment almost two weeks before, for what we sometimes present in the square. Before that, we present it there and even with our partner, which is the Ministry in particular" (interview 9).

- "Yes, they did demonstrations in repudiation of the war. There they presented Frelimo banners and I don't know what. So, the population, with fear and I don't know what, had to join in, even though they were not Frelimo members" (interview 5).

- "We had to call about one hundred leaders and heads of mosques, church and they had to come, they participated in the march on the day (…) But when it's young people asking or to be able to have a march, it's very difficult. When it's the young people who can make a petition, a signature, a petition, it will never go ahead. It's very difficult" (interview 12)

- "The march that we wanted to do was actually barred with police, military, dogs and everything. And then, when the priests wanted to have a prayer march, they said 'look, you're going to take advantage of the priests, but really silence, not even for noise' " (interview 20).

As in the rest of the country, the government remains quite reluctant to authorise marches, especially when organised by institutions more independent of governmental power, outside of their control or political trust. In the face of protest marches that might pinch the image of the authorities, the government response tends to be 'muscular', deploying riot police on the ground, invariably acting in a repressive manner:

- "and even now we have this case of the Pemba logistics base. There has been a great deal of violence once before. The young people demonstrated, they even ended up throwing tear gas at me, that pepper spray" (interview 11);

- "we had to make a peaceful, non-violent march. We blocked access to the entrance to the Nacole area which gave access to the new logistics base. We blocked it with a human wave, ready. And the police, when it came, started throwing tear gas. But none of the young people, I can testify, or old people, got up or took a stick to be able to throw at the police. But the police came at the citizens with violence" (interview 12).

4.1.6. Problems of Interaction

The use of these formal participation spaces by the interviewees was accompanied by a set of interaction obstacles, which can be summarised as follows: i) politicisation of the spaces for participation; ii) governmental authoritarianism and arrogance; and iii) the weakness of governmental structures to address and solve the problems presented.

a) Politicization of the spaces for participation

Firstly, the reports describe a province "*politically monopolised by the party in power*" (interview 20), with the capacity to manipulate the spaces for participation. The voices complain about the overrepresentation of government structures and mass democratic organisations in the consultative councils (with political expectations and tending to be aligned with the government), taking away the populations' capacity for negotiation. In turn, the community leaders who make up these forums find themselves at a crossroads of pressures which diminish their level of independence. On the one hand, the fact that they are appointed by the government (rather than elected by the population) makes them easily manipulated by government structures, with whom

they tend to establish clientelist relationships. On the other hand, their precarious economic situation makes them easily lured by multinational companies that can offer them various resources, such as compensations, jobs, salaries, and material goods:

- *"here we are going to present the commission that will do the management of the 2.75[%]. The president is always an administrator, the rest of the members* [are the] *director of health, of education. All directors there and one member and one lady from the community and me. Then I questioned. All are chiefs over here and these two members are also chiefs, leaders who are part of the government there in the village. There is no member, no simple citizen who is in that committee. And, really…"* (interview 3);

- *"but I keep saying, for example, we started in the village to form the consultative council. A group goes here in the locality, a group is formed here in the administrative post and a group even in the district. And we go and see who is going to chair the consultative council; it's the administrator himself* (…) *So, here, the producers or the carriers of this information start to get lost along the way. So, when we go there, we will only find the government machine. We can find the head of the post, head of the locality and those also (there are groups here OMM and I don't know who) will compose the consultative council of the district. And this district council is chaired by the administrator"* (interview 6);

- *" People who participate in these social spaces are people who are tied to the government of the day* (…) *It means that these participation spaces, in my opinion, have lost their essence which was to describe, indicate and discuss the most clavicular issues of this society* (…) *the selection process is elitist. You only participate in those spaces if you have some direct connection, either with the government of the day or with the basic structures of the government of the day, like the head of 10 houses, head of the block and all that"* (interview 8).

- *What happens is that public entities do not always respect the legal norms and sometimes seek to sow divisions between community leaders based on enticements. And the element of corruption also works a lot because the investors corrupt some public entities that should guide the process and they go on enticing them. But they are also people who have needs and, often, even in those cases where it is said* 'there was community consultation, there was understanding', *these are practices in which certain leaders were involved and received some monetary value, ended up signing the papers without the agreement of all and there ended up being confrontations between the leaders* (interview 17).

The processes of consultation at provincial level do not avoid the same dominant representation. The holding of Development Observatories [20] or Provincial and District Youth Councils, for example, were considered to be overly centralized forums with little participation, essentially aimed at publicizing the plans or achievements of the Government. These top-down meetings do not allow the active involvement of the population in defining the respective problems and planning intervention actions, nor do they allow an evaluation of the respective transformations:

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[20] Chaired by the Provincial Governor, the Development Observatory meets once a year, where members of the Government, representatives of political parties and civil society organizations participate, and where the Social Economic Plan or the Plan and Budget of the Provincial Decentralized Governance Bodies are usually discussed. In December 2021, the Development Observatory also discussed the Reconstruction Plan for Cabo Delgado (Macomia, 06.12.2021).

"At the level of Pemba city, in principle, there has been a development observatory for the province. But the development observatory´s model is not an adequate model, because the development observatory, the way it is done, is for me to go and sit and listen to what has been done (...) and in the end say 'I did this, I did this'. *But who did this where? And how was done it, you don't know. So, our participation... there is no involvement in the planning, implementation and analysis of things"* (interview 14);

- *"there is an organisation, national youth council, which is the interlocutor between the associations and the Government. They have been invited in the sessions of the provincial and district governments and present their problem there. But I feel that as such it is not enough. This is because normally the district governments have their social economic plans and in the elaboration of these the participation of youth is not included. They are planning technicians, they are heads of offices, they make a plan. So, you say this, the youth is usually surprised by the plans that this is what is going to be done, but in reality..."* (interview 4).

Distrusting independent organisations, the government tends to use a set of strategies to control, which can involve the co-opting of the leadership and the introduction of elements favourable to the government in the respective institutions, but also by enticing and granting benefits, extending its influence:

- *"In Pemba city you can see that there are members who are in committees and there are committees. But most 70%, 60% of the committees, of the groups, of the corps, are from the party. Everything is the party. And there is always a spy, and there is always one leaking information"* (interview 20).

This attempt to control the organisations is facilitated when they are structured in confederations, managed in a centralised manner, as, for example, in the case of the CTA, the OTM or CONSILMO. In a scenario in which the State presents itself as a regulator (licensor and inspector of activities), but also as an important client, a favourable environment is created for the establishment of clientelistic relations with the Government. It is in this scenario that one can understand attitudes of deference and subordination by the largest businessmen towards the Government[21]. The existence of a centralized structure that represents all businesspeople in the province makes the negotiation process easier for the Government (which only needs to convince a single interlocutor), while at the same time making it difficult to express the interests of all businesspeople in the province, in sectors as disparate as agriculture, fishing, commerce, tourism and transport, among others. In a skilful political game, the State is not so much concerned with creating a broad and participatory system, but rather with controlling the leaderships with the greatest influence and, in this way, the main pressure groups:

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[21] In various economic units (in the trade and tourism industries, among others), especially in those with better relations with the State, a photograph of the Head of State can be seen. As one business leader stated, "*here, you have a prom at a school* [and] *you have to have someone representing the government ... I mean, a meeting of business people has to have someone from the government to open. We still haven't managed to free ourselves from them"* (interview 19).

- "the government will always say they do consultations, but those consultations are usually more about fulfilling protocol, rather than genuinely listening to what people have to say and incorporating. The CTA itself at central level, when asked by the government… then the government also washes its hands of it several times using this 'hey, talk to the CTA' *model thing"* (interview 19);

- "we have a set of people who have grown up at the expense of political connections. The form of business in our country has been a bit like that, in which the entrepreneur relates better with the political power and, therein, manages to take the advantages (…) *when the market economy truly matures, when we have more alternation in power, because this also influences entrepreneurs to understand that there is no point in being tied to a politician or a party force* 'hey this guy is here for three years and in three years another one comes'" (interview 19).

Under these circumstances, the voices assert the discredit in relation to the usefulness and effectiveness of the negotiation spaces. The fact that many of the problems presented remain unresolved and in the absence of downward information feeds the idea that consultations with the population are simple staging to demonstrate compliance with legal requirements. In the absence of interest, capacity, and political autonomy to make sensitive decisions, and given the financial and operational difficulties of the public administration, the communication spaces emerge with a mainly palliative character, with the aim of putting protest to sleep, rather than promoting profound reforms:

- "Yes, those channels emerge (…) *because, when we apply pressure, the response is to mitigate the pressure, not to mitigate the problem"* (interview 19);

- "And there is a difficulty that [is] *the return of information. If we, for example, have problems of water, we discuss it here in the locality, we discuss it in the administrative post and the administrative post takes it here to the consultative council at district level, the decisions here never go down to these communities that* 'look there, your concerns we took, yes; the ones that were approved are those'" (interview 6);

- "they even try to look like they are coordinating, or they are understanding and they will take the recommendation, but they will never give the answer. The answer never comes down and always has a very political answer" (interview 20);

- "Sometimes we are received, heard and. ready. they put underneath what are our concerns, they put in the drawers and matter closed. So, this also worries us so much (…) *the government says that the basis of Mozambique's economy is agriculture, in inverted commas. That's politically speaking. But if we look at it in its entirety, the government does not value the peasant. It does not value them. And we have many situations"* (interview 10).

The politicisation of the public sphere also occurs in the field of the media. Managed directly by government structures, the radio stations of the Institute for Social Communication tend to become unofficial organs of the government, reporting on the achievements of the district administration or broadcasting a set of messages of primary health prevention and sanitation of the environment, avoiding critical aspects of governance. According to the interlocutors, topics such as the quality of public services, the corruption of state agents, young people unemployment and the factors that triggered the armed conflict constitute taboo themes. Although there are no written instructions on what should not be reported, during the process of socialization with

government structures, journalists understand the editorial policy and the consequences of deviations. After the first attacks in Mocímboa da Praia, despite the collective anguish resulting from insecurity, Community Radio remained silent in covering the attacks. In the absence of journalistic information, news circulated informally, often through rumours, translating the inevitable collective anxiety:

- *"When there was some uncomfortable news in relation to the political power (…) Dirt in the hospital or poor attendance of hospitals, extortion by police officers in control point… you couldn't go there to talk because people avoided it. You couldn't report that (…) each journalist would self-censor because they were aware that information that was damaging to the State would not be acceptable (…) The radio could hear about a citizen denouncing corruption. But the radio did not pass on this information, because it was something that involved the District Director of Education and even the Administrator"* (interview 23);

- *"The radio did not report the attack* [of 5 October 2017 in Mocímboa da Praia]*. Because they didn't know what it was. Nobody went after the information. It was back to normality and that's it. Until today. After 2017, I was no longer there, but I doubt so much that there is any news. Because it was very government controlled. The local people informed each other via family members, via phone calls called each other, they communicated* (interview 23);

- *"the public bodies do a lot of self-censorship; also, because, when we look at the editorial lines, it doesn't always correspond to what is the practice, and it also depends a lot on the training and intervention capacity of the journalist himself. If the journalist has proper training and understands their integration into society without hurting the editorial line, they could do much more than they do now"* (interview 17);

b) Government authoritarianism and intolerance

In the second place, the difficulties are related to what has been called authoritarianism. While the State tends to face producer, sporting, or recreational organisations with relative normality, showing little resistance to their respective creation, organisations aimed at more political issues face greater obstacles, above all when they are aimed at defending the fundamental rights of the population. The voices reveal great intolerance towards critical visions of the system of social relations or those that clash with the *status quo*. Instead of presenting the CSO as privileged partners in the relationship with the community, the government tends to present their members as a disturbance and a source of disruption of the social order. Civil society organizations that are more independent from government power tend to be connoted with the opposition, and targets of intimidation, problematizing their interaction with State structures:

- *"at the level of public institutions, this sense of civil society participation is not always assumed in its real dimension, and they think that civil society is disruptive, is opposition. There is fear of hearing ideas that are different from their own. But this is a process of education that has to be done from side to side and we don't expect that people who take office come in, take office already perfect and understand all the surrounding dynamics of a society"* (interview 17);

- *"in Palma, when it is the issue of resettlement* [and] *fair compensation, there were many polemics because we always organised ourselves to participate in these consultation forums. Then and there, civil society was seen as an obstacle. We were even given names that we were opponents, we were against the government in development. But we were advocating for fair compensation,*

proper resettlement for those populations. It means that, when they see a target who has a holistic view, a different view from what they are thinking, then for them is a boring person" (interview 6);

- *"The first problem is about acceptance of associations on the part of the government itself. In the beginning, when you create an association, the association was badly seen. The government itself thought that it was a group being formed for something against the government. They didn't see it as a group that is forming for community issues, for citizens, for associations (…); I myself, who am speaking, have already been called to the party and I was asked, when we created this platform;* [I was] *called to answer what was going on, what was my intention in joining civil society organisations and form a district platform. Also, I was asked* 'we heard that you hold meetings, go to the communities, meet with the communities; what do you say, and what is your intention?'" (interview 3).

The accounts of these associative leaders refer to difficulties of communication with the Government, represented as an autistic, centralizing entity, and uncomfortable with social dialogue. The government is represented as a laconic and inefficient entity in communication with the general public, establishing taboo subjects for society, especially when it comes to politically sensitive issues, related to the violation of fundamental rights and social exclusion, to land conflicts (especially when it involves interests of national big men[22]), to transparency in the management of natural resources, particularly around the extractive industry. The religious leaders themselves, when they take public positions on issues of human rights, transparency, or governance, tend to be reproved by the Government and relegated to merely spiritual functions, denying the respective exercise of citizenship. The following accounts are illustrative:

- *"It was very strange for other organisations, including the government, to hear us talking, for example, about rights. Demanding rights, talking about public policies, talking about better public services, talking about human rights. So much so that we have heard many times phrases like you are Church, you need to address or stay focused on religious issues (…) Many times"* (interview 7);

- *"we will hardly see spaces where very comfortably you can talk about, for example, the issue of transparency, the issue of corruption, the issue of injustices that happen in mining spaces or areas, the issue of taxes the benefits of which not felt in the communities, the issues of exclusion. There are very important issues that young people think they cannot question"* (interview 7);

- *"We do debates; where I remember, in those last elections, we invited media organs, we invited those who were part of the parties involved mainly. We did. But only one party showed up and in addition, without justification, did not show up (…) Without any justification. (…) Frelimo always denied. In many debates"* (interview 16).

The journalistic articles by Hizidine Acha, a reporter for the television channel STV, reveal the difficulties of communication between the government and the general public. In his numerous reports on socially sensitive topics (security in the province, police assaults, the poor state of public roads, the poor quality of public services, etc.), he tries to gather information from government bodies that invariably remained unavailable until the close of the report. As a former director of a local radio station concluded, "*the government does not communicate"* (interview 23).

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[22] Term initially used by Sahlins (1963: 285-303) in the analysis of the social systems of the Pacific Islands, and recovered later in the study of other societies, including African ones.

This hostile climate in relation to CSO tends to trigger among themselves a climate of fear and prejudice in relation to the government and State structures, often influenced by more arrogant administrators, especially with the beginning of the armed conflict and greater militarization of the province, reducing spaces for communication:

- *"many associations have preconceived ideas and that it is difficult to penetrate the walls of governance to seek information, present the ideas and discuss anything. Some, because of past professional experiences, and others even because of shyness. And when it comes to certain issues, for example this issue of military nature; when this issue of terrorist subversion began here in Cabo Delgado, many associations refrained from investigating, studying the issues"* (interview 17).

- *"But, for example, there is an administrator, who (...) now is in another district where I went to work in these two months of January and February, and, impressively, he continues [the] same closed, bureaucratic person, and very much of what you want, very much of here, we, if you don't have a marching permit, if you don't have a credential, then you don't work, he continues (...) But often we have to admit that this was not always closed due to the system itself. It's often due to the individuals who were running those places"* (interview 14);

- *"the practices of people confuse with institutional in those places (...) But, many times, we have to admit that this was not always closed due to the system itself, many times it is due to the individuals who were running those places"* (interview 7).

In a province with a history of political violence and tight control of the spaces for dialogue, a climate of fear tends to be generated among the populations. According to reports, anonymous citizens are reluctant to speak openly and in public on socially or politically sensitive topics, for fear of reprisals. Media professionals report that anonymous citizens are often afraid to reveal their identity, especially on topics that could embarrass the authorities. In turn, leaders of organisations focused on advocacy, as well as journalists, revealed the climate of threats and hostility existing in the province, aggravated with the process of penetration of the extractive industry:

- *"Because this province is always closed by the single party. People are afraid to talk. Even you, [if] you ask a woman why she has been for four hours in a water fountain... the problem of water you are seeing that it is a problem of water, but as a journalist you need to take image of the source, but they deny talking. They don't want to talk. Afraid to talk (...) 'What are you afraid of?' nobody answers. It's this thing that when you speak, people pursue you, it's true. That's why people don't talk here either"* (interview 11);

- *"We have debates of themes... but the participation, I understand, also out of fear, some people decide for anonymity. Nobody wants to speak, for example, it's so-and-so who said that. There's fear. These themes, when you make the calls, people say 'no, I prefer not to say who I am, but I'll say something about this'. So, it shows that it is a generalised fear* (interview 16);

- *"I, personally, in Palma have already received several [threats], even my own coordinator has already been told 'this kid of yours talks a lot, you have to tell him to be very careful'. I've already received them. My colleagues have already received in a land conflict, where the investor himself threatened to kill them 'be careful, be careful, this is Mozambique, you know how people disappear' That is a threat. I even gave a report to STV where I called the attention of the President*

of the Republic himself to make a statement because of the issue of the logistic base in Pemba, where they said this colleague of yours talks a lot, be careful " (interview 10).

c) The impact of the armed conflict

There were citizens' associations in the various districts of the Northeast of the province that were trained in matters related to citizens' rights and political issues - budget monitoring, evaluation of dialogue and participation - but the war was responsible for their spatial dispersion and the destruction of forums for debate. On the other hand, the militarization of the Northeast of the province was responsible for an increase in political intolerance and a climate of fear. In the destination spaces, the associative leaders carry traumatic experiences, facing problems of food insecurity and economic survival:

- *"you no longer have those spaces, those institutions, or those structures functioning at the base, because of threats from terrorism, attacks. In some places we don't have the people. And qualitatively, because when these threats begin, people also lose the capacity, or perhaps the will to continue with dialogue. To continue to dialogue freely and openly without fear. For example, to be confused, to be perceived as someone from the left, in inverted commas, or someone from the opposition (...)* today, many of these organisations or associations are weakened and also concentrated in districts where, at this moment, you have minimum security, like Pemba, Montepuez, Chiúre, Mecufi and so on"* (interview 7);

- *"but, it's difficult now. Who are we going to sit down with? Because the communities are scattered. Where to find the communities? It is true that they are in the resettlement centre. But not all the communities are there. Even the leaders, others are not even there. And, with* [the] *trauma that they bring when we go, when we call, the concerns are theirs, or they want something to survive, it's food. Or they want to hear that on day X they will return home. Those are the two concerns practically that they have. It's not easy"* (interview 18).

The beginning of the armed conflict and the increase in the military presence translated into a decrease in the fundamental rights of citizens. The declaration of a State of Emergency and the mandatory curfew was accompanied by a greater militarization of the State's presence, with abuses against the population, particularly journalists. The detention[23] or physical disappearance[24]

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[23] On 16 December 2018, journalist Estácio Valoi, accompanied by David Matsinhe (Amnesty International activist) were detained for two days by elements of the Mozambique Armed Forces (FADM) in the district of Mocímboa da Praia, eventually being released without charge. Valoi's work material was confiscated by the military and the journalist is still waiting, to this day, for its return. On 5 January 2019, Amade Abubacar, a journalist with Nacedje Community Radio, was detained in the course of his duties while interviewing IDPs in Macomia who were fleeing attacks on their villages. The journalist was detained for two weeks in a military barracks in Mueda, held incommunicado, deprived of access to a lawyer for 11 days and later transferred to a civilian jail. Amade was detained for 108 days and charged with "public incitement through computerized means". On 15 February the same year, Germano Adriano, a journalist from the same radio station, was arrested. Germano was informed by his superiors at the Institute of Social Communication (ICS) that his request for transfer had been approved, and that he could collect the document at the ICS premises. Instead of the authorization, Germano found an arrest order, for which MISA (s.d. a) accuses the ICS in Macomia of collaboration in his detention. In July 2021, after photographing the premises of the Mozambique Post Office in Montepuez, Estácio Valoi was taken to the police station by two elements of the Rapid Intervention Unit, where he was detained for two hours. Similarly, over the past three years, STV journalist Hizidine Achá has been arrested and assaulted several times by police forces while carrying out his duties.
[24] Ibraimo Abu Mbaruco, a journalist with Palma community radio, has been missing since 7 April 2020. In the last message sent to his colleagues, he claimed he was "surrounded by military personnel". According to

of several journalists while carrying out their duties was a threatening signal to media professionals, inhibiting them from reporting on military events:

- *"I speak of my district of Mocímboa da Praia, (...) many young people had their property, they had their money, they were small economic agents. So, the work that was done by the government was to pursue those young people and accuse them of belonging to the insurgent group, just to extort money, take away their property, kill them. This happened"* (interview 5);

- *"Talking about war situations in these districts, you get killed. If you are an employee, you are attacked and you are expelled. Do you understand? In fact, we have practical examples. A journalist disappeared until today* [in Palma]. *We are talking about those two in Macomia. There is a lot of complexity"* (interview 23);

- *"Here in Paquite, when the rapid intervention unit also committed excess; then, he was there* [filming] *and I don't know what and, at night, they didn't care if he's a journalist or not. You can't film. I know he insisted... They beat him up a bit. (...) There has to be another attitude in the relationship, not only with the media, but also with the citizen. Because there was an excess of zeal, and this helped to slow down the action a little bit"* (interview 17).

4.1.7 The particularities of the Makonde plateau

All voices were in consensus in attributing particular characteristics to the participation environment on the Makonde plateau. The historical relationship that many inhabitants of the plateau have with the Frelimo party and their participation in the national liberation struggle is reflected in the existence of thousands of former combatant pensioners[25], with numerous suspicions of unduly attributed pensions (Israel, 2006). The existence of many pending applications for this subsidy creates expectations in many families, who remain strategically loyal to the ruling party. The widespread distribution of State resources has enabled the constitution of a surveillance network, with the capacity to penetrate and control spaces for participation, which become politically captured. The Association of Former National Liberation Struggle Combatants (ACLIN) played an important role in political surveillance, acting as a shock group, with threatening discourse and behaviour towards potential opponents, particularly during election periods[26]. In this scenario, a conservative political culture is formed, hostile to independent organisations that question governance. Participation and interference in these matters tend to be understood as a

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a statement by MISA (s.d. b), quoting police officers, the journalist was taken by elements of the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces to Mueda. Despite the insistence of family members, colleagues and MISA to the authorities of Palma district, his location is still unknown.

[25] According to data provided by the National Institute of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Finance, out of the 17,764 beneficiaries of the pension of former combatants of the national liberation struggle, who received that amount in Cabo Delgado province via CTT, 9,422 (53%) were residents in the so-called Makonde Plateau, namely in the districts of Mueda, Muidumbe and Nangade. It should be noted that there are more 14,438 former combatants registered in the province, who receive their pension by bank transfer, as well as 3,660 new entrants, whose district of residence is not discriminated in the reports obtained. If we assume the existence of the same territorial distribution trend for those who receive the pension via CTT, we can estimate that the number of former combatants existing in the plateau may amount to 19,006 individuals, which would represent 4.7% of the population counted by the 2017 Census in these three districts. If we admit that there is no more than one pensioner per household, we would have that 21% of the households in the plateau are former combatant pension beneficiaries.

[26] Individuals from Mueda headquarters report episodes of threats and beatings by members of politicians from opposition parties, especially during election periods.

political confrontation and a threat to the dominant party, with which the group has a clientelistic relationship. This hostile political scenario tends to influence the religious leaderships themselves, which are much less assertive in the plateau zone:

- *"in that plateau zone, for example we speak of Muidumbe, of Mueda, it is not easy. It was never very easy to mobilize the leaders, including the religious leaders, to participate in the issue of governance or in the issue of policy making or governance monitoring . Because that seemed to go against the ideologies or the government of the day. It was perceived very much that way (...) But it was easier to do that in Mocímboa da Praia, in Palma"* (interview 7);

- "[In Mueda] *anything you try to explain that is wrong, they say* 'you know, my daughter, we are not worried about what is wrong (...) We are the ones who liberated. We are Frelimo; even if something is out of the ordinary, we are not going to change or change our flag. Our flag is this'" (interview 20);

- *"Now, that northern area Nangade, Mueda, Muidumbe, the whole area from Awasse to there... iiih, that's to wake up that it's not worth it (...) No technical school, no university and you can't wake up those people. They receive former soldiers'* [pensions]*. Others even have cards that are not even from that date* [of the liberation struggle]*, but, hey, they get in. All the young people are addicted, they don't work. They have ex-combatant money and they're all sitting down. When the end of the month comes, they go and buy things in the same shops as the owners, the bosses. So, it's a vicious circle,* 'who [are] you to speak against? ' *It's like a chip they put in people's heads"* (interview 20).

However, far from constituting a politically amorphous scenario, a set of discontent voices do emerge, especially among the youngest, without access to State resources, and who, in the relationship constituted with the party in power, tend to privilege, not so much the achievements of the past, but rather the opportunities existing in the present, in a context marked by difficulties of access to public services, by unemployment or underemployment[27]. On the other hand, the voices emphasize the frontal and assertive nature of the organisations on the plateau, as well as their determination and capacity for collective mobilisation, which allows them great pressure on the district administration. The situation of military insecurity, the inability of the FDS to guarantee the defence of the populations, and even the mistrust of sinister interests, leads more young Makonde to question the ruling power:

- *"In general, the organisations that were intervening are partners or from the government, for example in the provision of very direct services, for example health, offering HIV testing, offering work equipment, training technicians, so on... Those are more accepted organisations. They were and still are more prominent organisations because they directly support the budget. But in recent years, we see that other organisations, like social organisations, that come and do this issue of advocacy, this issue of empowering the community to participate in governance, there was a lot of space and even openness for the rulers. It was not very easy, especially in Mueda"* (interview 7);

- *"It is less active from the point of view of participation in movements. But when they enter and they understand* [that] *it has this particularity of the Makonde people, it's this openness, this frankness, this very spontaneous, very direct way of putting things. That, I think, was one of the*

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[27] More openly, caravans of young people wearing T-shirts of opposition political parties were observed in the 2019 elections, a scenario unthinkable in previous elections (Feijó, 2019).

great gains. There were few groups. Very few effective ones, because they hardly question the system. But that strength of questioning, that straightforwardness they have with the leader, because they think he's a son of the land and they can talk directly to him. It was very impressive. If the platform of Mueda district went to the administrator to talk about their concerns, that would give them a lot of advantages. They know that if you deny them, there is a problem. That can cost you your car, that creates a lot of agitation" (interview 7);

- *"but today, [the] speech is already different; today, the speech is already different. A lot of people are associating the issue of violent extremism with something that the government is not cautioning. 'Why are you not [defending] us, why are we not protected and why is this happening?' So much so that they are very much demanding the answer in this. But also this answer is only given to a certain group of people in the Mueda area, and I don't know where"* (interview 20).

4.2. From informal channels to aggressive forms of participation

Aware that they constitute the majority of the active population, facing employability problems, but without channels for political participation, the main alternative found by young people is in informal spaces. It is on the street, in markets or at football matches, often on social networks, that many young people try to vent, resorting to gossip and malicious gossip, to sharing *memes*[28], without the message reaching directly the decision-making centres and without direct impact on social change. Instead of building an informed and participatory citizenship, where local problems are discussed in a frontal and enlightened way, invisible spaces of participation are formed, with no capacity for transformation. Participation takes the form of venting, sharing rumours in a way that is not necessarily constructive:

- *"Frankly, everything stays behind the scenes, as they say, under the mango trees. They talk, unload and I don't know what. And that's it"* (interview 18);

- *"the places where we have always heard the big criticisms, the big opinions from some young people is in the street football games movement. I, who am talking, particularly I like those places more because there is a lot of information"* (interview 12);

- *"But, it's clear that participation, even at the community level, is not effective and an alternative for young people. It's usually really the markets, there where they sit to sell, in the stalls where they sit to drink. And there is the space where they meet to say what they think and often quite dangerously"* (interview 7).

As explained by Habibe *et al.* (2019: 19), social networks, namely Facebook, or Telegram, among other networks, have provided a space for the gathering of numerous discontent young people, who have become targets for the recruitment agents for violent purposes:

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[28] Ironic or joking messages, sometimes accompanied by images or videos, shared by users of social networks in a viral way and which become very popular. The themes of *memes* are quite wide-ranging, focusing on everything from everyday aspects to political criticism.

- "There are other people who use social networks to be able to defame, denigrate and to be able to recruit people, to be able to make the movement of terrorists, because in the first moments, it was through social networks where I had the opportunity to be added with a number that was international and I had to leave" (interview 12).

The inability of social transformation tends to generate more aggressive channels of participation. Over the past few years, we have seen a great deal of popular unrest in the province, manifested through strikes and riots led by workers in Palma district (Sekelekani, 26.10. 2018) and, more recently, in the Balama mines, often with destruction of property; in riots in centres for displaced people and assaults on neighbourhood secretaries in reaction to alleged diversion of food aid; in physical assaults on law enforcement agents, in reaction to their predatory and opportunistic form of surveillance (Feijó *et al*, 2022), but also in waves of criminality, through attacks and theft of vehicles and residences. According to the interviewees, the inexistence of functional participation channels and the withdrawal of protagonism from local leaderships have been detonators of all the accumulated social tension, resulting from profound phenomena of social exclusion. There are reports of numerous episodes of violence:

- "People exchange ideas. Maybe there's no one who understands politics better, no one who understands the context better, no one who understands approaches better. And people develop a way of thinking, a mentality that (…) is not positive. So, we unfortunately have time bombs. One day, people find refuge in practices that are harmful to society to expose themselves, to impose themselves, to influence their interests and mark [their] presence. Many times, here in Cabo Delgado, they even manifest themselves through lawlessness. People place themselves on the roads to steal this, steal that, break into houses. And now, at this level that we have, it may also be a consequence of the lack of a space where it can suit the young people" (interview 7);

- "that's why these problems are happening recently. Most of them are young people, they feel marginalised. Today, there is no space for them to make the decision for their life. To say something, what do they think could be improved in terms of that youth group. So, out of ignorance, a part of it due to illiteracy, they end up joining the movements in which even they are prejudiced" (interview 6);

- "They assaulted me, I lost my phone, I lost some things. I was taken in by the security that was there, the G4S; they took me to the camp (…). The workers were given that almost 15-day holiday. But they were asking for 6 days to rest and the management didn't want it. But when they created that strike, they ended up ceding 15 days. You see what the damage is…" (interview 9);

- "Price increase, yes; they burned tyres and also another time they were there they burned tyres. If I'm not mistaken, it was because of requiring professional driving licences in public services and many didn't have them, and they closed there" (interview 11);

- "[the neighbourhood secretary] a week ago was slapped in front of his house" (interview 13).

5. FINAL REFLECTIONS

"So, wihtou employment, we have informal trade as a solution. So, if informal trade exists and it is the government itself that comes and confiscates the goods, then, how do we stand? And, because we know this, this is where our fear comes in, since it's the government; it knows our difficulties here and does this. If we go there [to the Municipal Council] *will they listen to us? So that's where we are, as an association, also a little afraid to go and expose these difficulties"* (interview 2).

The development of an active citizenship in Mozambique, and Cabo Delgado province is no exception, is strongly conditioned by high rates of illiteracy and difficulties in access to information, mainly in rural areas. The State is not only incapable of promoting training for the population, but is also mistrustful of actions to raise awareness on fundamental rights and mechanisms for civic participation promoted by civil society organisations. The maintenance of a political culture of subject was functional to the penetration of the big capital in the exploitation of natural resources. In a scenario of lack of information, a favourable environment is created for the emergence of rumours, which quickly circulate among populations with difficulty in ascertaining their veracity, creating a fertile climate for misinformation. Instead of promoting the clarification of sensitive issues (particularly those related to the military conflict), the Government opted for information black out or laconic and unofficial messages[29]. The government is uncomfortable when questioned by an independent press that it cannot control, external enemies and appeals for popular vigilance are emphasised, ignoring development and governance problems.

The precarious economic scenario, marked by unemployment and underemployment, affects the development of civil society organisations. The organizations are deeply dependent on their members´ contributions , who are largely undercapitalized, so they lack the technical means to operate, making associative work problematic. The military conflict had a profound impact on the economy and dispersed the populations, so the CSO lost organizational capacity, advocacy, and social pressure, especially during the State of Emergency.

The organizations' activities become dependent on the existence of partners, generally with uncertain and irregular support, and the associative leaders pay more attention to external discourses, to which they adapt their approaches. This situation deprives local organisations of their capacity to define problems and influence the debate. The arrival of many external organizations in the face of humanitarian problems has not always included local organizations, thus reproducing socio-spatial asymmetries. When this arrival was translated into partnerships, relations were generally unequal.

In addition, there are bureaucratic difficulties in terms of access to documents and the formalisation of associations, which is generally a slow and costly process.

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[29] The long interview given to Mozambique Television by the commander of the European Union training mission to Mozambican troops, Brigadier-General Lemos Pires, in June 2022, during which he did not avoid sensitive questions about the challenges of a guerrilla war, had no equivalent in Mozambican counterparts over the previous 4 years.

The associations have problems of transparency and internal democracy, which can be seen in the low turnover of leaders (who tend to become confused with the organisation itself) and the frequent reluctance to accountability. On the other hand, there are still obstacles to the participation of the young members, despite the fact that they make up the majority of the province's population.

Despite the existence of these obstacles, various spaces for formal participation are visible, through collective forums (from provincial to local levels), requests for hearings, letters and petitions or public marches.

Although not very common, voices identified administrators with a more dialogue profile or State departments more open to sharing information and demonstrating willingness to interact. This openness was particularly evident following the conflict in the mines of Namanhumbir, in the district of Montepuez, with the start of the armed conflict and an increase in the number of displaced people. Powerless to manage the humanitarian drama and incapable of reducing social pressure, State leaders sought to establish alliances with civil society organisations, using them as intermediaries in their relations with the population. With clear political intentions, rapprochement is also evident in pre-election periods.

In the large urban centres and in areas closer to the large extractive projects, more dynamic and active civil society organizations are beginning to emerge. Civil society support mechanisms have a positive influence on the incubation of local organisations, making them more knowledgeable about legal mechanisms, able to gather evidence and have an impact on the population.

The existence of formal channels for participation has not invalidated various obstacles, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Centralisation of decisions at the level of the capital** and reduced autonomy of provincial and district authorities, forced them to implement projects that clash with the interests of local populations. The allocation of natural resource exploration licences and large DUATs have been responsible for the interruption of economic activities, population resettlements and the frustration of local expectations, increasing conflict. District governments were forced to facilitate large investments, approved at the capital level, problematizing the local creation of frank and open spaces for participation.
- **Politicisation of the State administrative apparatus**, expressed through the capture of local leaderships, through corruption, embezzlement and appointments based on criteria of trust. Public debates tend to be politically controlled, preventing honest and broad participation. Highly elitist and unable to absorb younger populations, consultative councils are far from being spaces to influence public policy. The strategy for managing problems is merely palliative, seeking not so much to carry out reforms as to reduce pressure through less assertive measures.
- **Government mistrust of public scrutiny and intolerance** towards independent social forces, perceived as opponents and necessitating control and vigilance;
- **Weakening of the State**, evident in its technical and financial incapacity to respond to the population's problems. The slowness and inefficiency of the administrative machinery feeds suspicions of embezzlement and reduces the people's confidence in the State. Faced with their inability to cope with the enormous demands, State agents adopt laconic and evasive communication.

- **Prohibition of public demonstrations of social protest**, particularly on sensitive issues or when organised by entities independent of the ruling party. The declaration of a State of Emergency has aggravated the situation, limiting the spaces for participation and the exercise of fundamental rights. The greater sensitivity of some public leaders contrasts with the behaviour of the Defence and Security Forces, known for opportunism, excessive zeal, and violence. The use of riot police to prevent peaceful demonstrations, attacking defenceless civilian populations, tends to fuel State feelings against the population.
- **A climate of fear of the State on the part of various leaders.** In a context of military conflict, in which the involvement of local leaders in intermediation between the State and the rebels would be fundamental, the former are afraid to present alternative visions of the conflict, making conflict management a monopoly of the defence and security forces;
- **The armed conflict** constituted a setback in the spaces for dialogue and citizenship. On the one hand, it implied the displacement of thousands of individuals, defragmenting informal groups that were valid interlocutors, with an impact on the political fabric. On the other hand, through threats, arrests and the disappearance of citizens, the war symbolised a setback in the spaces for dialogue and the exercise of citizenship.
- **The opportunism of State officials** and the difficulties in accessing justice (inefficient and politicised) feed disbelief in formal mechanisms.

All these obstacles prevent the creation of open and effective spaces for participation, making the political arenas elitist and politically controlled. Despite making up the majority of the province's population, crowding informal markets and other economic spaces, young people are not properly represented in decision-making places, which are perceived as unwelcoming. The possibilities for participation are relegated to the markets, football matches and social networks, without much capacity to influence public policy.

The situation is aggravated by the reduced party rotation, which could act as an escape valve for the population. In this scenario, the conditions are met for violence to be interpreted as a possible form of participation.

The abandonment of production sites, the food insecurity experienced in the province and the upward trend in food prices increase the risks of discontent and contestation, especially among the urban young people, making them particularly vulnerable to recruitment for criminal or violent activities.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

In this scenario, the following recommendations become relevant:

- **Massive training of local populations,** not only in technical-professional terms, but introducing citizenship issues, related to fundamental rights, civic participation and claim mechanisms;
- **Expansion of access to information,** enabling the State with technological resources to make available documentation of public interest;
- **Training local leaders in legislation,** social diagnosis, conducting meetings, gathering, and systematising evidence, planning advocacy and negotiation processes.

- **Institutional capacity building of civil society organizations** in terms of facilities and subsidies for operation, fostering youth organizations and organizations for the defence of vulnerable economic sectors such as peasants and fishermen, informal vendors or transporters (motorcycle-taxi, *chapa,* etc.), which represent the majority of the province's population and where poverty is most concentrated.
- **Involvement of CSO** in oversight and monitoring actions (of governance, exploitation of natural resources, access to information), but also in prevention of violent extremism (in religious spaces, radio stations, neighbourhoods, sports, culture) and negotiation with violent groups.
- **Revision of the costs of legalising and formalising associations**, making the process quicker and less bureaucratic.
- **Administrative decentralisation of the territory,** giving more power to the provinces in strategic decision-making.
- **Election of community leaders** and clarification of their respective territorial domains, facilitating their respective roles in the organisation of the territory.
- **Strengthening the Rule of Law,** the Attorney General's Office, and the judiciary, promoting access to justice and government transparency.

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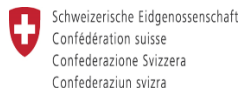
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