



Covid-19 and its Implications in Mozambique: An Anthro-po-sociological Analysis

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has imposed and is still imposing major and felt implications on Mozambican society. It is precisely for this reason that, with this article we offer a reflective and pragmatic contribution, with theoretical developments, but with recommendations to face this calamitous scenario. As a methodology, we selected the literature review, with a qualitative approach, supported by some empirical knowledge. The research shows that the Covid-19 pandemic has implications for the population resulting both from the spread of the virus and from measures that seek to minimize its damage. These implications are: the fear of being infected or not receiving medical attention if necessary; the stress caused by decreased income; the stress of shelter in place; and the uncertainty caused by the absence of a solid exit strategy. In order to minimize the occurrence of riots caused by the dissatisfaction of Mozambican society, we recommend the following: maintaining part of the income of formal and informal workers, combining assistance and job preservation policies and subsidies for the at-risk population; a guaranteed reduction of the rates of electricity and water supply; expanding activities geared to the mental health of the population; disseminating clear, coherent, timely and transparent information about the pandemic and how to tackle it.

Keywords: assistance polices; covid-19; implications.



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Introduction

It looked like a simple disease! It has become a worrying epidemic! And, boom, it transformed into a terrifying pandemic that reconfigured the entire global society! Societies are in constant transformation, but it must be recognized that with the new Corona-Virus (Covid-19) a new reality of social, cultural, political, educational and economic chaos has emerged.

Having appeared in the city of Wuhan, China, in December 2019, news of the mysterious respiratory disease became public. This situation brought disorientation and worsened to the point that, on May 13, 2020, the Executive Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Program, Mike Ryan, announced that 'Covid-19 may never disappear'. In that sense, it could become an endemic disease like HIV-AIDS, so we have to learn to live with it.

The rapid expansion of cases of infection caused by the disease in the population in many countries around the world meant that on March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO), declared the disease caused by the Corona-virus (Covid-19) as a pandemic (WHO, 2020b). As of March 23, 2020, Mozambique became part of the list of countries with confirmed cases of the disease caused by the new Corona-virus (WHO, 2020a, p. 05).

Across the globe this information has brought surprise and fear. The dynamics, such as social distancing and other preventive measures internationally, brought about by the virus are similar. Furthermore, in each country, these measures have had different implications.

Ainslie (2020) points out that Imperial College reproduced an econometric model to predict the effects of Covid-19 in Mozambique, and estimated that between 61,000 to 65,000 people will lose their lives and 90% of the population may be affected. These are extremely terrifying effects, compared to the recent impacts caused by the tropical cyclones IDAI and Kenneth that devastated the provinces of Sofala, Manica, Tete, Zambézia, Cabo Delgado and Nampula, as well as the shameful and worrying military conflicts and confrontations in the center and north of the country.

Therefore, without ignoring these predictions, or even the precautions and warnings given in these situations, and due to the econometric assumptions to be taken into account, including their limitations, as emphasized by Mussagy (2020), we see that at this point we are "bombarded" by studies, opinions, reflective texts, videos, news, advertising spots ... that can be strongly influenced by the situation. The effects may not reach the figures quoted by Imperial College, which possibility depends greatly on the decisions taken by the government, on the measures actually implemented with the support of multilateral, bilateral institutions, private initiatives, good faith organizations, civil society organizations, and how all we will act collectively in the different phases of this pandemic.

Given its epidemiological nature, the disease quickly moved from the restricted and sensitive space of medical science to the public space, more open to opinions and comments. However, it must be understood, therefore, that the official authorities reserve the responsibility for spreading information about Covid-19, although it is known that doubts and controversies hover among the specialists, given the fact that it is a new and ongoing disease in the stage of discovery. What is known is that the disease belongs to a large family of viruses that cause illnesses associated with common flu and more serious illnesses, such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), in addition to being transmitted from "person-to-person" through saliva "droplets" generated by coughing or

breathing (oral fluids) and also by physical contact with contaminated people or surfaces (MISAU, 2020).

Mozambique has its social, cultural, economic, technological, political and other dynamics, influenced by the industrial revolution as well as by globalization, a condition that makes Mozambican society a “risk society” and/or part of the “global risk society”, as Posse (2020) argued. However, it is necessary to recognize that this is a simplistic assumption, if, for example, we take into account Guivant's (2001) criticism about the “risk society” theory developed by Ulrich Beck. In other words, even recognizing the merit of the theory (Guivant, 2016), Guivant (2001) considers that this theory tends to look at the world as if it were a homogeneous society, ignoring, therefore, the specificities of each context. Although we agree with Guivant's (2001) criticism against the idea of homogenization - in defense of the heterogeneity of society - the present study assumes that Mozambican society is a “risk society”, as we will reflect upon in the analysis of the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Against this background, the present study offers a reflective and practical/empirical contribution (analyses of the present and subsequent recommendations to better envision the future of the communities) on the implications of and the fight against Covid-19 in Mozambican society in particular, using the literature review method. Content analysis was the technique used for data collection, seeking to compare the different interpretative approaches of the theme in progress, and finally, making recommendations on the path that the State can take to face this dramatic and drastic phenomenon.

In addition to the introduction already made, this study is structured in four general sections (some sections having their subsections): i) Mozambique and its prevention reaction to Covid-19: general context; ii) Implications of Covid-19 in Mozambican society: reflections and (im) forecasts; (iii) Conclusion; iv) Bibliographic references.

1. Mozambique and its prevention reaction to Covid-19: general context

Africa is a continent where most of its social relations are of an “Ubuntu”³ nature. The true African culture advocates a friendly and harmonious interaction of the elements that make up society, where people help and work together in the fields, in funeral ceremonies, in weddings, in initiation rites, among other ceremonies or events. Here, the valuation of the “we” culturally has a sacred and essential value in the relations between members of society. In Mozambique, in recent years, social relations have been in a constant transformation, in a process that we would call the gradual transition from “closed society”⁴ to a “open society”⁵, thus combining the perspective presented by the Austro-British philosopher and professor Karl Popper in his work “The Open Society and Its Enemies”, one of the greatest philosophers of science of the 20th century.

Despite the strong acculturation that Mozambican society experiences in general, it still has its own identity culture that differentiates it from other societies. Matriarchal and patriarchal relationships, which have characterized the socio-political order of traditional societies, are alive; the lively and fraternal ceremonial interactions of the population are still alive. But, after the announcement of the danger of the new Covid-19, all these forms of social interaction have had to be reconfigured and, instead, the whole society has been called upon to adopt a “new and

³ **Ubuntu**-A society sustained by pillars of respect and solidarity is the essence of ubuntu, an African philosophy which stresses the importance of alliances and relations between people. An approximate translation would be ‘Humanity with and for others’.

⁴ Closed society-A society characterized by the tendency to attack or defend itself against what it perceives to be external threats.

⁵ Open society-In profound contrast, an open society is that which embraces, on principle, an entire humanity, at least in terms of an ideal model which indicates a cosmopolitan society.

<http://rel.somalco.me>

universal culture” of social distancing (without hugs, kisses, handshakes, etc.), of no or restricted performance of certain ceremonies that require greater social agglomeration, and also to adopt the “culture of the constant and morally obligatory use of soap or other types of disinfectants” to wash hands , as well as the “culture of wearing masks”.

Posse (2020) demonstrates that we understand that the reaction of Mozambican society to Covid-19 was, and still is, characterized by the adoption of preventive measures, such as social distancing, washing hands with soap or ashes and/or alcohol-based disinfectants, wearing masks, as a result of experiences in other contexts. The State's institutionalized intervention in the fight against Covid-19 can also be witnessed through the reinforcement of the awareness actions for the adoption of and compliance with the preventive measures - which in a way are already being implemented by the Mozambicans, despite being on a smaller scale.

It should be noted that this positioning of the State results from pressure from different groups in society in fear of the virus, to which the President of the Republic, Filipe Nyusi, referred in his report, on April 29, 2020, on the state of combating Covid-19. This position evolved from a simple monitoring process to the enactment of the State of Emergency on March 30, for thirty days (01 to April 30), initially. Later, it was extended until July 29.

It is noted that, this set of measures reflects, to a certain extent, the production of risk as a social rationality, insofar as it manifests the “liberation [among Mozambicans] of fantasies of danger and antidotes for them, thus stealing from modern society [Mozambican] the freedom of action” (Beck, 2002 citing Posse, 2020). In other words, the feeling of panic that has installed itself among Mozambicans - as a result of information conveyed by the press about the disease, social, economic, hospital and political conditions (disbelief on the part of Mozambicans in relation to the government's ability to fight the virus) – has made it possible, on the one hand, to adopt measures as if the virus were already in Mozambique, and, on the other hand, to show that they were predisposed to abdicate their freedoms, as was verified with the decree of the State of Emergency. A priori, it was felt that they were more correct measures.

According to information provided by CNN Business (2020) due to the health emergency situation, which led to measures to restrict principally the movement of people, the cancellation of international events and the restriction of economic activity, actions are envisaged in the world that have brought a new reality to people's homes, markets, streets, tourism, air transportation, commodity prices, financial market volatility, among others.

2. Implications of Covid-19 in Mozambican society: reflections and predictions

The sociology of everyday life stresses the crucial importance of routines as a fundamental pillar of collective and individual well-being. And cultural anthropology shows that when social disturbances affect resilient cultural behavior, it can cause discomfort and sociocultural malaise. With the current pandemic, of course, new dynamics of corporate relations were imposed on Mozambique.

The subjective dimension of risk, in the actions of Mozambicans, was made explicit, in a way, through the decree of the State of Emergency, by exposing the unpreparedness - of the different State institutions - to implement the decree, as, for example, in restrictions on the use of passenger transport and the movement of people (Posse, 2020).

In relation to the issue of public transport, the decree limited the number of passengers on buses to 1/3, as a way of avoiding crowds, but did not reinforce the means of transport. Because of this, the measure was not effective, the buses continued to take passengers beyond their maximum capacity, a situation that forced the government to back down on the measure,

and introduce the mandatory use of the mask for users of public transport. This mandatory use of masks has extended to locations with population agglomerations. However, there are difficulties in adoption by Mozambicans. The restriction of the movement of people left most Mozambicans in a situation of greater vulnerability than that in which they already were living, since the majority are informal workers or depend on informal business activities to survive, and this implies leaving home.

Furthermore, this second aspect also helps to illustrate that poverty was central to the subjective production of risk among needy Mozambicans. That is, despite the campaigns and mandatory measures to combat Covid-19, this group of Mozambicans continued to take to the streets for income-generation in the same way as before the pandemic.

However, this stance is due, to a large extent, to a question of choice, as suggested by the words of Navarro and Cardoso (2005), that “individuals tend to build a self-image and consolidate what they think is a certain human potential, based on this feeling to promote self-assessments to expose themselves or not to risks”. In other words, this group of poor Mozambicans chose to continue looking for their survival in the same way as before because hunger is a greater and more present risk compared to Covid-19, which still seems distant. Or, as the people say, it is better to die from Covid-19 than to starve. Or, as Beck (2011) suggests in the analogy to environmental problems, hunger is a visible risk while Covid-19, although real, is an invisible risk because it seems distant (it is known that Mozambicans only feel fear when they see danger with their own eyes).

Posse (2020) points out that another aspect that can help illustrate that actions to combat Covid-19, in Mozambican society, are the product of subjective risk is the social construction of identities. That is, it was possible to observe that the speeches around the virus were shaped by stereotypes in the dichotomous logic of "others" and "us". The "others", the Chinese being "sick" and who were spreading the virus throughout the world, including in Mozambique - since there is a large presence of Chinese in the country -, and "we", the Mozambicans, were healthy. It was based on this stereotype that we observed the emergence of speeches that argued that the State should prohibit the entry of Chinese - including individuals from other regions with cases of Covid-19 - into the country as a way to avoid contagion among Mozambicans. In addition, there was discrimination against the Chinese, by avoiding the sharing the same physical spaces to reduce the risk of contracting the virus, and including the way they were addressed, for example, "hey, coronavirus" when calling or identifying them.

It is clear that the current pandemic has introduced at least five behavioral drivers, related both to the pandemic itself and to the coping mechanisms adopted: i) the fear of being infected, that someone close to you is infected or that it is not possible to receive medical care; ii) decreased income, resulting in reduction in consumption or entry in indebtedness; iii) shelter in place; iv) conflicting or inaccurate information about the pandemic and how to deal with it; and v) the absence of a crisis exit strategy. Although these factors have transformed the behavior of almost the entire population, stress levels are proportionally higher for some groups, especially for those at greater risk of contracting the disease or in a situation of poverty (or who may enter it).

2.1. Fear of being infected or not having care available

It is known that a pandemic is, in itself, a factor of stress due to the possibility that the person himself or someone close to him is infected. These factors are observed in both infected and uninfected people, occurring both during and after the end of a pandemic. This behavior is visible in Mozambican society.

<http://res.com.br>

Maunder et al. (2003 citing Moraes, 2020), in a survey on the effects of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Canada in 2003, identified feelings of anger, fear, loneliness and boredom among infected people. Zheng et al. (2005), in a study on the effects of SARS among student groups in Japan, identified fear, worry and depression, even though none of them had been infected.

In Mozambican society, a stress factor related to this is the fear that there will be no medical care available in case of need or that someone close (family, friends, etc.) may not be attended to if needed, knowing that the conditions in local hospitals are not satisfactory.

Observing that the pandemic in question manifests itself quickly and quickly, social distancing measures have been adopted in most countries in the world in order to reduce the speed of virus transmission, thus reducing part of the stress associated with the pandemic, recognizing the limitations that each country faces when adopting these measures.

It is important to note that these stressors affect everyone, but vary according to social class and place of residence, affecting more acutely the poorest people and populations living in areas with a limited number of health professionals and hospital beds.

2.2. Side effects of shelter in place

In Mozambican society, according to a preliminary study conducted by us, we assume that it is women, between 35 and 44 years old and whose income is usually meager for normal living, who have the most difficulties in managing the current restrictions. At the opposite extreme, it is men, over 65 years old and with incomes that allow them to live comfortably, who demonstrate less difficulties in relation to the current restrictions. It should also be noted that, regarding age, younger people show that they are having more difficulties with restrictions than all other age groups.

At the household level, it is the individuals from larger households, and with smaller children, who are most represented among those who have the most difficulty in managing this state of emergency.

With regard to the impact of the pandemic, in the current labour market, the group that reveals the greatest difficulties includes those who were made redundant and, to a lesser extent, those who went on “forced vacations”. On the other hand, the situation of least difficulty is identified mainly by those who are telecommuting. Although this group includes people who appreciate this new style of work, but there are also others who are having extreme difficulties in dealing with this new reality.

It should be noted that shelter in place can imply high levels of stress, which can compromise the physical and mental health of the population and that this is a problem that has affected the Mozambican population in their daily lives. The literature is conclusive in the sense that the decrease in the number of social interactions and the restrictions in circulation increases stress levels. Pressman et al. (2005 citing Moraes, 2020) found a high correlation between social isolation and degradation of physical and mental health, including loss of sleep quality and efficiency, as well as increased levels of cortisol in the bloodstream.

In these situations, we would like to accept that the need for social interactions and the feeling of belonging rises in times of crisis, that is, shelter in place during a pandemic, aggravates a situation that is already conducive to the deterioration of the mental health of the main players in corporate relations. In a study about the effects of quarantine due to the SARS outbreak in Canada, Sim and Chua (2004 citing Moraes, 2020) identified that 29% of people had

post-traumatic stress disorder and 31% had depression. And that, in fact, corresponds with our perspective.

Furthermore, the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that shelter in place can have several consequences, including: anxiety, fear, irritability, changes in appetite, sleep disturbances and increased alcohol consumption, tobacco and illicit drugs (CDC, 2020b). Among the recommendations made by the CDC and National Health Service (NHS), in the United Kingdom, are: keeping in touch (online) with friends and family, doing physical exercises, maintaining a healthy diet, practicing hobbies and taking up relaxation techniques. In addition to these, the CDC recommends that people share useful information produced by credible bodies.

In line with Magalhães (2020), we realize that there is a dark and pessimistic experience /perception of the impact of the pandemic and the restrictions resulting from it in everyday life, associated also with the experience of a monotonous sense of time and the feeling of shelter in place to a closed, almost prison-like space.

In Mozambican society, people who live in small spaces, with a large number of people or with few resources find it difficult to adopt several of the preventive recommendations given by the government and other international institutions. Middle and upper class individuals are able to keep themselves entertained during quarantine, which is not the case with the poorest, as they have less access to devices, applications or broadband internet connection. They also have less space at home, making it more difficult to perform relaxing or fun activities, as well as to practice physical exercises. Moraes (2020) warns that, in a situation of shelter in place, this is likely to deteriorate mental health proportionally more among poorer people, reducing their incentives to maintain social distance.

In order to minimize this problem, it is necessary to guarantee not only income, but also the accessible supply of electricity during the shelter in place period, so that people can keep in touch with friends and family, as well as carry out other activities online. We know that information and communication technologies are almost everywhere, and in Mozambique, most of the technologies (cell, television, radio, etc.) used are dependent on electricity.

With this, we intend to say that social networks, created by the use of information and communication technologies, fight social distance, allowing people to interact, despite being physically distant. Suedfeld (1974) demonstrated that highly stressful events create the desire to seek the company of others, especially those who are experiencing similar levels of anxiety or trauma. For Yalom (1995), sharing experiences in crisis situations creates a sense of universality and brings feelings of relief. The existence of social support networks before, during and after traumatic events increases the likelihood of maintaining mental health during and after a crisis.

In addition, recommendations for maintaining mental health should be made widely available. The dissemination can be made on radio and television channels, social media or public announcements, including messages for specific audiences (elderly people, people with a history of mental disorders, people in poverty etc.). It is also possible to support local governments in setting up support groups for people in vulnerable situations.

2.2.1. Shelter in place and domestic violence

Another social phenomenon noted in in this scenario of the new Corona-Virus pandemic and the necessary measures of social isolation and home shelter in place, is that children and women are at even greater risk of suffering physical, sexual and psychological

<http://rel.somoc.me>

violence. Above all, when domestic violence already occurs, vulnerabilities increase dramatically, especially for the most fragile strata (children and women).

There is a relationship between shelter in place and the number of episodes of domestic violence against women and children. And that hypothesis is proven by the Ministry of Gender and Social Action and by the Police of the Republic of Mozambique, who, without listing numbers, stated that cases of domestic violence increased during the period of shelter in place.

Although there is little information in the literature about the relationship between these two phenomena, in our perception, at least three factors create a fertile ground for cases of violence to increase: i) stress caused by the pandemic; ii) greater number of hours of contact with possible aggressors; and iii) difficulty in accessing social solidarity institutions or aid services.

In fact, the increase in the number of cases seems to have occurred in several countries, including China, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Spain and the United States (Santos, 2020). To address the problem, easily accessible channels through which people can call for help must be maintained.

The tensions accumulated with fears about the pandemic, the intensely close family life, the overload of domestic tasks and work at home, or the lack of jobs and income, can generate or aggravate conflicts and violence in many homes. Violence that could have occurred, previously, against children and adolescents will continue and may worsen. Therefore, it is essential to clarify society on how to ask for help and report it. In a society of technological precariousness, such as the Mozambican society, the most appropriate methods of remote reporting must be rethought, so that the right to protection of the most vulnerable is protected and consolidated in this new social reality.

For example, in Sofala province, on May 21, 2020, Rádio Moçambique revealed in its news programs that cases of domestic violence are on the rise in this period of emergency, due to the pandemic. Worse, victims are afraid to file complaints. This complaint was made by the non-governmental organization Women, Law and Development (MULEIDE), which points to women as the main victim. And, according to MULEIDE, between March and April, reported about 120 cases of domestic violence that were referred to the courts. The MULEIDE counseling officer in Sofala showed in her report that most complaints have to do with physical and sexual violence.

Confined at home and, in most cases, having to live with the aggressor, a growing number of Mozambicans, mainly women and children, are becoming victims of domestic abuse in this time of shelter in place. We realize that, despite the fact that the volume of complaints has increased substantially, the increase in domestic violence is not mentioned in the statistics of public agencies. The reason is because, isolated from social life, the victim is held hostage by the aggressor and prevented from making a report.

In order to safeguard the right of protection to these most vulnerable social strata, we recognize that it will be a great challenge for the institutions in charge of this area, whilst also mentioning that each governmental (or non-governmental) body must always act in line with the dynamics or changes taking place in society. Society is always in constant transformation. The action plans must seek to respond to the lived reality. To this end we urge these guardianship institutions to see the reason for undertaking unmistakable and untiring actions.

The increase of cases of domestic violence during the pandemic is not only occurring in Mozambican society. Other countries facing covid-19 have the same problem. The United Nations (UN) has recommended measures to prevent and combat domestic violence during the

pandemic, with online reporting investments, emergency services in pharmacies, temporary shelters for victims, among others.

Therefore, in this period, it is essential to support parents and guardians so that they can deal with stress and welcome their children, creating an environment of tolerance and security at home. At the same time, it is important for the entire population to be attentive, to know what the available reporting channels are and not to be silent in the face of violence. And it is up to the government to guarantee the continuity of protection services for women and children. However, it must be recognized that nowadays, men also suffer domestic violence, hence the Ministry of Women, Social Action and Children has been renamed as the Ministry of Gender, Social Action and Children.

2.2.2. Shelter in place and education

The pandemic scenario forced the Government of Mozambique to devise strategies to contain the rapid spread of Covid-19 by declaring a state of emergency at national level by the Head of State. Among the measures announced by the President of the Republic is the suspension of classes in all public and private educational institutions, from pre-school to higher education, and also the reduction of the number of people participating in social events, except for activities of strictly public interest, and the mandatory use of masks in crowded spaces, as is the case with markets, as well as public transport.

In Mozambique, due to the closure of classes, the Ministry of Education and Development (MINED) and the Ministry of Science and Technology, Higher Education and Technical Professionals (MCTESTP), were challenged to create strategies in order to guarantee the continuity of classes through the use of other mechanisms/platforms such as online classes community radios, social media networks such as WhatsApp, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Skype, Moodle, e-mail, etc.

It should be noted that the platforms officially used for classes in primary and secondary education are television, radio, internet together with exercises and support sheets that must be monitored by parents and/or guardians, which according to the findings of the Education authorities are a success, but it is not known whether students are following classes.

Let us recognize that Mozambican studies - such as the one carried out by MINED in 2020, show that parents and/or guardians have a lot of difficulty in monitoring the students. It is known that the 8.3 million Mozambican students, attending either primary or secondary education, are distributed across various parts of the country, rather than being only in the country's principal cities. According to the 2017 statistics of the Mozambican population:

About 30% of the population live in urban areas; 70% live in huts; only 22.2% of Mozambicans have access to electricity, so the rest use batteries, candles, oil / paraffin, batteries and other sources of energy; 35% have radio in their homes and 29.1% have TV. In short, 70.9% of Mozambicans do not have a TV and will not be able to follow classes online or on the radio (INE, 2017).

It must be made clear that there are many Mozambicans who are unable to buy megabytes to attend classes “online”, on technological platforms, or even to make photocopies of textbooks. Some parents do not know what a photocopier is. In some parts of the country, a photocopy can cost between 3 and 5 meticaís, which contrasts with sources of income that are low. Can they get a photocopy of all the materials for each of the subjects being taught? Are the teachers on the ground, that is, are they going out to deliver study materials to students? If so, who is following these activities at ground level? To what extent are district education services

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meeting these guidelines? Wouldn't we be committing exclusion within inclusion, in view of the country's socio-economic reality?

With this, we do not want to point the finger at anyone, but, still, these are issues that stand out in the face of these implications imposed by Covid-19 that confused or worsened the precarious reality of the national education system. Furthermore, it should be stressed that the quality of education must be guided by constitutionally established principles, rules and objectives. Access to education is a subjective public right and the failure to provide by the Public Authority, or its insufficient and irregular delivery, may result in culpable liability for the supervisory authority.

2.3. Impacts caused by loss of income

According to the Confederação das Associações Económicas de Mocambique (CTA) (2020), similar to the situation of the world economy, the evidence suggests that Covid-19 could have a significant impact on the Mozambican economy. In the world economy it is estimated that in 2020 Covid-19 will reduce the expected growth rate by 3.6% which means that in 2020 the national economy may grow between 2% and 2.3%.

The pandemic and the restriction on the circulation of people produce a generalized decrease in the quantity of products and services offered and demanded, leading to a decrease in income levels and an increase in unemployment. Although this occurs across society, some groups are affected proportionately more than others (Moraes, 2020, p. 09).

Adapting this to the Mozambican case, a division has been proposed by Milanović (2020), in which workers can be divided into at least five groups: i) health professionals or from sectors that provide inputs (direct or indirect) for health, whose services have a high demand growth; ii) workers operating online services, whose work becomes a little more in demand; iii) workers not connected to the health area, but who perform essential functions (public security, urban cleaning, water, electricity, food production and distribution, etc.), whose demand remains stable or decreases relatively little; iv) workers who can perform functions at a distance (lawyers, accountants, programmers, bankers, bureaucrats, academics, teachers, researchers, students, among others) whose demand also remains stable or decreases relatively little; and v) workers in sectors whose demand substantially decreases, in many cases reaching zero (workers in closed factories, workers in commerce, street vendors, cultural and entertainment professionals, etc.).

The impact in terms of decreased income falls disproportionately, of course, on workers in the latter group, especially those in the informal sector, who represent approximately 70% of workers in the country. For them, income can drop to zero almost instantly, leading to an increase in indebtedness levels or the lack of means to pay for essential items, including food, rent, medicines and electricity (Moraes, 2020).

The relationship between sharp falls in income and conflicts is supported by the literature. Berazneva and Lee (2013) demonstrated how recessionary situations increase the likelihood of unrest. Grasso and Giugni (2016) argued that protests during recessions are motivated by the subjective feeling that others may be suffering less from the effects of a crisis.

In Mozambique, several organizations with a trade unionist vocation, such as that of domestic employees and that of employees of private companies, not excluding the Mozambican Workers' Organization (OTM), have repeatedly fought for the rights of workers who have been dismissed from companies or homes because of the pandemic situation, and this has created several conflicts. For example, many domestic workers across the country have been dismissed

from their place of work, thus becoming unemployed and living without the means for survival. Their unions have protested the cause of these unemployed, mainly against the government, claiming that they are not receiving any State aid for survival. It can be noted, therefore, that some of the employees who are left without income blame the government for not having created a “sufficient enough” fund to subsidize companies and other institutions. It is known that the situation is untenable for companies alone to bear all costs while the business goes from bad to worse.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, publications have drawn attention to the importance of protecting these groups, highlighting the need to guarantee income and preserve jobs through: social policies; fiscal stimulus; tax exemptions for micro, small and medium-sized companies; and debt relief, especially for poor countries such as Mozambique. These recommendations come from a variety of sources, including the International Monetary Fund (INF), the World Bank, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). They also come from academics of different theoretical orientations, investment banks and consulting firms.

For informal workers it is necessary to guarantee a minimum income. For that to happen, there are two options: a focused policy or a universal policy. A policy only for those who need it most (focused) would be fair, as it would not allocate scarce resources to people less affected by the pandemic. However, this policy could unfairly exclude many people from accessing the benefit, especially since there is little time to process claims. Although a transfer policy for all (universal) citizens may seem unfair in that it benefits those who do not need it, it is possible to compensate for this by a small increase in the taxation of higher-income individuals (Mankiw, 2020).

There is an urgent need to make resources reach people whose income has dropped substantially. To do this, you need to transfer money as quickly as possible to as many people as possible - and then look at ways to adjust for any errors. The justification for this is that targeting is costly and extremely difficult in the short term.

The ideal is that the operation for income compensation is simple and occurs within the necessary time, even though there is a risk that some beneficiaries do not meet the vulnerability criterion.

Another important point is that it is also necessary to reduce incentives for the dismissal of formal workers and to guarantee part of their income. In addition to protecting the employment of these people, the likelihood of bankruptcy of companies would be reduced and the costs associated with rehiring personnel after the end of the crisis would be avoided. The central idea is that companies can hibernate during the crisis period, instead of closing (Saez & Zucman, 2020 citing Moraes, 2020). One option is to do this directly, with the government subsidizing workers' wages.

It is also essential that these policies do not have a greater impact on income for people with lower incomes. In addition to placing people in a vulnerable situation, this would provoke feelings of injustice. In the social psychology literature it is observed how perceptions of injustice provoke negative feelings - impulses to retaliation, protests, emotional exhaustion, and moral and physical revulsion whose aggregate effect would increase the likelihood of violent social conflicts. Uprisings of dismissed employees are already emerging, therefore it is important for the Mozambican government to create a fund capable of dealing with this situation, in a timely manner, by means of a subsistence subsidy allocation, which would function according to the models we previously proposed.

2.4. Confusion caused by conflicting or inaccurate information

In this pandemic period, with a certain level of shelter in place of people (mainly from the middle and upper classes - since the lower class is still on the street looking for their daily bread), inaccurate or conflicting information about the pandemic and the ways in which the government faces it cause confusion, increase stress and reduce the impact of policies to cope with the disease.

This problem stems from both rumors and contradictory positions from government agencies. Regarding the first point, this phenomenon was called “infodemia” by the director general of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, a process in which not only the virus, but also rumors spread quickly, creating a cacophony conflicting information. It is thus necessary to “immunize” the population so that it can better distinguish false news from the real one.

Contradictory information from government agencies decreases public confidence in public bodies, increases stress and the likelihood that people will believe rumors. And, in a scenario like this, there is more diffusion of fake news⁶. In addition, there is a fine line between not creating panic in the population and hiding the seriousness of a pandemic. As highlighted in Sandman (2009), a strategy of hiding information tends to have the opposite effect, reducing the population's trust in the authorities and generating episodes of panic.

The literature on communication in times of crisis emphasizes that transparency is a key factor: it is necessary to present clearly what is known, what is not known, the sources of information, and what is being done to learn more about the problem (Edmondson, 2020). This is true not only for communication with society, but also for communication within the government.

2.5. Mitigation strategies: recommendations

For Mozambique to be able to control the pandemic situation so that there are no harmful implications, it is essential that an action plan is formulated, observing, initially, what other countries are adopting and what the literature recommends: “know the world to know how to act locally”.

Economically active workers (20 to 49 years old), who do not belong to risk groups, could gradually return to work. This should be conditional on the health system not being in a critical situation and that these workers do not come into contact with people in risk groups. We suggest that, if you choose to return to work, these workers should be in only a few sectors. The selection of sectors must be considered using objective criteria, for example how important they are in terms of wealth and jobs generated. In addition, a sample of these workers should be tested frequently for Covid-19, as well as monitored to immediately track whether they are transmitting or receiving the virus.

The perspective of CTA (2020), regarding the impact on the business sector, estimates that due to Covid-19, the Mozambican business sector may experience losses between USD 234 million and USD 375 million, with the tourism sector being the most affected with estimated losses between USD 53 Million and USD 71 Million. Therefore, in order to face these impacts of this pandemic, it is proposed to adopt fiscal, customs, labor and financial measures, with a view to ensuring the survival of companies and ensuring the recovery of their activities. The CTA

⁶ Falsenews that is disseminated with the intention of inciting certain behaviours in people, above all, influencing decision-making, inciting riots, among other things. Very often fake news is spread via social media.

estimated that the cost of implementing these measures is USD 355 million. And not only that, we think that there must be social and economic assistance provided to the population so that there is greater motivation to stay at home and significantly respect the preventive measures.

In turn, another strategy is to observe locations in which the number of cases is low (which requires tests, of course), which could progressively return to normal. Such a strategy could consider the idea of “commuting zones”, which are geographical areas where there is great mobility within the area, but little mobility from/to the outside (Moraes, 2020; Monras, 2020). Regardless of the format, it is essential that tests are available. In the absence of data, it is difficult to estimate when it will be safe to break the quarantine and detail how it should be conducted.

It will be difficult to convince people that it is safe to return to work, consumption and transportation routines. The confidence that must be restored is not that of the 2008-2009 crisis (in which it was necessary to know whether a counterparty was insolvent), but that which leads to overcoming the fear that a co-worker, salesperson or customer is contaminated (Dewatripont et al., 2020).

To prepare and respond effectively, companies must pay close attention by establishing strategies that cover emergency response, business continuity, crisis management and crisis communications, not just to be ready to monitor the progress of an emerging outbreak and understanding its possible effects, but also to protect their employees and continue operations in the event of border restrictions, problems in the supply chain and localized direct impacts. Companies must understand how existing insurance coverage can respond to an outbreak and make necessary changes to their policies. Finally, test data and demographic information should be used to monitor the population at the national level.

Conclusion

In all, one thing is certain: the new Corona Virus (Covid-19) is here to stay in our societies. This disease poses several challenges for global society. It demystified certain social, cultural, economic, political and environmental standards that were accommodated as "sufficient", calling into question or "in doubt" all national and international systems.

This scenario has significantly reconfigured Mozambican society. It has remodeled the ways people relate in their daily lives, imposing new mechanisms of action and interaction. Although these mechanisms are uniform in nature worldwide, their forms of use and handling depend on the specificities and conditions of each social, cultural, economic and political context.

As a result, the pandemic context and the coping measures adopted by Mozambique (and other countries in the world) - such as shelter in place, create implications such as high levels of stress for the population, especially for the poorest and those most at risk of being infected which may compromise their physical and mental health.

Through this study and allied to studies carried out by institutions such as WHO and MISAU, it was observed that, on the one hand, people who live in small spaces, with a high number of people, or with few resources have difficulties in adopting prevention recommendations, as they have less space at home, thus having more difficulty in performing relaxing or fun activities. On the other hand, middle and upper class people are able to keep themselves entertained during their shelter in place since they have access to devices, applications or broadband internet connection. But, even so, when middle and upper classes consume excessive information about the impacts of the pandemic become at risk of severe

<http://rela.com.mz>

stress and panic. “Fake news” has gained more space within this scenario, mainly on social networks where there is an increase /agglutination of masses/people.

To mitigate non-positive implications, a set of fiscal, customs, labor and financial measures must be adopted or maintained, with a view to ensuring the survival of companies and ensuring the recovery of their activities. The National Institute of Social Action (INAS), which is responsible for the Basic Social Subsidy for vulnerable people (who live in precarious situations), together with some philanthropic and charitable organizations (which have been a great asset to alleviate the absolute poverty of many, above all in times of calamities, and more), could, if they joined forces face the “macabre” that this pandemic imposes. Not only this but also if forces were really engaged, they could fight the most deadly pandemic of all: hunger. As long as the government does not give survival allowance to this population, we will always be seeing people in the street looking for “their daily bread” to eat and survive. This subsidy model should be preceded by a carefully designed strategy for identifying more vulnerable or needy individuals.

Covid-19 also proved that there is an essential need to consolidate the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in public and private institutions. For example, educational institutions must already be investing in putting into place technologies for their work environment, disseminating among teachers and students, as well as to the Administrative Technical Body (CTA) the best strategies for handling these technologies.

Therefore, these measures must be aimed both at protecting vulnerable people and at decreasing the likelihood of violent social conflicts. These can also decrease the likelihood of non-violent events, such as marches and processions: although in normal circumstances these were legitimate, they reduce the positive effects of the social distancing rules that are so sought after as a means to safeguard health.

Last but not least, it is a human duty to accept home shelter in place, to remove people from markets and outings to guarantee them and others the first and the main human right, life. But it is also a human duty to guarantee their livelihood so that their right to life is not denied by the greatest Mozambican pandemic: hunger.

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