

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique



Samuel Francisco Ngovene

Charles University of Prague, Faculty of Humanities Studies

ABSTRACT: Mozambique is a country with cultural segregation along its rivers, dividing the main ethnic groups of the Machangana, Macena, and Macua, respectively from the South, Centre and North. This division has led to internal conflicts, seemingly rooted in ethnicity. The aim of this study is to analyse the tolerance of the main ethnic groups in Mozambique in terms of cohabitation, sharing opportunities, and political power. The study utilizes participant observation in the field, group discussions, and a questionnaire targeting 150 respondents, with 50 in each ethnic group. The data were analytically crosschecked to compare the opinions of people from different ethnic groups. The responses from the questionnaire were analysed statistically to understand the level of tolerance among the ethnic groups and their perceptions of sharing opportunities and political power. As a conclusion, people in Mozambique are generally tolerant of cohabiting or marrying individuals from different ethnic groups. However, when it comes to sharing opportunities such as employment or business, they perceive individuals from different ethnic groups to be taking away opportunities. Similarly, each ethnic group believes that having a president from their own group would lead to better opportunities for their community. It is important to address this intolerance, as it can be a source of internal political conflicts. The anthropological approach provides a valuable tool for diplomacy channels to ensure long-lasting peace.

KEYWORDS: Cohabitation, Ethnicities, Mozambique, Political Conflicts, Tolerance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The article aims to measure the level of tolerance in regional inter-ethnic cohabitation in Mozambique, among the main ethnic groups, the Machangana (South), the Macena (Centre) and the Macua (North) in relation to marriage, sharing business or employment opportunities and political power.

According to Ngovene (2023, p.531), Mozambique is a country with cultural segregation along its rivers, dividing the main ethnic groups of the Machangana, the Macena, and the Macua, into areas South, Centre, and North, and culturally by languages and lineage systems (patrilinear versus matrilinear), which creates a clear distinction between one group and another.

The ethnic distinction, coupled with cyclical political conflicts in Mozambique from 1976 to 2019, have influenced to seek an understanding of ethnic tolerance, by raising the question: How do people from a certain ethnic group react when individuals from different ethnic groups come to settle or work in their region?

Through a participant observation method, the research found that people are more tolerant to cohabiting or to marriages across ethnic groups. However, they do not have the same tolerance when it comes to sharing opportunities.

In terms of the organisational structure, the article starts with the current contextualisation as an introductory session. The second section brings a theoretical discussion about ethnic coexistence in different perspectives, emphasizing the theory of cultural relativism. The third section describes the methodology used to conduct the research. Through crossing the quantitative and qualitative data, the fourth section discusses the level of tolerance of different ethnic groups, regarding to cohabitation and to sharing opportunities. The last section is the conclusion remarking that some ethnic groups in Mozambique are more tolerant, and some have little or no tolerance towards others, which may bring about political conflicts.

2.0 ETHNIC COEXISTENCE - THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Inter-ethnic coexistence requires a tolerance of culture or economic, specifically for societies with clear ethnic distinctions such as Mozambique. When societies are highly interconnected and ethnic groups are mixed, the level of tolerance is also higher. However, societies with a limited mixture, or clearly separated by ethnic groups, are likely to be less tolerant.

According to Soeters (2005, p.23), when the boundaries are clearly identified and people live in a separated manner, then there is a greater chance of intolerance and tensions occurring.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

Therefore, the main cities in Mozambique, such as Maputo, Beira and Nampula, constitute examples of true tolerance as they are strongly mixed, in comparison with the countryside districts. In the main cities, people do not focus on the origin, social status, or political affiliation of individuals, unless the behaviour of a certain person disturbs the society. In such an instance, the person causing a disturbance is judged regarding his origin and culture.

On the contrary, in the countryside, such as in the District of Massingir, people tend to know more about each other. Issues such as the ethnic origin and social status of certain individuals are taken seriously, especially the identity of a newcomer.

Ethnic tolerance and ethnic hate incidents are two contrasting circumstances mutually exclusive to each other.

According to Sedmak, Medarić, and Walker (2014), ethnic tolerance refers to the acceptance, understanding, and respect for individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. It promotes inclusivity, appreciation of differences, and the rejection of discriminatory attitudes. In an ethnically tolerant society, people coexist peacefully, valuing the richness that diversity brings to their communities. On the other hand, ethnic hate incidents involve acts of discrimination, prejudice, and hostility towards individuals or groups based on their ethnicity.

We must acknowledge tolerance regarding economic interests and ambitions of power as central in the analysis of conflicts. However, I agree with Soeters (2005, p.74), that cultural factors play an important role in conflict arising.

Indeed, there is an extensive literature about ethnic coexistence and its connection with conflict.

Joseph Soeters, in *Ethnic Conflicts and Terrorism: The Origins and dynamics of Civil Wars*. (2005), describes ethnic conflicts in Europe in historical perspective and tries to find a bridge to the terrorism networks.

Jan Sokol, in, *Ethics, Life and Institutions: An Attempt at Practical Philosophy* (2016), shows how the lack of relativist vision can break up with ethics and creates focus of conflict.

Mateja Sedmak, Zorana Medaric and Sarah Walker in an international project involving five countries, studied Interethnic Conflict and Violence in European Schools.

In Mozambique, Calton Cadeado, discussed the role of ethnicities in the political history of Mozambique.

Indeed, these approaches are important to create a foundation basis to our research however, from the available literature, no author was specific to weigh the level of tolerance of ethnic groups in a certain social area in Mozambique. Therefore, the research aims to fill this gap by weighing the level of tolerance of the main ethnic groups in Mozambique, in the areas of cohabitation, marriage, business and leadership.

2.1 Regional Ethnocentric Thought

Ethnic coexistence was a dominant topic during the construction of African nation-states in 1884/1885, from the Berlin Congress, where African borders were drawn up regardless of ethnic composition. As a result, many different ethnic groups were aggregated within the same nation-state, like in Mozambique (Machangana, Macena, Macua).

Interethnic coexistence happens in African states established mostly in the second half of the 19th century, but also elsewhere across the world in states created before European expansion. The recent Eurobarometer survey reveals that "discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin continues to be regarded as the most widespread form of discrimination in the European Union." (Eurobarometer, SEDMAK, MEDARIĆ, and WALKER, 2014 p. 17).

According to Pratt (2003, p.4), interethnic encounters result in what she labelled "Contact zones," defined as "Social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination - like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today."

In a contact zone, different cultural groups can lose their original identity in a mutual gain or in domination through assimilation, transculturation, or acculturation. In the worst cases, where different cultural groups are not able to balance their coexistence, the interaction tends to end in a political conflict. That is, cultural reasons can end up in politics, specifically if it involves power relations.

By law, these ethnic groups should live as the same people, that is, Mozambican people. It requires a strong interethnic understanding among groups previously separated, geographically and culturally, to become one people. It was then necessary to apply anthropological theories to manage harmonious cohabitation. For this thesis, ethnocentrism is the most important among cultural theories.

Ethnocentrism is a cultural theory based on the assumption that "Societies look at the world with their own group as the centre, they perceive and interpret other societies within their own frames of reference, and they invariably judge them inferior." (Booth 1979, p.13)

Therefore, the scope of ethnocentrism is to identify one's own ethnic group as the centre of the universe, with a tendency to view one's own culture as superior to others, and as the model for how to live.

A strong ethnocentric community is relatively intolerant. For this community, it is almost impossible to empathise with foreigners. As a matter of fact, all the communities with unfavourable attitudes to cohabiting with others consider foreigners as awkward and as enemies. Therefore, generally, there is a potential emergence of conflict in these communities.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

Otherwise, people of mixed marriages (e.g. between a Macua woman and a Machangana or Macena man or between a Muslim woman and a Christian man), and people living in areas where population was highly mixed, turned out to be more tolerant. In other words, when the boundaries are clearly identified and people live in a separated manner, then there is a high chance of intolerance and tensions.

With both ethnic intolerance and ethnocentrism, people consider their own ethnic group as the one with the rights to occupy the most important positions in the administration, so that they will have authority to decide on the distribution of public services.

Ethnic intolerance creates a kind of nepotism, as Soeters points out, "The civil service issue is a clear form of what is elsewhere referred to as 'ethnic nepotism' i.e. favouring the members of one's own group, and this has unmistakably been proved to be a source of irritation and conflict." (Soeter, 2005, p.25)

If ethnic intolerance means ethnocentrism, then, tolerance requires a cultural relativism approach.

2.2 Cultural or Ethnic Relativism in Political Conflict

Cultural relativism, according to Bernard (2004, p.99), can be defined as cultures judging each other according to their own internal standards, without any universal standard to judge between cultures. That is, each norm is valid within a specific cultural context.

According to Sokol (2016), with regards to customs, not only is there nothing that can be called absolute, but there are not even any scales we can use to tell the difference of them. Therefore, he concludes stating that, "If everything is merely relative, there is no basis for evaluation or judgment." (Sokol, 2016, p.83)

In international context, based on cultural relativism, for instance, scholars like Glacier (2013) and Afshari (2011), claim that there are no universal human rights. They argue that the norms and standards projecting the fundamental rights of individuals represent a Western vision of the world, rather than a universal one.

Indeed, in different countries the Human Rights Law was systematically violated because it was against the standard local cultural norms. In Morocco, "Using the mutilation of female sex organs as an example, certain studies argue that local populations, tied to their folklore and traditions, resist these rights." (Glacier, 2013, p.43)

In Mozambique the Human Rights Law also found a resistance regarding the right to study, specifically for the female, because they were traditionally reserved to take care of homework.

Another phenomenon connected to the female in the schools was the pre-mature¹ marriage. Pre-mature marriage was a default tradition among Mozambican girls, specifically from the countryside. Adults' men used to choose an 8 to 12 years old to be their wives. Sometimes they took immediately to their homes as spouse, but in some other times, the girls were only committed to marry with that man upon the appearance of breast.

The practice has been negatively affecting the education system and women's empowerment.

However, grace to the civic education taken by different governmental and non-Governmental institutions, this barrier was overcome. What was understood as Western values became a normal tradition that men and women have the same right to education. Relativism implies the deepest tolerance, in the sense that each ethnic group may see others as they see themselves or wish to be seen.

In contrary, we have heard some ethnic groups considering themselves as superior or more privileged among others. As Hagendoorn and Nekuee point out "These negative attitudes do not represent an adherence to notions of biological inferiority but, rather, a belief in the cultural inferiority of ethnic group." (2020, p.205)

In a domestic context, based on this principle, our research sought to understand the level of ethnic tolerance among the Machangana from the South, the Macena from the Centre, and the Macua from the North, when they interact with each other in the spheres of family, business, administration, and politics. We recognised from the beginning that ethnic segregation is not an overt issue in Mozambique.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This empirical research is based on the assumption that some ethnic groups in Mozambique are more tolerant, and some have little or no tolerance towards others, which may bring about political conflicts.

Empirical research aims to gather evidence for this assumption.

The data used for the evidence were collected in intense field research in Mozambique, via participant observation, from July to September, 2023.

During this period, the researcher spent a significant amount of time in Massingir (South), Beira (Centre), and Nampula (North) participating in the group's routine activities and social events.

The evidence was collected and analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively to ensure a wide-reaching and deep conclusion.

Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire with ten close-ended questions. The questions measure the level of tolerance of people from different regions of Mozambique in social, economic, administrative, and political spheres.

¹ Pre-mature marriage refers to a marriage involving people below 18 years old.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

The sample of quantitative research comprises 150 respondents, with 50 individuals from each place, to represent the ethnic group. Although the selection of respondents was random by availability, in terms of age, it was mainly young people between 18 and 35 who answered the questionnaire. Therefore, they make up 72% of the sample, according to the table.

Table 1: Description of Sample

Description	I	II	III	Total
Age	Youths	Adults	Over 60s	N = 150
	18 to 35 = 108 (72%)	36 to 59 = 36 (24%)	60+ = 6 (4%)	
Region/ Ethnic group	Machangana - South	Macena - Centre	Macua - North	
	Massingir = 50	Beira = 50	Nampula = 50	

Source: Elaborated by the Author, 2024.

The sample of 150 respondents out of about 30 million Mozambicans does not seem representative; however, in ethnography, what counts is the quality of interventions through interviews and participant observations.

The questionnaire responses were analysed using Statistic Program for Social Science (SPSS), a tool widely used to analyse quantitative data through means of charts and tables.

The correlation between ethnic tolerance and the emergence of conflicts in different Mozambican regions helped to interpret the statistical data. For this purpose, quantitative and qualitative analyses were used in parallel.

The qualitative research data were collected through informal interviews to discover more detailed opinions about tolerance and feelings about living and working with people from different ethnic groups or being governed by someone with different ethnic origins. This technique involved 18 interviewees distributed according to the table below.

Table 2: Distribution of interviewees by regions and occupations

Distribution	Regions and occupation			Total
Regions	Massingir = 9	Beira = 4	Nampula = 5	N = 18
Occupation	Politicians = 7	Public Servants = 3	Academicians = 1	
	Market traders = 4	Traditional leaders = 2	Students = 3	

Source: Elaborated by the author, 2024

The interviewees were previously selected by convenience, based on their role in certain areas. Therefore, politicians, public servants, market traders and academics interviewed in this research are those occupying leadership positions. The rationale for this method of selection is that, if these individuals can represent their groups on a specific matter, then, their individual opinions can also be representative.

The interviewees are mainly in Massingir, representing Machangana from the South. This is because the author belongs to the same ethnic group, sharing a language and other cultural features with the natives.

The other form of qualitative data collection was via two focus groups composed mainly by experts in social sciences.

The first Focus group was organised on August 17 at the University of Licungo (UniLicungo), in Beira. Academics and bachelor students of Anthropology, Philosophy, Sociology, Political Science and History expressed their opinions in an open debate, preceded by a brief presentation about Mozambique's ethnic composition.



Fig1: Focus Group at the University of Licungo - Beira

Source: Photo by the Author, 2023.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

The above images document the focus group session at UniLicungo.

The second focus group was in a virtual mode with master's students in Human Rights, and lecturers from the Catholic University of Mozambique (UCM), on August 24, 2023.

Significantly, this group consisted of people from backgrounds ranging from judges, and public officers to anthropologists. Therefore, the triangulation of information collected through these techniques and interpreted through the analytical tools ensured consistent results.

4.0 ETHNIC ACCEPTANCE IN COHABITATION AND MARRIAGE

It was always challenging for an individual to settle in a region with a different culture from their own. The individual resents having to adapt to feel comfortable, in areas ranging from linguistic to the adoption of the local customs, such as traditional dances, type of food, and the form of greeting others.

The process occurs in a gradual way and, the greater the interaction among newcomers and native people, the more rapid their integration. However, settling in is mostly challenging in instances of less interaction or even when newcomers from different ethnic groups are rejected outright by certain natives from the new community.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique (CRM, 2004, art. 35)², all Mozambican citizens have the same rights within the Mozambican territory, regardless to their race, ethnic origin, place of birth or social status.

To confront the rights stated by the law and the reality in the field, our research tried to gather responses from 150 people who were asked about their position regarding cohabitation and marriage with people from different ethnic groups. The results are summed up in Table 4.

Table 3: Cohabitation and marriage among different ethnic groups

Questions	Yes		No		I don't mind		Total
	Num.	Perc.	Num.	Perc.	Num.	Perc.	
Do you feel uneasy about cohabiting with people from different ethnic groups in this community?	18	12%	95	63%	37	25%	N = 150 100%
Would you prefer to marry a partner from the same ethnic group as yours?	35	23%	27	18%	88	59%	

Source: Elaborated by the author, based on the questionnaire, 2024.

According to the results, people are tolerant of cohabiting with individuals from different ethnic groups. Statistically, 63% do not feel uneasy to cohabiting with other people from different ethnic origins to their own.

People from the Focus Groups (FG) argue in favour of tolerance to a friendly cohabitation among people from different ethnic groups based on the principle of nationalism:

The Republic of Mozambican is united and indivisible therefore, no matter if you decide to move from the North to settle in the South, you are still a Mozambican living in your country. You are still enjoying the Mozambican citizenship. (Attendant1, FG - UniLicungo, 2023)

This vision aligns with the CRM, as it supports to a non-discrimination approach.

There are, indeed, other contributions to the tolerance focusing on Anthropological approaches.

We need to eliminate ethnic barriers to enhance tolerance in Mozambique. If we leave ethnic pre-conceptions backwards, we would be building a nation and contributing for a lasting peace. (Attendant 3, FG - UniLicungo, 2023)

Such in legal as in anthropological perspectives, the arguments point to the need of tolerance in a cohabitation to ensure a national peace.

The 12% of people bothered by ethnic cohabitation should not be underestimated, because this low number may be growing and transmitting the feeling of ethnic and regional hatred.

However, when it comes to a deeper family integration through marriage, a significant 23% refuse to be involved maritally with a partner from a different ethnic group.

Indeed, the extent of interethnic marital intolerance is high in the countryside, where people are keen to keep the tradition alive.

It is extremely difficult to marry someone from different ethnic group of Machangana because she had a different family upbringing. The way she was taught how to take care a husband is different from our tradition and at some

² CRM, 2004, art.35: Todos os cidadãos são iguais perante a lei, gozam dos mesmos direitos e estão sujeitos aos mesmos deveres, independentemente da cor, raça, sexo, origen étnica, lugar de nascimento, religião, grau de instrução, posição social, estado civil dos pais, profissão ou opção política.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

point, we see her familiar behaviour as disrespectful. [I1 (Interviewed-1), Interviewed in Massingir, August 3, 2023, IPC]

For the outsider girls, the challenge was to copy the local culture when they get married in a different place of their origin. But for men, apart from cultural clashing, they also needed to break up with the protectionist barrier. In Massingir, the local men protected their fellow girls to get married by the outsider.

In my youth we did not accept outsider men to dating with girls from our region. We were vigilantes in this matter, and we considered this behaviour as abuse. If we notice that a male from other region uses to come and dating girl from this region we tried to ambush and beat during the night. We were a team of around 10 young men, and due to our trend to protect our girls against outsider, later we became known as the protector team. However, it was easy for our local girls to meet their outsider boyfriends outside of our region. (I2, Interviewed in Massingir, August 6, 2023, IPC)

The above thought is strongly intolerant and could be a focus of ethnic conflict. Fortunately, people with this thought constitute minority of our sample and they relate to the past over 40 years. Currently, thanks to the easy flow of information, people changed the approach regarding to inter-ethnic marriage.

In general, a majority of 59% do not care about the ethnic origin of their partners as they understand modernity as an epoch to break up regional barriers with the flow of people and goods, which has been strengthened by the facility of communications.

For me, it does not matter if someone comes from which ethnic group or even nationality. The most important in a relationship is a mutual understanding, and common goals. The habits and local or family customs can be cultivated through the time. (Attendant 2, FG - UniLicungo, 2023)

From the results, both the inquiry and FG or separate interviews, people showed they are open to interethnic cohabitation and marriage, as more than half of the respondents demonstrated tolerant behaviour.

If 63% are not bothered about living with people from a different ethnic group and 59% do not even pay attention to the ethnic origin of their partner, then we are among an ethnic tolerance.

Indeed, we believe that their receptive attitude can influence other low number of people with a rejection attitude to change their perception and become more tolerance to.

Therefore, simple interethnic cohabitation and marriage cannot constitute a source of conflict based on the results so far presented. However, this is not an ended data to draw a conclusion about tolerance. It is necessary to expand the analyses to different areas such as in the business and occupation of vacancies and positions in Public Administration.

5.0 REGIONAL UNBALANCED BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES – EXPERIENCE OR ETHNICITY?

According to the INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTATÍSTICA (INE) (2019, p.51), among 28 million of the Mozambican population (projected to 30 million people in 2023), the tertiary sector, (transportation, communications, business, finance, and administrative services), absorbed only 13% of people.

This percentage includes traders in the formal and informal market and public servants. Therefore, the employability rate is very low, and the work demand is very high.

We sought to understand the feelings of 150 natives (50 in each ethnic region), towards people from different ethnic groups coming to work in their region, and the results tend to reflect a certain level of rejection.

The key question concerned the sharing of opportunities between natives and people coming from different ethnic groups, and it was split into three focus areas: business, public administration and, leadership positions. The surveyed people were grouped by regions according to their ethnic origin (Machangana-South; Macena-Centre; Macua-North). Each question featured three options: Agree, Disagree, and No Relationship (N.R), and the results are summarised in the chart below.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

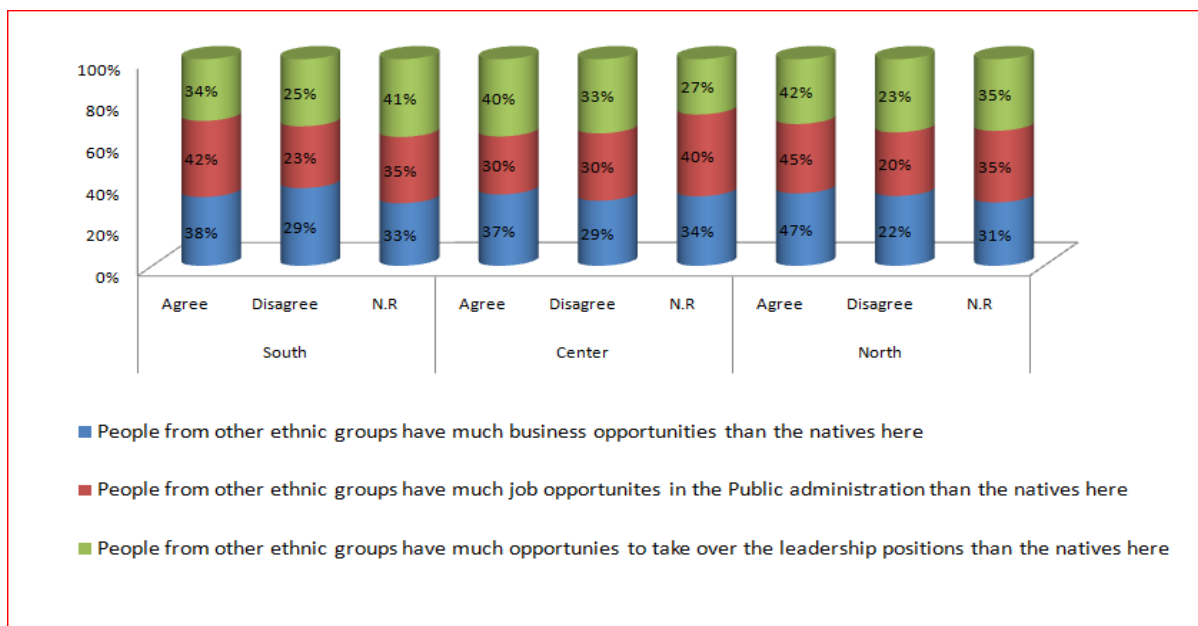


Chart 1: Relationship - Opportunities vs Ethnicities

Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire, 2023.

Based on the results, the native people in different regions are convinced that outsiders have more business opportunities in comparison with the natives. Among the Machangana from the South, 38% support this position. However, the highest level of agreement was among the Macua from the North, with 47% supporting that the outsiders have more job opportunities.

For this study, we understand the data as the focus of interethnic intolerance, when it is related to opportunities.

The motivations for this way of thinking vary from one region to another. In the South, the Machangana understand that outsiders offer themselves to the labour market for any kind of job and they do not care about a fair salary.

The bad thing is that they take our jobs, and they gain half the money a native would get if he/she had this job, therefore they are the mostly preferred by the employers. (I2, Interviewed in Massingir, August 6, 2023, IPC)

The Macua from Nampula (the North) view people from other ethnic regions, especially the Machangana from the South, as those owners of big investments in the North, in the extraction of mineral resources, as an example. In fact, the North is rich in mineral resources such as precious stones, coal, and gas, but it is mostly exploited by foreign companies, or if they are nationals, they do not belong to the Macua ethnic group.

What we have seen, people from Maputo (South), when they submit a request to exploit any business, such as a mineral activity, they get approval at once, without delay neither complication, but for us, as the native, is very tight to get an exploration license. In all these big investments, none belong to a native. (I10, interviewed in Nampula, August 23, 2023, IPC)

We do not pretend to argue against this feeling. However, the interlocutor is a mineral exploiter and, the mineral industry is very complex to be analysed in an ethnic perspective as it requires a robust investment, mostly via business trust with international companies.

Therefore, to broaden our understanding we interviewed exploiters of traditional business, like clothes and food market. The feeling of the native in these markets is almost the same as in the mineral industry.

In the fashion market I don't see any open discrimination based on whatever reason, ethnic origin, race, or religion.

But coincidentally people running high business volume are not originally from here in Nampula. Maybe most of us we fail in our management to become succeeded businessmen, or to hold ownership of large commercial enterprises. (I12, interviewed in Nampula, August 24, 2023, IPC)

In the business field, there is a common feeling of ethnic favouritism among the Northerners.

We can try to associate these arguments to the Portuguese legacy of unbalanced opportunities of education among Southerners, Centre and Northerners. Indeed, to run a successful business requires management skills.

At the same time, we understand that disregarding these witnesses would neglect an overt ethnic sentiment.

First, the Portuguese rule ended over 50 years ago. It is enough time to balance the education opportunities throughout the country. From the last 10 years up to today, the higher education institutions have been in all provinces, therefore, unbalanced education can no longer be used to excuse regional favouritism.

Second, as Pollard and Kinyera (2017) emphasised, the Northerners, especially people from Nampula, are more experienced in business because they were in contact with Middle East and Indian traders back in the 7th Century through the Mozambique Island.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

Indeed, the first Arabic traders arrived in Mozambique through the Mozambique Island in Nampula and they established trade relations with the Northern region, before the Portuguese arrival in the 15th Century.

If the contact with Arabic traders justifies the predominance of Islamic religion in the Northern, then, by the same reason, we believe that Northern people are experienced enough in business in comparison with people from the South.

From the data in the chart and the collected statements grounded with the daily observation in the field, we can draw two intertwined conclusions in the business domain.

1. In each region, the locales think that people coming from other regions have much business opportunities in the region, than the natives.
2. This thought is not grounded, neither in politics, nor in education skills or business experience.

Each ethnic group accuse the other ethnic groups as being unfair competitors in business. On one hand, the Southerners look at the Northerners as the most preferable in the informal labour market because they cheaply offer themselves to work. On the other hand, the Northerners look at the Southerners as being the most privileged in the labour market.

In a nutshell, people are not tolerant to share business opportunities. They hate each other based on ethnicities.

6.0 ETHNIC FAVOURITISM IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

In the Public Administration, it is worth mentioning that the Government is the biggest employer in Mozambique. Statistically, "The tertiary sector (transportation, communications, business, finance public administration) absorbs 13% (2.464.400) out of 17.280.000 economically active population. From this number, the Government employs 385.000 to work in Public Administration, corresponding to 16%." (INE, 2019, p.51)

Many trained people have an expectation of working in the Public Administration after completing their courses. However, the selection procedure for entrance in Public Administration is through a public tender, often at a national level and without ethnic discrimination.

The data in the Chart 2 show that 42% in the South, 30% in the Centre and 45% in the North believe that people from outside the region have many opportunities to find jobs in Public Administration, in comparison with the natives, even when the tenders were opened locally, in Municipality level.

In the countryside villages, such as Massingir, they link unequal opportunities with the lack of training of the natives:

Indeed, the public servants here in Massingir are mostly from different regions of Mozambique. But it does not necessarily mean that the selection procedure rejects the natives. From long time ago the native people were rather focused on cattle grazing and farming than training to gain academic skills, required in the Public Administration. But in the last 10 years they opened the eyes therefore, now we have young people with complete higher education. Unfortunately, the Government is no longer hiring many people in the last years, hence our sons are shooting cans around the village and at the end they get involved in criminal activities. (I2, Interviewed in Massingir, August 6, 2023, IPC)

However, in the urban centres, such as in Beira and Nampula, they consider the favouritism towards outsiders to relate to the unfair and blurred selection procedure.

Here in Nampula, all you need is just to have a family member in the top level of Government to be hired. If people in the high level, that is, with possibilities to manipulate the tender, they bring their family members from their ethnic origin. (I10, Interviewed in Nampula, August 23, 2023, IPC)

In the Centre, they also have an ethnic mentality. However, they regard the selection procedure as fair and based on the score achieved in the entrance exam.

The Public Administration staff is composed by people from different origin. Before the tender date, people from outsider Districts or even Provinces, when they decide to apply here in Beira, they come some two or three days earlier, they lock themselves in the rent room practicing with entrance exams of the previous years or reading the proposed legislation. Our sons from here in Beira, they spend two or three hours reading, then they go to meet their friends.

Therefore, the outsiders are likely placed in better positions in the approval list. (Attendant 2, FG - UniLicungo, 2023)

In short, despite the existence of legislation with clear procedures of selection to enter to the Public Administration, people believe in ethnic ties during the selection. This idea was built in during the time of African empires. During the said epoch, power and privileged work positions were deeply tied to lineages.

Based on this lineage assumption, we searched for the people's understanding among three regions concerning the leadership positions in the Public Administration.

34% in the South, 40% in the Centre and 42% in the North agreed that the leadership positions in Public Administration are mainly occupied by outsiders.

The reasons for this, as confirmed by the questionnaire, divide opinions, as some people find it legitimate while others see it as running counter to local sovereignty.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

Wherever there is a leadership position like for the header of certain service (Education, Health, etc.) in the district level, they bring someone from outside the district to occupy. If the position is from the province level, they bring someone from outside the province. But it is not bad because, is rather easy to respect, as a chief, someone you are not very familiar with him, than to someone you saw his childhood and his carrier building. In this later case, people always try to link his status with the past, that is, before he was granted authority. (I2, Interviewed in Massingir, August 6, 2023, IPC)

In Nampula (North), they have a different perception:

It is always a good idea to start a leadership role in your native region. It gives our local sons to grow in their carrier right here where they can have closer people to make consultations, not only about the specific tasks of this position but also about different topics of life. If you are not familiar with people, because you are not a native, you will take a while to familiarise with people and it can affect your leadership role. (I8, Interviewed in Nampula, August 24, 2023, IPC)

Some people do not see any kind of relationship between ethnic origin and job opportunities, which is good in terms of ethnic tolerance. However, the number of people making a direct connection between ethnic origin and job opportunities is indeed high and worrisome.

In a nutshell, people hate their Mozambican fellows from different ethnic groups when it comes to sharing opportunities in their own regions of origin. When people are out of their ethnic origin, they are commonly given names such as "outsiders" or "job stealers", when it is about competition for job vacancies.

From this perspective, we can define this attitude as ethnic intolerance. However, we cannot decide whether ethnic intolerance can be the sole source of political conflict. Therefore, we extended our research to scrutinise the thoughts of natives about the preferences of ethnic origin of their political leaders.

7.0 POLITICAL LEADERSHIP VS ETHNIC ORIGIN

The relationship between politics and ethnicities exists in communities and cannot be underestimated, and its strength depends on various factors.

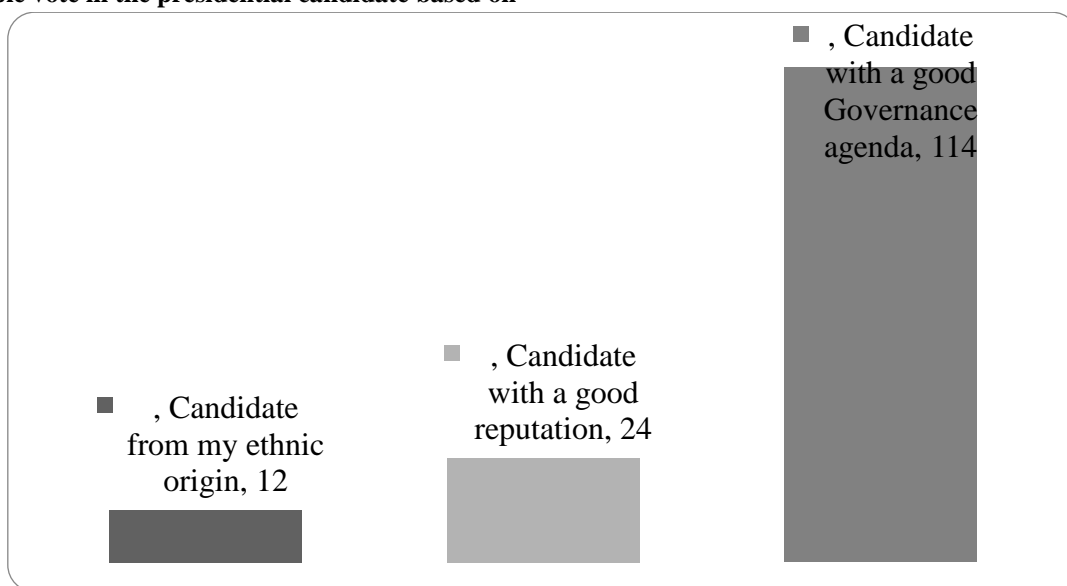
In our previous research we found that "Where the political information about certain elite or political party is scarce, voters scrutinise the candidate through their ethnic identity." (Ngovene, 2023, p.537)

In this case, upon elected, politician needs to reward the supporting ethnic group to keep this relationship live. The rewards range from over-supplying public service to over-granting privileged political and administrative positions to this ethnic group, regardless to the required skills for the said positions.

In researching ethnic tolerance in politics, we asked the same sample of 150 people, *what they take into consideration during the election of a presidential candidate*.

The results show a certain level of political maturity and tolerance because people do not put much emphasis on a candidate's ethnic origin, according to the chart below.

Chart 2: People vote in the presidential candidate based on



Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire, 2023.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

Most of surveyed, that is 114 people, corresponding to 76%, affirmed they vote for a candidate based on their appreciation of his/her political agenda. This finding allows us to assert that people are politically tolerant of being ruled by a President with a national political view, regardless of his ethnic identity.

The voting based on political agenda was also confirmed during the focus group:

The presidential candidates have the right to introduce himself over the country, during the electoral campaign, to explain his political governance agenda. This activity has a State Budget support, apart from the internal sources within the political parties. It is up to the voters to decide on which candidate have presented a convinced agenda. (Attendant 4, FG - UniLicungo, 2023)

16% (24 people) pointed out that they vote based on the reputation and records of the candidate. However, this data can only fit for those candidates with records of a previous role with a remarkable impact on society, such as the renewal presidential candidates.

The emergent candidates in the political arena do not have a recorded political background but can, indeed, enter in the poll. In these cases, the voters, especially those with little skill to judge the governance agenda, scrutinise the candidate through their ethnic identity.

Therefore, 12 people, corresponding to the 8% mentioned that they vote for the candidate from their ethnic origin.

The arguments to directing the vote based on ethnicities could be a response or a strategy of the excluded groups to find a cohesion among them.

Historically, the FRELIMO party is a joint of the three movements (UDENAMO, MANU and UNAMI), created based on ethnic lines. There was a dispute between the Macena, Macua and Machangana. However, the Machangana were soft, therefore, they were not directly involved in this dispute. Hence, Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, a Machangana from the South, merged the three movements into one front– FRELIMO. This merge did not, completely, cut ethnic political orientation. Upon independence, ethnic exclusion became clearly notable in benefits distribution, including the selection to occupy the Government positions. From the independence onwards, each leader propagated a message that there has been an exclusion of people from their ethnic region to benefit the Machangana from the South. The native people, rather preferred to massively adhere this message spread by the fellow ethnic member, than the nationalism message diffused by a leader sent from the South or somewhere. Upon the foundation of RENAMO, people found it as the right option to rescue from FRELIMO. This is the main reason, up to the early 1992 RENAMO had occupied 78% of the national territory, because they diffused the message against ethnic exclusion. (I6, Interviewed in Beira, August 15, 2023, IPC)

As Smith (1960) pointed out, the ethnic groups are linked through family systems, ways of production, languages, and religion but they do not have their own political system. Therefore, if an ethnic member finds a political movement, their fellow are likely to support without questioning.

Indeed, ethnic support among the exclusion groups has been discussed from different perspectives. Weber (1968) labelled it as “reactive-ethnicity model” to explain that the excluded ethnic groups tend to strengthen their solidarity to become strong enough to stand against the favourable group.

The other argument to directing the vote based on ethnicity is related to the similarity of political agenda presented by almost all the candidates in the poll.

People vote in the candidate based on ethnic origin because, despite the ascending wave of literacy, not many people care about reading the governance agenda, but also, because all the candidates promise to do the same thing during the electoral campaign. Therefore, people rely on ethnic ties to give their vote of confidence. (I6, Interviewed in Beira, August 15, 2023, IPC)

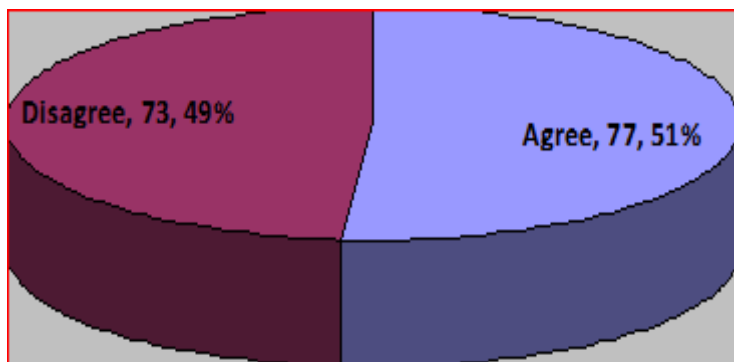
In fact, the electoral manifests of different candidates seem to be the same, with a slight difference on the language used or with utopian promises in some cases.

The third argument to directing the vote in ethnic lines is associated with the expectation that upon elected, the president may overprovision to his ethnic group with the state privileges, such as public services and government positions.

Although the data, significantly indicate voting tendencies based on political agenda, there is an idea, according to which "the elected president acts in a nationwide but gives many privileges to his ethnic origin." This idea was widely discussed in the perspective of ethnic mobilisation by Ngovene (2023, pp.532-536), and the conclusion was that, from 1994 to 2014, the candidates were voted for mainly according to their ethnic origin.

Therefore, people were questioned as to whether they agree or disagree that "once elected, the president uses to over-privilege to their ethnic origin", and the surprising results are presented below.

Chart 3: Opinion about the President's Attention.



Source: Elaborated by the author based on questionnaire, 2023.

More than half of the surveyed people (51%) confirmed that, once elected, the presidents give different regional considerations and much emphasis to their ethnic origin.

It seems to be a contradiction for us. On one hand, people are aware that once elected, the candidate shows favouritism to his own ethnic origin, but on the other hand, they show a commitment to scrutinising candidates based on their political agenda.

I do not agree that the elected president gives extra privileges to his ethnic origin. For example, the President Filipe Nyusi is a Makonde from Cabo-Delgado, but he has not done anything special there in his two leadership terms. The mega-projects settled in Cabo-Delgado were built during the Guebuza's mandates. The trend of the government is to over privilege where the top leaders have their investments. (I6, Interviewed in Beira, August 15, 2023, IPC)

It is obvious that people can have a divided opinion about ethnic approach, some being more tolerant and others, extremely intolerant.

The research reveals an ethnic intolerance that can be explained through different ways.

The Macena from the Centre and the Macua from the North, see the Machangana from the South as being the mentors of fake "image of traitor" about the Centre and North.

Since the war of liberation, during the single movement (FRELIMO), the Southerners mostly diffused that people like Joana Simeao, Lázaro Khavandame and Mateus Gwenjere were the traitors of the homeland, and they represent the Macena from the Centre and the Macua from the North. Currently the speech changed to rename the most appealing politicians from the Centre and the North as they are serving for the foreign interest. Hence, if the President belongs to this region, this kind of thought can change. (I4, Interviewed in Beira, August 14, 2023, IPC)

In their turn, the Southerners accuse the Macena and the Macua of being rude and focused on wars:

The Macena and Macua are specialists in wars, not in a soft power to lead the Country as President. They acquired this talent during the war of national liberation, which started in the North (Cabo-Delgado). From that experience, they are more likely to start a war, as they did to the Civil War, between Renamo and the Government (1976-1992), the hostility conflict (2013-2014), the post electoral conflict (2016-2018), all started in the Centre. (I3, Interviewed in Massingir, August 3, 2023, IPC)

In short, voters overtly scrutinise the candidates based on their political agenda, but covertly through their ethnic origin.

People try to find a reason to support a presidential candidate based whether on his ethnic origin or political agenda but, in practice, they believe that the elected candidate will confer benefits on his own region. Whether through patriotic trust, or technical skills, there is a hidden fight to have a President of the Republic of Mozambique from a certain region. In other words, each ethnic group desires that the President should belong to their region to gain privileges over the other regions.

8.0 SCHOLAR SPORT GAMES AND NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CULTURE – THE ETHNIC TOLERANCE PROMOTORS.

In a country such as Mozambique, with a higher cultural diversity, it is vitally important to shape a spirit of national identity through a permanent crossing of different ethnic groups and their cultural traits. The crossing and mixing of different ethnic groups ensure a commitment to national unity and tolerance among themselves.

According to Brown & Johnson (2015, p.77), "Cultural identity can also be shaped at special organised gatherings such as music festivals, sports championships or markets like the winter market."

In fact, article 11, line g) of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique (2024), defines as one of the fundamental goals of the state, "The promotion of a society of pluralism, tolerance and culture of peace." Indeed, the School Sport Games and the National Festival of Culture, both taking place once every two years, have been a true means of cultural interaction to ensure ethnic tolerance. These events occur in different provinces in rotation.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

The first edition of the scholar sport games took place in Maputo in 1978, while the first edition of the National Festival of Culture was from 28/12/1980 to 04/01/1981.

According Machel (2023), the first edition in 1980/1981 was called National Festival of Traditional Music and Songs (FNCMT - *Festival Nacional de Canto e Música Tradicional*). The first edition intended to align with the post-independence period in which the government project focused in creating the so called “New Man”³. The festival constituted a government endeavour to value Mozambican identity and personality and to transform individual experiences into collective experiences for a community. Additionally, the regional cultural experiences needed to become national experiences to consolidate national unity.

Indeed, each edition of the National Festival of Culture is an opportunity to promote national unity.

However, the educational system, right from primary school, does not motivate students to acquire knowledge about other ethnic groups and cultures. The content of the curriculum related to Mozambican cultural identity is taught from secondary schools.

In a nutshell, we cannot consider the inclusion of cultural promotion in the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique as enough to create ethnic tolerance. Education is also another powerful means of cultivating tolerance among different groups, to allow them to see themselves as equals with the same right to share opportunities.

9.0 CONCLUSION AND REMARKS

Ethnic division or tribalism may have declined during the merging of the three regional movements to form FRELIMO, but it has been replaced by a new form consisting of the assumption that there are some ethnic group overprivileged than the others.

The research revealed that the Machangana from the South, the Macena from the Centre, and the Macua from the North tolerate cohabitation and marriage across the ethnic groups. However, when it comes to sharing opportunities such as employment or business, there is a perception that individuals from different ethnic groups may be taking away opportunities. Similarly, each ethnic group believes that having a president from their own group would lead to better opportunities for their community.

The level of intolerance tends to increase when moving from the cities to the villages. Beira, the capital city of Sofala, is the most multicultural city, where about 34% of the population were not born in Beira. Therefore, they showed themselves more tolerant than people from Massingir, the countryside.

The study highlights the importance of addressing this intolerance, as it can be a source of internal political conflicts.

9.1 What is the Next Step?

Wolff (2010), in a TED Conference entitled “The path to ending ethnic conflicts”, based on the learning experience from the Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Montenegro, Kenya, Liberia and Sudan, highlights three elements necessary to mitigate ethnic conflicts, which I believe can be applied to the Mozambican context: Leadership, Diplomacy and Institutional design.

The leadership must show an interest and willing to negotiate and, above all, to pave the way for Diplomacy to act accordingly and, there should be organised institutions to handle the achieved agreements.

In Mozambique, beside the civil war which lasted 16 years, the following conflicts raised mainly because the trusted institutions did not follow the achieved agreements in the previous resolutions, mainly the *Acordo Geral de Paz*⁴ (AGP). One of the key and problematic point was the inclusion of the remaining RENAMO’s armed men to the Armed Forces of Mozambique. The leadership was not proactively enough to predict the risk of not fulfilling this clause. As a result, for any unhappiness, whether of economic, political, or ethnic reason, RENAMO uses these remaining men to start a civil war because they are trained for that and are prone to engage in a war.

Diplomacy needs to be well equipped with necessary tools for negotiation to achieve higher impact accords. Additional, Diplomacy cannot be attorned to a political party, to ensure its independence.

Finally, the institutions designed to ensure the fulfilment of the achieved agreements need to be organised from their conception to functionality.

The disconnection or malfunctioning of these three elements creates an unbalanced benefit of the major agreements. The unbalancing could be felt among different territorial regions, that is, South, Centre, and North, or among different social classes.

Indeed, with the results of this study we conclude that Mozambican people from different ethnic groups do not see themselves with the same citizens rights, although the Constitution of the Republic establishes the same rights to all Mozambican. Ethnic intolerance is rooted in this basis.

In the short-term, there is a need to organise a series of lectures about the rights of a Mozambican citizen, to be delivered to all communities, but focusing on the countryside. The results show that the countryside communities are less informed about the common rights of the citizens of Mozambique, therefore, they are likely to reject people from other ethnic groups and prone to engage in a conflict to expel them out.

³ New Man was a designation of independent human with a mentality free of colonialism and free of all the colonial conceptions.

⁴ AGP (Acordo Geral de Paz) – the Peace General Accord signed on 4th October, 1992 in Rome (Italy) between the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO, to put an end the 16 years of the horrible civil war.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

The team of lecturers should be composed by Anthropologists, Political Scientists, Historians and Jurists. The main content is to draw a nationalist consciousness, regardless to the individual ethnic identity. We believe that this approach could reduce ethnic hate and enhance tolerance among Mozambican.

Currently, an almost similar task has being done via biennial Scholar Sport Games and, via National Festival of Culture. These two activities gather students and artist from all the country in a rotationally selected city in biennial basis.

The attendance to these activities observes a selection criterion to ensure representation of all the provinces with a given quota. Hence, it is obvious that the activities do not involve all Mozambicans but the selected people. Therefore, the lectures could complement these activities to draw a nationalist consciousness to the remaining people without opportunity to be directly involved in such activities.

In the long-term, one way of overcoming intolerance is to introduce cultural content to help to shaping national identity early in the primary school. Topics such as "People of Mozambique" and "Mozambican ethnic groups" can help to see people from different ethnic groups merely as an identity and not necessarily as enemies.

The findings of this investigation are expected to have a significant role in shaping national identity and to use Anthropology as a valuable tool along with diplomacy channels to ensure long-lasting peace.

Further studies could rely on this research and define practical steps to put into practical place the above outlined proposed solutions for long-last peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I want to thank God for my life and health.

I wish to acknowledge the Grant Agency of Charles University (GAUK) for having funded my field research through the Project no. 1362/2023.

I also owe a deepest thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Marek Halbich, for his wisdom and guidance all through my academic journey.

REFERENCES

- 1) AFSHARI, Reza. (2011). *Human Rights in Iran: The Abuse of Cultural Relativism*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press.
- 2) BERNARD, Alan. (2004). *History and Theory in Anthropology*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- 3) BOOTH, Ken. (1979). *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*. New York, Holmes & Meier Publishers, INC.
- 4) BROWN, Jill; JOHNSON, Nicola F. (Eds.). (2015). *Children's Images of Identity: Drawing the Self and the Other*. Rotterdam, Sense Publishers. ISBN: 978-94-6300-124-3 (e-book)
- 5) CADEADO, Calton. (2011). *Why ethno-political violence has become absent in Mozambique? "Demobilization of ethnicity"*. (Dissertation of Master in Coexistence and Conflict, Brandeis University, Massachusetts).
- 6) GLACIER, Osire. (2013). *Universal Rights, Systemic Violations, and Cultural Relativism in Morocco*. New York, Palgrave MacMillan.
- 7) HAGENDOORN, Louk; NEKUEE, Shervin (Eds.) (2020). *Education and Racism: A Cross National Inventory of Positive Effects of Education on Ethnic Tolerance*. New York: Routledge.
- 8) INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTATÍSTICA. (2019). *Resultados Definitivos: Censo 2017 - IV Recenseamento Geral da População e Habitação*. Available online via www.ine.gov.mz accessed on December 2, 2023.
- 9) MACHEL, Graça. (2023, 05 March). Interview with Graça Machel – Interviewer: Belarmino Lovane (*Interviewed about the First edition of National Festival of Culture*). Access <https://opais.co.mz/o-regresso-do-festival-nacional-da-cultura-uma-outra-conversa-sobre-a-mocambicanidade/>
- 10) NGOVENE, Samuel Francisco. (2023). *Ethnic Mobilisation in Politics -Machangana Ruling Over*. Journal of Namibian Studies, (ISSN: 2197-5523), Vol.36, S2, pp: 524-538, available via <https://namibian-studies.com/index.php/JNS/article/view/4892>
- 11) POLLARD, Edward; KINYERA O. Charles. (2017). *The Swahili Coast and the Indian Ocean Trade Patterns in the 7th–10th Centuries CE*. Journal of Southern African Studies, 43:5, 927-947, DOI: 10.1080/03057070.2017.1345266
- 12) PRATT, Mary Louis. (2003). *Imperial eyes: studies in travel writing and transculturation*. New York, Taylor & Francis e-Library. ISBN 0-203-10635-0.
- 13) REPÚBLICA de MOÇAMBIQUE. (2004). *Constituição da República de Moçambique*. Maputo, Imprensa Nacional.
- 14) SEDMAK, Mateja; MEDARI'C, Zorana and WALKER, Sarah (Ed.) (2014). *Studies of Interethnic Conflict and Violence in European Schools*. New York, Routledge.
- 15) SMITH, M.G. (1960). "Social and Cultural Pluralism." In *Social and Cultural Pluralism in the Caribbean*, eds. V. Rubin, 763–779. Annals of New York, Academy of Sciences.
- 16) SOETERS, Joseph L. (2005). *Ethnic Conflicts and Terrorism: The Origins and dynamics of Civil Wars*. London, Routledge.

Cohabitation, Ethnicities and Tolerance: An Anthropological Approach to the Political Conflicts in Mozambique

- 17) SOKOL, Jan. (2016). *Ethics, Life and Institutions: An Attempt at Practical Philosophy*. Prague, Karolinum Press.
- 18) WEBBER, Max. (1968). *Economy and Society*. Los Angeles, University of California Press.
- 19) WOLFF, Stefan. (2010, 10 November). *The path to ending ethnic conflicts*. Accessed via [https://youtu.be/UfM7t_oqNDw] on December 12, 2023.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.