



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN RESETTLEMENT CAMPS: THE INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE OF NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE

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On my first day of primary school, my teacher asked me the million-dollar question: “Marta, what are your plans for the future?”. As an innocent 6-year-old child with big plans, I told her “I think I want to change the world”. Facing the utopian answer of a revolutionary girl, she said “well, that is a great plan, but you have to learn how to clean up your own room first”. Even though I felt disappointed at that moment, her response later taught me that small steps lead to big changes. I could have not taken this small step without the support of the persons listed below.

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ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence has been widely used by various actors against the most vulnerable individuals in conflict-affected settings. Internally displaced girls and women are especially susceptible to suffer from this type of violence; nevertheless, they frequently choose not to report it. The present research identifies and analyses the reasons for the under-reporting of gender-based violence occurrences against the above-mentioned individuals in northern Mozambique, namely, the province of Cabo Delgado. In the first phase of primary data collection, the researcher conducted two focus group discussions to obtain a transparent understanding of the community members' interpretations, including internally displaced people. In a second phase, seventeen semi-structured interviews were conducted with community agents, activists, service providers, international and non-governmental organizations representatives, and political and religious figures. Subsequently, the findings were evaluated through an altered version of the ecological model (What Works to Prevent Violence, 2018).

The results revealed that under-reporting of gender-based violence cases is caused by the following reasons: victim's fear; social stigma; fear of retaliation; lack of information about gender-based violence and respective materialization; culture-blaming; distorted interpretations of female and male identities; the perpetrators' influence within the community; lack of preparedness of officials working formal institutions, including hospitals, to refer victims to judicial bodies; women empowerment as a secondary subject within decision-making bodies; prevalence and importance of informal institutions and respective decisions; lack of official supervision on informal institutions; grassroots' lack of knowledge on the creation or amendment of laws; male majority in security forces, including police stations and military; abuse of authority; lack of training of security forces concerning gender-based violence and respective long-term implications; absence of a standardized reporting process; and morosity of the trial. Therefore, this research points out that under-reporting of gender-based violence must be evaluated from a variety of cultural, social, and political perspectives.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence; Internally Displaced Girls and Women; Resettlement Camps; Mozambique; Cabo Delgado.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FRELIMO	Liberation Front of Mozambique
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IO	International Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance
UN	United Nations

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Figure 1 Adapted version of the ecological model

1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The Muslim-dominated province of Cabo Delgado has been targeted by ethnic and religious disputes since 2007 (International Crisis Group, 2021; Jorge Cardoso, 2021; UNHCR, 2021). Some theories attribute these disputes to (i) a general feeling of accumulated frustration, resentment, and growing lack of hope towards national authorities; and (ii) radicalism of those who studied abroad – in Saudi Arabia’s *madrassas*, for instance – and did not find in Cabo Delgado the code of conduct for which they aspired (ibid.). In 2011, the discovery of large mineral and hydrocarbon deposits reshaped the province’s dynamic and transformed the region into a vital area for the country’s national authorities. Despite an increase in foreign investment in the province, the population saw their natural resources and land expropriated without feeling short-term improvements in their quality of life. This, along with the above-mentioned radicalism, drew the attention of an Islamist militant group named Ansar al-Sunna¹ (ibid.; FAO, 2022). Since October 2017, the group has been carrying out violent attacks across the province of Cabo Delgado; as a result, insecurity and violence have been triggering a mass displacement within Cabo Delgado and to the neighboring provinces of Niassa, Zambezia, and Nampula. According to data released in February 2022 (FAO, 2022), over 820.000 people have been internally displaced in northern Mozambique – some twice (ibid.; Fontanini, 2021). Concurrently, the recent natural disasters ravaging the region, mainly floods and cyclones, exacerbated the region’s already-existing humanitarian and socioeconomic crises (International Crisis Group, 2021; UNHCR, 2021; IFRC, 2022). Therefore, the number of internally displaced people in northern Mozambique is expected to rise (Fernando, 2022). According to OCHA (2021), children and women make up 79 percent of internally displaced people. Several sources state that these groups – children and women – are particularly exposed to violence as a consequence of forced displacement dynamics, including gender-based violence (ibid.; Phuong, 2004; Internal Displacement, 2020).

Intending to instill fear and spread terror, the phenomenon of gender-based violence has been redefined, as it includes a larger number of actors, both victims and perpetrators, along with a wider variety of categories in comparison with the first reference to this concept (for further information, read UN General Assembly, 1993). Gender-based violence is positioned in both the private and public spheres of life due to its cross-sectional nature and, if not

¹ Popularly known as ‘Al-Shabaab’, the researcher opted for the employment of the expression ‘Ansar al-Sunna’ to avoid confusion with the Somalia-based Islamist group of the same name. Ansar al-Sunna – literally meaning ‘Supporters of the Tradition’ – was founded in 2015 by the followers of the radical Kenyan preacher Aboud Rogo Mohammed, assassinated in 2012. The group recruited frustrated youth who felt marginalized by national authorities and became militarized in 2015 (West, 2018).

contained, perpetuates a cycle of violence against the most vulnerable groups (D’Odorico *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, internally displaced children and women suffer double vulnerability due to forced displacement and exposure to gender-based violence; nevertheless, several actors indicate a low rate of gender-based violence occurrences reported by displaced people in the province of Cabo Delgado (*ibid.*; Issufo, 2021). This apparent incompatibility must be comprehended; for this reason, the researcher argues that the causes of the under-reporting of gender-based violence by internally displaced girls and women are a relevant topic, primarily because the combination of these two elements is rarely addressed. The selection of girls over children is explained in the fourth chapter.

1.1. PURPOSE AND RELEVANCE

In the aftermath of the above-mentioned conflict, internally displaced children and women have been experiencing “ongoing and new forms of gender-based violence” (D’Odorico *et al.*, 2021: p. 3). The armed conflict tore the region’s social fabric apart: family members were separated, security authorities were conflict-centered or absent, and support facilities that had been set up to assist victims of gender-based violence, for example, were destroyed (*ibid.*). At the same time, the arrival of the impacted regions’ population resulted in a large increase in the number of people in host communities (UN-Habitat, 2021). The population of Pemba² tripled: the district has a population of 200.529 people, which includes 151.553 internally displaced people, most of whom are children and women (*ibid.*: p. 2). District authorities had to adjust existing infrastructures or build new ones in remote areas to accommodate a growing number of people – as an example, consider support mechanisms for victims of gender-based violence. Ní Aoláin *et al.* (2012) state that violence against girls and women “not only persists but even increases beyond pre-levels and sometimes even beyond wartime levels” (p. 70). This is relevant in understanding the various forms of vulnerability that girls and women face within host communities, as well as implications for the future, since “gender-based violence is an important constraint that retards economic growth and poverty reduction” (*ibid.*: p. 37).

1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND QUESTIONS

As previously noted, numerous scholars claim that a large number of gender-based violence victims decide not to report the attackers in a scenario of forced displacement due to social

² Pemba is the capital of the province of Cabo Delgado.

stigma, distrust in service providers, or fear of reprisal (Vu *et al.*, 2014; MacTavish, 2020; Danish Refugee Council, 2021). The researcher intends to analyze more than surface deep by investigating deep-rooted sociocultural and historical dynamics and the functioning of various types of institutions established in the region. Therefore, the goal of this research is to contribute to the discussion about the reasons that lead to the under-reporting of gender-based violence amongst the internally-displaced girls and women of Cabo Delgado. The researcher seeks first to determine how the population's view of gender-based violence impacts internally displaced girls and women and their vulnerability to this type of violence in the province of Cabo Delgado. In a second phase, the researcher seeks to comprehend the factors that influence the decision to report or not gender-based violence cases. Finally, the researcher identifies and analyzes the causes of the under-reporting of gender-based violence against the above-mentioned individuals. The stated phases translate into the following questions:

- (i) How is gender-based violence perceived within the community?
- (ii) What is the decision to report gender-based violence dependent on?
- (iii) What explains the under-reporting of gender-based violence?

1.3. THESIS STRUCTURE

The present research is divided into the following eight chapters. As previously mentioned, the first chapter consists of an overview of the background and justification, along with the subject's purpose and relevance, and concludes with the research objective and questions. The second chapter includes a review of previous research on gender-based violence perpetrated against internally displaced girls and women, as well as the research gap. In the third chapter, the researcher justifies the selection of the analytical framework along with its adaptation to serve this research's objective better. The fourth chapter describes the methodology employed throughout the research, as well as the following sections: research settings; research design; reflexivity and positionality; delimitations and limitations; and ethical consideration. Given the qualitative nature of the research and the inherent difficulty in differentiating the findings from the analysis, the fifth chapter comprises the findings' description along with the corresponding analysis. In chapter six, the researcher lists and discusses the reasons that explain the under-reporting of gender-based violence cases perpetrated against internally displaced girls and women based on primary – participant's testimonies and observation – and secondary data. Finally, chapter seven corresponds to the research conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the present chapter is to describe what has been published about the relationship between gender-based violence, internally displaced girls and women, and the under-reporting of this type of cases. Furthermore, the researcher goes into both themes by identifying and describing significant concepts, theories, and controversies (see Bryman, 2016: p. 6).

In the 1990s, the term 'internally displaced person' did not elicit the same amount of solidarity as the term 'refugee' (Phuong, 2004). This became especially noticeable during that decade when the number of internally displaced people escalated as a result of internal disputes linked to human rights abuses (ibid.). By 1995, the number of internally displaced people in the world had surpassed almost twice the number of refugees (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2022); thus, the need for a normative framework was evident. Despite the effort of the former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who developed the first definition of the concept, there was no international framework regarding internally displaced people until 1998 (Weiss, 1999; Cohen, 2004). By that year, the Commission on Human Rights adopted the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which constitute the "key international standard on internal displacement worldwide" to this day (OHCHR, 2022: para. 1). Therefore, the definition of internally displaced people utilized in the present research is the one employed by the Commission on Human Rights: "internally displaced people are defined as persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border" (Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998).

Internally displaced people have a different legal standing compared to refugees. The convention on internal displacement is a non-binding set of principles that do not hold signatory states accountable if they fail to comply. Furthermore, the convention presumes the responsibility of the national authorities to offer protection to internally displaced people in the concerned state; however, it does not consider that national authorities may have been responsible or complicit with the internal displacement (Ferris, 2019). This is particularly relevant considering the dynamics of the international community regarding forced displacement, examples of which are the monsoon floods in India, the terrorist

insurgency in Mozambique, and the conflict in Ukraine. Given the sharp increase in the number of internally displaced people over the last two decades – from 21 million in 2000 to 55 million in 2020 (IOM, 2021) – it can be argued that an increasing number of people globally are facing a situation of severe vulnerability and international law falls short in responding to this crisis. According to the most recent data (ibid.), developing countries have the largest populations of internally displaced persons; as a result, one may argue that improving and adapting the international norms on internal displacement is not perceived as a priority for the international community.

The situation of those forced or obliged to flee within the country is particularly challenging for children and women (Ferris, 2019). Given the short timeframe for this research, the author concentrates on girls instead of children (for further information, read chapter four). Despite the efforts to protect them, example of which is the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, displaced girls and women are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict settings (Sjoberg, 2016), as the researcher analyzes further. The term ‘gender-based violence’ was first employed in 1993 (for more information, read the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993). While it was initially limited to girls and women (ibid.) the concept has since been adjusted to include a broader range of victims and practices. For this reason, the researcher opted to employ an inclusive definition throughout this analysis. Developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2015), gender-based violence is “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (e.g., gender) differences between males and females; it includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty; these acts can occur in public or in private” (p. 5). The phenomenon can manifest as sexual violence, physical violence, emotional and psychological violence, harmful traditional practices, and socioeconomic violence (Global Protection Cluster Working Group, 2010: p. 168-169).

Given the emphasis of this analysis on gender-based violence faced by internally displaced girls and women, the relationship between gender performativity and precarity is particularly pertinent. Butler (2009) describes gender as performative in the sense that gender roles are socially manufactured, whereas precarity is characterized as an induced condition of vulnerability, which brings together “women, queers, transgender people, the poor, and the stateless” (p. 8). In this perspective, institutions are essential in this approach because “social and political institutions are designed (...) to minimize the conditions of precarity” (ibid.: p. 2); subsequently, failing institutions increase the exposure to, among

other factors, violence, poverty, and displacement. The latter point is analyzed further in greater depth, as it encompasses formal and informal institutions, as well as their relative influence on the population's degrees of precarity. As stated by Burnell *et al.* (2017), formal and informal institutions are becoming complementary, and the latter have been marking politics in Sub-Saharan Africa.

With a large proportion of men actively involved in the conflict, displaced families are frequently headed by women (Justino *et al.*, 2012), who already face deep-rooted structural violence. According to Sjoberg (2016), girls and women “experience war and conflict in ways that are fundamentally, but not only, shaped by social structures of gender” (p. 175), which has a disproportional impact on them. In post-conflict scenarios, “displaced women and girls continue to experience discrimination, gender-based violence, and restricted participation in decision-making” (Ferris, 2019: p. 501); yet, they face a new set of challenges fueled by the new social dynamics. Girls and women are more vulnerable to female genital mutilation, rape, stigmatization, forced marriage, denial of access to services, sexual slavery, harassment, or transactional sexual relationships as the social fabric of society has been torn apart. Furthermore, internally displaced persons are “viewed with suspicion by the local population” (Jacques, 2012: p. 185), making forced displacement and integration into a new community complicated, especially for the most vulnerable groups. Despite the aforementioned challenges, several scholars suggest that forced displacement represents a critical opportunity in regard to women's emancipation. The performance of new gender roles attributes new responsibilities to girls and women, who may “create networks of survival, acquire new skills, and become more self-confident in a setting in which patriarchal control is relatively weak” (Brück *et al.*, 2011: p. 95). Other authors argue that, due to a culture of masculinity, the performativity of new gender roles may create or aggravate spousal violence, as the researcher analyzes further.

One could expect a rise in gender-based violence reporting in conflict or post-conflict settings; nevertheless, gender-based violence within conflict-related scenarios is frequently under-reported (Vu *et al.*, 2014; Balaji *et al.*, 2016; Mootz, 2017; D'Odorico *et al.*, 2021). Even though several authors identified a set of impediments to care-seeking for gender-based violence survivors among internally displaced people (D'Odorico *et al.*, 2021: p. 36-42; Odwe *et al.*, 2018; Muuo *et al.*, 2020), the causes of gender-based violence under-reporting are vague. Through the author's dissertation “Barriers in Reporting Sexual Violence in Syrian Refugee Camps”, MacTavish (2020) explored the impediments to denouncing sexual violence – which, as previously stated, is one of the gender-based violence types – among Syria's refugee women. The author identified the following reasons: inadequate legal

framework, fear of retaliation, religion, shame, and distrust in service providers. Through the execution of a gender-based violence risk assessment within the refugee community of Azraq, the Danish Refugee Council (2021) identified three reasons that support the non-reporting of this type of violence: potential stigma, safety risk, and community police constituted of a majority of men (for further information, read *ibid.*: p: 24). Vu *et al.* (2014) also investigated the prevalence of sexual violence against female refugees. They identified social stigma, shame, and fear of retaliation as major deterrents to reporting gender-based violence crimes. Despite the academic material on the under-reporting of gender-based violence cases in conflict-related scenarios, it concentrates on refugee girls and women rather than internally displaced girls and women.

The foundations of gender-based violence must be comprehended in order to analyze this phenomenon in relation to internally displaced girls and women. First, socio-cultural norms play a relevant role in identifying the causes of gender-based violence (UNHCR, 2003), particularly in terms of socially defined gender roles. “Gender defines the roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities, and privileges of men and women in any context (...) this learned behavior is known as gender identity” (*ibid.*, p. 12). Internally displaced people flee their original community but remain inside the country’s borders; yet, the social-cultural norms that prevailed there might be different from those within the host community. Or maybe not. Another compelling argument is that “culture is often used as an excuse not to intervene or to remain silent about violent behavior, even if the respondents think this is not a legitimate excuse” (Le Mat *et al.*, 2019: p. 208). As Bhana *et al.* (2009) highlighted, “teachers in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, (...) use culture for legitimizing gender-based violence; referring to the dominant position of men according to Zulu culture and expressing discontent about increased attention to women’s rights that may threaten this superior male position” (cited in Le Mat *et al.*, 2019: p. 208). The impact of culture-blaming, as well as the existence of both traditional and modern values in relation to gender-based violence, is thus relevant, as it assists the researcher in identifying the cultural disincentives to this phenomenon under-reporting. However, culture cannot be examined without the analysis of the country’s past and regional development. This is particularly relevant when analyzing former colonies because many colonial rulers implemented a “divide and conquer” policy, which resulted in uneven development in different regions.

The role played by female actors during peace processes, along with the incorporation of gender-related themes in the outcome agreements, is paralleled by the position of women in society (Lawyers Without Borders Canada, 2018). Women are frequently perceived as voiceless victims in so-called developing countries (Chandler, 2016); this is transcribed to

peace processes, which men mostly negotiate as they hold the highest positions in political and security institutions (Lawyers Without Borders Canada, 2018). Furthermore, the inclusion of topics dealing with gender-based violence and victim protection, mostly girls and women, is not a priority for the parties discussing, which happens due to a lack of women in the delegations (Castillo Diaz and Tordjman, 2012). According to data provided by the University of Edinburgh and the Council on Foreign Relations (cited in Lawyers Without Borders Canada, 2018: p. 54), “of the approximately 1.187 peace agreements negotiated between 1990 and 2017 only 19 percent referred to women and 5 percent referred to gender-based violence confirming the continued marginalization of gender issues despite UN efforts”. Several authors argue that women’s presence and engagement are preferred due for the following reasons: women and female-led organizations are more likely to meet the counterpart and, thus, work together to achieve a goal; women are more likely to establish trust-based relationships; women are more likely to create initiatives that will benefit the entire community; and women’s interactions are less aggressive (Garasu, 2002; McCarthy, 2011; Lawyers Without Borders Canada, 2018). Women have the ability to “give a public expression to pain” (Casimira, 2003 – cited in Lawyers Without Borders Canada, 2018: p. 54) and to maintain community stability, cohesion, and reconciliation (ibid.). Notwithstanding, women are still often denied the right to participate in decision-making processes. This group is thus excluded, despite being, along with children, the most vulnerable group in terms of gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict scenarios. Women have embraced activism to counteract the lack of access to effective decision-making (Opare, 2005). In the province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, most civil society organizations are headed by women, who are also responsible for organizing workshops, debates, or protests, such as the one currently underway against FRELIMO’s Deputy Alberto Niquice. This individual was accused of child sexual abuse but elected and sworn into office in February 2020 (Club of Mozambique, 2020). This leads to the significance of state-civic interaction.

Civil society organizations and national authorities play a significant role in combating gender-based violence, to different degrees depending on the country’s specificities. According to Brück and Vothknecht (2011), “in many developing countries, social institutions limit women’s access to resources such as education or health care (...) economic opportunities are restricted by legal frameworks and customary law (...) enforcement mechanisms are often insufficient, and traditional, gender-discriminating customs are likely to prevail (...) women are often discriminated against in access to formal employment (...) [and] systemic inequality between men and women also persists in access to political participation” (p. 91-94). In the same way that acts taken by the abovementioned

actors may hinder women's empowerment, they also play crucial roles in addressing the roots of this form of violence. According to OHCHR (2020), "preventing and addressing gender-based violence against women requires legislative, administrative, and institutional measures and reforms, including the eradication of gender stereotypes" (para. 8). This indicates that national authorities would be required to intervene and change people's perceptions of culture and customs, as these may accept or even normalize gender-based violence practices. In addition to this, civil society organizations have a prominent place in addressing this phenomenon, considering their efforts to assist women's empowerment movements, which have been largely responsible for incorporating gender-related issues onto political agendas. Another role of civil society organizations is to exert pressure on national authorities, as it "generates public support through its advocacy, and by holding governments accountable to the standards and agreements they have already made" (Gender in Norway, 2022: para. 2).

In contrast to the above-mentioned authors, the researcher seeks to address a wide-ranging concept of gender-based violence along with a different target group. Comparatively to data available on the relationship between gender-based violence under-reporting and refugee girls and women, the linkage between this phenomenon – and its five identified strands (Global Protection Cluster Working Group, 2010: p. 168-169) – and internally displaced girls and women is scarce, and thus a relevant topic.

3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The present research seeks to identify and comprehend the drivers that contribute to the under-reporting of gender-based violence against internally displaced girls and women. Subsequently, the researcher opted for analyzing the findings using an adapted version of the ecological model. Developed by the program What Works to Prevent Violence (2018: p. 1-8), this analytical framework explores the interconnections of gender-based violence against girls and women with statebuilding and peacebuilding processes (SBPB), namely, the way in which SBPB strategies may influence gender-based violence, and how the latter may lead to ongoing conflict.

Gender-based violence exists in both the public and private spheres of life (UN General Assembly, 1993; Ní Aoláin *et al.*, 2012; D'Odorico *et al.*, 2021); for this reason, the ecological model addresses a combination of both domains. In a first stage, it focuses on the several strands that contribute to shaping one's life: individual, interpersonal, institutional, community, and societal. Each of these levels is relevant to understanding the way in which

an individual's experience is shaped by one's social interactions. This is particularly relevant in comprehending (1) how social interactions influence one's perception of gender-based violence against girls and women and (2) the reasons that may justify the phenomenon's under-reporting. Concurrently, the ecological model addresses the so-called 'key building-blocs' of SBPB that, within the above-mentioned societal levels, "offer several areas for policy makers to address violence against girls and women and gender inequality to achieve positive outcomes" (ibid.: p. 3). Therefore, the interdisciplinary framework comprises the following thematic 'building-blocks': (i) conflict resolution and peace process; (ii) inclusive economic growth; (iii) fair power structures and the policy environment; (iv) capable and legitimate institutions; along with (v) supportive regional/global environment (for further information, read ibid.: p. 4-8). Given this research's objective and questions, the researcher adapted these 'building-blocks' to reflect on Cabo Delgado's particularities and opted for analyzing the following dimensions and sub-dimensions:

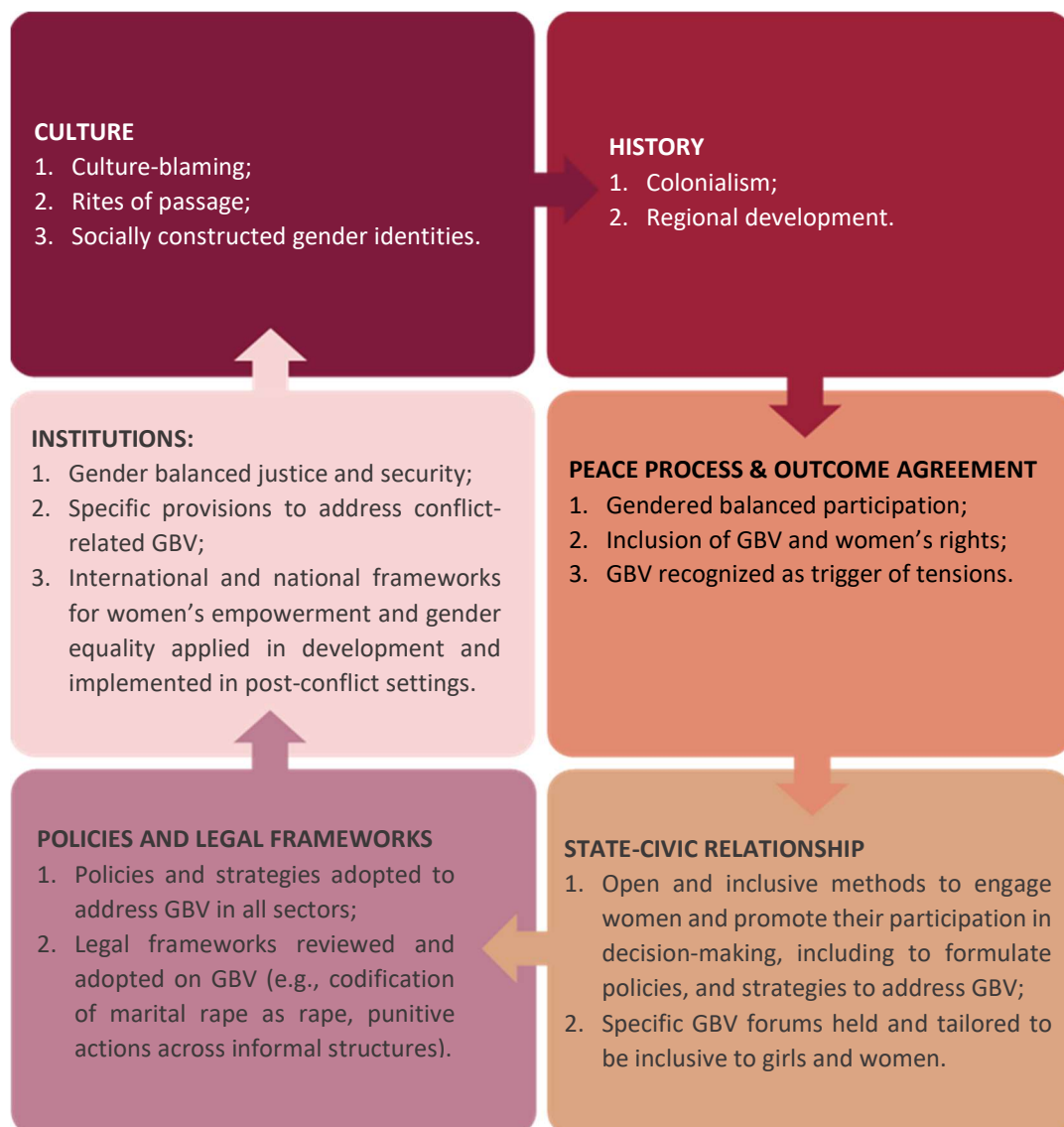


Figure 1: Adapted version of the ecological model (What Works to Prevent Violence, 2018: p. 4-8).

The aforementioned dimensions and subdimensions, along with the five societal dynamics, focus on the relevance of analyzing the period before, during, and after the conflict. Although the present research concerns a post-conflict scenario, this is inextricably linked to existing structural violence and to the participants' perceptions of gender-based violence based on their and previous generations' experiences. These are significantly shaped by historical features and cultural norms and practices. The researcher was able to comprehend how culture and traditions influence gender-based violence perpetration against girls and women, as well as how locals respond to it. This is also related to the significant role that family and community play in shaping the lives of girls and women in the province of Cabo Delgado, which must not be disregarded.

Furthermore, the framework recognizes the importance of the post-conflict phase in transforming society into an inclusive environment for girls and women, along with the continuous neglect of gender-related issues during this period. The post-conflict scenario constitutes an opportunity to develop gender-sensitive policies and legal frameworks, as well as to redefine and strengthen the role and focus of institutions – whether formal, informal, international, non-governmental, civil society, or governmental. The analysis of peace processes and outcome agreements helps establish a linkage between the post-conflict period and the role held by female actors in decision-making, which demonstrates whether or not women contribute to the development of policies and legal that aim their protection in the conflict aftermath.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a brief description of the research settings and design, limitations, delimitations, and clarifies the methodological choices made prior to and throughout the research. A section on reflexivity and positionality, along with ethical considerations, was also added.

4.1. RESEARCH SETTINGS

This research's findings were gathered during a fieldwork activity conducted in the city of Pemba, the capital of the province of Cabo Delgado, from March to April 2022. Located in the country's northeast region, the district of Pemba welcomed over 150.000 internally displaced people, which represented a 75 percent increase in the district's total population (UN-Habitat, 2021). This district is home to numerous IOs and NGOs along with formal and

informal institutions whose focus is on gender-related issues. This latter aspect was relevant as it assisted the researcher in gathering a significant amount of information within a short timeframe. In comparison to the remaining districts of Cabo Delgado, Pemba has had a relatively peaceful atmosphere in recent months in regard to attacks perpetrated by Ansar al-Sunna militants. However, the rates of gender-based violence cases faced by internally displaced girls and women are still high (D’Odorico *et al.*, 2021).

Given the multidisciplinary nature of gender-based violence, the phenomenon’s origins, and the reasons that might justify its under-reporting, the researcher opted for interviewing a diverse range of participants, namely: community members, including internally displaced women and men, representatives of non-governmental and international organizations, community agents, political and religious figures, activists, and service providers.

Each organization and institution was selected based on online information, according to the role they play in addressing gender-based violence and mitigating its effects. The participants in the group discussions were carefully chosen, through purposive sampling, to include persons of different ages and varied personal and professional experiences. Purposive sampling is a method of strategically selecting individuals who are relevant to the study’s objective (Bryman, 2016: p. 408). The researcher had intended to include participants from various religions, ethnicities, and educational backgrounds. However, while the researcher interviewed participants from different religions, ethnicities, and educational backgrounds, generalizations regarding these dimensions were not possible to make.

4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Given the research’s objective – to identify and assess the barriers to reporting gender-based violence among Cabo Delgado’s internally displaced girls and women (see chapter 1) – the researcher employed a qualitative exploratory method to collect in-depth data. As a result, two group discussions and various semi-structured interviews were held in person. Both were given an interview guide (see Appendix), which the researcher developed by meeting the analytical framework’s six dimensions (read chapter 3). Important to note that individual interviews were tailored to the participant’s personal and professional experiences. The two group discussions with community members, including internally displaced women and men, took place at the beginning of the research. The purpose was for the researcher to become familiarized with various concepts and traditions before conducting individual interviews. This was also beneficial because the researcher intended

to better grasp the key arguments, challenges, and experiences of the grassroots' members in order to strengthen the interview questions. The researcher employed triangulation to confirm both information provided by community members and observations gathered from day-to-day interactions (Bryman, 2016).

According to Bryman (2016), "the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to respond" in semi-structured interviews (p. 468). This is especially important considering the seven-week timeframe for developing trustworthy relationships with the participants. In total, the researcher interviewed two community agents, four non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives, one international organization (IO) representative, four political figures, one religious figure, one service provider, and four activists. Each interview lasted between 45 to 90 minutes. The group discussion with female figures lasted 120 minutes, whereas the one with men figures lasted 30 minutes.

Purposive sampling was utilized to strategically select participants with a diverse range of professional experiences in critical fields related to gender-based violence, the phenomenon's under-reporting, and internally displaced girls and women (Bryman, 2016: p. 408). The researcher selected them by approaching pre-existing and *in loco* acquaintances. Despite the dimensions described in the analytical framework (read chapter 3), the researcher could have inserted a dimension on the participants' ethnicity or level of education to understand some generalizations; however, this was not done due to the short timeframe and lack of time to bond with the participants.

4.3. REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY

The researcher acknowledges her position as a woman who was born and raised in Portugal while analyzing cases of gender-based violence against Mozambican internally displaced girls and women and its under-reporting. In addition, she avoided having preconceived ideas about the occurrence of gender-based violence in the province. It is worth noting that male figures were not portrayed as perpetrators of gender-based violence, nor female figures as victims. As previously noted, the research concentrates on internally displaced girls and women due to the limited timeframe – male figures who suffered from gender-based violence, for example, are not the majority and, usually, require a time-consuming process of trust that the researcher did not have. Despite this, the community's concept of masculinity – linked to the development of gendered social identities – must be addressed, as it presupposes a specific set of tasks that must be performed by female or male figures, as the research analyzes further. In addition, to avoid creating an uncomfortable interview

setting, the researcher kept a neutral posture and avoided personal implications on both data collection and findings interpretation.

4.4. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The current section focuses on the limitations and delimitations that were considered prior to and during the seven-week timeframe research. The limitations of this research were first addressed in this section since these influenced the researcher to incorporate some of the delimitations.

Gaining people's trust is, *per se*, a time-consuming process; for this reason, the number of people interviewed was limited – 27 participants. In addition, even though the researcher is a native Portuguese speaker, numerous other languages and dialects unknown to the researcher are spoken in the province of Cabo Delgado: Kimwani, Shimakonde, Ciyaawo, Emakhuwa, and Swahili (Ngunga and Faquir, 2012). The researcher asked a Mozambican friend, who is proficient in Portuguese, Shimakonde, Emakhuwa, and Swahili, to act as an interpreter in order to overcome this hurdle. The researcher acknowledges the complexity related to gender-based violence concepts and respective interpretations according to one's culture; for this reason, the researcher asked the participant to clarify the understanding of complex concepts or expressions such as 'gender-based violence', 'culture-blaming', or 'being a man'.

Another constraint was the research's timing – conducted during Ramadan in a Muslim-majority district, the researcher has difficulty scheduling interviews since some of the participants were fasting and 'too exhausted to talk', as stated by a service provider. However, the fieldwork research took place in the period before and after the Mozambican Women's Day – April 7th – which was very beneficial since many people were eager to discuss about gender-based violence. During that time, the researcher attended multiple events and conferences in order to interview key figures from Cabo Delgado's organizations. In addition, another limitation was the researcher's relative's political position, which could cause some hesitation among community members to share information. In order to avoid this, the researcher chose to keep this information from the interviewees, with the exception of one who was a relative's acquaintance. Finally, because people who speak Portuguese in that province are more likely to be more qualified, the researcher chose to conduct group discussions in several languages and dialects, rather than interviewing simply those who are more educated.

Along with the above-mentioned constraints, several delimitations were implemented. As previously stated, the present research attentions on data collected from two group discussions and various semi-structured interviews with community members, including internally displaced women and men, political and religious figures, service providers, activists, representatives of non-governmental and international organizations, and community agents. Children and police officers were purposefully not interviewed throughout the fieldwork research: the former due to the requirement of a parental consent, and the latter due to the likelihood of these professionals seeking financial incentive in exchange for information. As previously indicated, the researcher was unable to provide psychological support to victims of gender-based violence; for this reason, the group discussions involving internally displaced women and men were based on fictitious scenarios to avoid the reemergence of traumatic memories. During the latter activity, female and male participants were separated into two sex-based groups to ensure the interviewees ability to speak freely and without any gender-related constraints. The decision to interview and analyze Cabo Delgado's community, including internally displaced people, is linked to the researcher's pre-existing connections within that group.

4.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research was conducted having in mind the ethical standards outlined by Bryman (2016: p. 120-146). Prior to the interview, the researcher ensured the participant's safety and future protection by providing the following statement:

"You were invited to participate in this research because I believe your experience will assist me to identify the reasons behind gender-based violence under-reporting. Before we begin, I want you to be aware of the following: 1) your identity will never be revealed; 2) you are not required to answer to any of my questions; and 3) if you ever feel uncomfortable during this session, please inform me and it will be terminated immediately".

Subsequently, the researcher proceeded by asking each participant a set of questions to ensure their oral, informed, and explicit consent. Those who requested it were also given a consent form on paper (Bryman, 2016: p. 133; for further information, read Appendix).

"Do you have comments or questions? Do you give me permission to record this interview and use the material you provide in my thesis? If so, do you wish to sign this consent form?"

Given the researcher's financial incapacity to provide psychological support to victims and survivors of gender-based violence, the researcher opted for asking community members, including internally displaced women and men, about hypothetical situations of gender-based violence, rather than their personal experiences. Throughout the fieldwork research and the findings' analysis and discussion, the researcher utilized identifier codes in order to protect the participants' identities (ibid.). Furthermore, the interview recordings and notes were kept in a folder that only the researcher could access as it required a password.

Finally, the present ethical reflection is also necessary to inform the reader about the researcher's awareness concerning a potential case selection bias. Therefore, the following condition was taken into account to guarantee the accuracy of the conclusions: the author of the present research is a Portuguese national whose family members were born and live in the province in the analysis, Cabo Delgado. In addition, one of the researcher's relatives is a political figure – this information was not disclosed to participants, except from one political figure who was this relative's friend, nor the relative had access to the participants' identities.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter describes and analyzes the findings gathered during the field work research, as well as secondary data. Given the qualitative nature of this research, description and analysis are combined into the same chapter to avoid duplication.

The researcher proceeded with a thematic analysis approach (Bryman, 2016: p. 584-589) due to the vast amount of data obtained. The dimensions stated in the adapted version of the analytical framework used in this research (for more information, see chapter 3) were included to delineate the following thematic division: (i) culture; (ii) history; (iii) peace process(es) and outcome agreement(s); (iv) state-civic relationship; (v) policies and legal frameworks; and (vi) institutions. An assessment of Cabo Delgado's culture and history contributes to provide a response to the first research questions whereas the remaining dimensions concentrate on the second and third questions (see chapter 1).

5.1. CULTURE

Traditional religious and cultural practices have a significant influence in Mozambique's central and northern provinces, in comparison with the country's southern region. This is

particularly relevant in terms of women's empowerment since, as enhanced by Brück and Vothknecht (2011), "cultural norms, customs, family traditions, and religious practices may all interfere with women's opportunities" (p. 91). A simple observation of daily activities within the community of Pemba indicates the dominance of a patriarchal structure, which is exacerbated by the dual vulnerability faced by internally displaced girls and women. As an NGO representative highlighted:

"These girls and women were Mozambican before they became internally displaced persons (...) the problems they encounter concerning gender-based violence might be faced by any Mozambican woman. The problem is not just related to their fragile situation, but also to deep cultural roots" (NGO representative).

Several political figures interviewed by the researcher acknowledged the importance that cultural and religious practices have in the maintenance of gender-based violence. However, opinions concerning the strategies to address the phenomenon vary. One of the political officials recognized the challenges to "reform a culture in a matter of days". Once questioned about these barriers, the interviewee added the following:

"Gender-based violence will never disappear in Mozambique; for this reason, international funds must be redirected to themes that constitute de facto priorities (...) We [political figures] are occasionally invited to attend conferences about women's emancipation, inclusion of female politicians in decision-making processes, and the prevention of gender-based violence. I see other leaders there (...) some of whom have married 16-year-old teenage girls or demanded sexual favors in exchange for registration certificates of internally displaced girls or women. How can the grassroots adapt if their leaders do not act as role models? It is our culture" (political figure).

The above-mentioned testimonies fall into a culture-blaming approach, which "devalues women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals; normalizes or minimizes abuse; claims gender-based violence is accidental; ignores sexism; promotes aggressive or even toxic masculinity; and uses men's achievements to exonerate, excuse, and/or deny (...) their behavior" (Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, 2017). In the following section, the researcher has identified three subdimensions that, based on the interviews conducted, must be explored in order to understand the cultural causes for the under-reporting of gender-based violence: (i) rites of passage; (ii) child marriage; and (iii) masculinity.

5.1.1. Rites of Passage

Rites of passage play, in central and northern Mozambique, an important role in children's personal development. These are informal cultural agencies that mold children's identities into a given list of characteristics connected to the social roles expected from female and male identities in the society. In addition, these rituals also ensure the continuance of cultural traditions, such as local music or dances (Osório and Macuácuá, 2013). Matrons and masters – *matronas* and *mestres* in Portuguese – perform separate rituals for girls and boys, respectively. The ceremonies are led by the community's most respected elders (ibid.).

Girls are summoned between the ages of 11 and 14, following their first menstruation, whilst boys are called between the ages of 12 and 14, after the first signs of puberty. Multiple interviewees argued that the participant's youth is attributed to their willingness to accept guidance without questioning. The ceremony usually lasts between three and thirty days, depending on the family's ethnicity and/or income. The children's relatives are kept away from the ceremony to avoid interfering with the guidance provided by the matrons and masters. When asked about this cultural practice and if children have a say concerning their participating in the ritual, a community agent stated the following:

“Some families save for up to two years in order to send their children to the rites of passage – it is very expensive. Typically, children do not know about these rites until they are coerced to participate” (community agent).

The topic was also heavily discussed during the group discussion with female community members. In comparison to the male community members discussion, it was clear to the researcher that women were more affected by rites of passage since they remembered more details. Following the researcher's introduction of the topic, male community members approached it superficially. One of the internally displaced women interviewed shared the following story:

“My mother promised me that the next day she would take me to another village to meet my cousins and that we could eat a lot of candy; instead, she took me to a rural area where there was a long queue of girls waiting to get into a cabin. She left me there and returned a month later to pick me up” (community member).

The researcher concludes from the interviews that there is a significant difference in the lessons passed on to girls and boys. As previously stated, they are both taught about their cultural heritage, senior care, and the anatomical differences between girls and boys. Sexual intercourse is also discussed; nevertheless, early sexual initiation and sex-related risks are not addressed. While boys are educated about female-related physical characteristics, such

as menstruation, and being circumcised – often without anesthesia because it is thought that physical pain prepares them for the future –, girls are taught about deep social dynamics. Two of the interviewees, who were submitted to the rites of passage, shared the following testimonies:

"Girls are educated to be submissive, to obey to men, and to be passive. They teach them [girls] how to properly behave in society, how to take good care for the house and children, how to wash their private parts, and how to give pleasure to their spouses. The latter includes a technique in which girls pull the labia minora to make them bigger and, therefore, give sexual pleasure to men" (NGO representative).

"Imagine groups of girls having these thoughts implanted in their heads for centuries. This [gender-based violence] is the outcome" (activist).

The researcher asked the participants if there was a link, positive or negative, between rites of passage and gender-based violence against girls and women. Several interviewees, mostly community members, maintained that rites of passage are a part of their tradition and cannot be considered gender-based violence. An activist emphasized the beneficial aspects of the rituals by stating: "these are not just harmful or invasive practices; they teach about important aspects of Cabo Delgado's culture and the way society is organized". Participants generally agreed that the ritual forces children to mature quickly. According to one service provider, "children who participate in the ceremonies tend to leave them with the curiosity of trying the new things they learnt straight immediately". Being these children so young, they do not have access to sexual education; therefore, their chances of developing a sexual disease, having obstetric fistulas, child marriage, or childbearing are higher.

The rites of passage are not regulated by formal institutions; the teachings conveyed are solely determined by the gender perspectives of the matrons and masters (ibid.). Violence is a typical method of imposing authority within these rites. "We were forced to obey the elders or else they would beat us," one of the community members explained. Several interviewees agreed that violence was perceived as the most effective teaching tool.

"Children grow up believing that violence is normal, and they are more likely to perpetrate it without shame and to suffer from it without complaining. Those children who do not participate in these ceremonies are marginalized and considered as minors, even if they are 18 years old" (community member).

This latter testimony highlights the pressure put on families to subject their children to the rites. Even if the parents relocate to another province to avoid subjecting their children to

these cultural rituals, often senior family members take the responsibility and offer, without parental consent, their own version of the rites of passage to both girls and boys.

5.1.2. *Child Marriage*

According to the most recent statistics from Mozambique's Demographic and Health Survey, 48 percent of women in Mozambique aged 20 to 24 have been married or in union before the age of 18 (cited by UNICEF, 2020). Nampula, Cabo Delgado, Niassa, and Manica have been identified as the provinces that register the highest rates of child marriage (Ministry of Woman, Child, and Social Action, 2011, as cited in Mapote, 2021). Except for Manica in central Mozambique, the remaining provinces are located in the country's northern region³. The researcher questioned the participants about the causes behind the country's high rates of child marriage. Poverty and subsequent vulnerability were the most often cited causes, as the interviewees argue that non-wealthy families regard this practice as an economic opportunity, as stated by a service provider:

"Non-wealthy and poorly educated parents are generally happy when they have a girl instead of a boy since it implies that they will be able to receive a dowry as soon as they marry her (...) in Metuge [the district where several resettlement camps are located], child marriage and child prostitution are a common reality" (service provider).

The ancestor's experience, which often married before the age of 18, especially in central and northern Mozambique, is at the root of this phenomenon's normalization. Furthermore, polygamy is prevalent. Given the emphasis that traditional cultural values place on virginity, "girls are frequently married off as second or third wives to wealthy men" (Girls Not Brides, 2022a: para. 4). Several participants emphasized the impact of tribalism in the high rates of underage marriage. Two participants – one activist and one service provider– shared the following statement:

"Ethno-linguistic issues are frequent in northern Mozambique, and tribalism is reemerging in Cabo Delgado (...) girls are often married at a young age in the province's rural districts to prevent emigration to neighboring provinces" (activist and service provider).

In addition, a political figure confided that "child marriage is deeply rooted in Cabo Delgado and cannot be eradicated (...) community and neighborhood leaders, for instance, like to

³ The contrasts concerning regional development are discussed under the dimension 'History'.

have multiple wives in order to feel respected by the community, and they must be young”. The researcher discusses this particular aspect further.

Child marriage, according to UNICEF (2020), increases the likelihood of girls and their descendants being victims of domestic abuse. This problem frequently prevents children from accessing education due to a variety of realities, including school dropout to marry or due to an overburden of new responsibilities, such as caring for the spouse's family; or childbearing. Due to the conditions of being married or in union under the age of 18, these children's education is frequently neglected, and re-enrollment is not considered – sometimes due to exclusion laws enacted by the school or government (Girls Not Brides, 2022b). Despite being a harmful reality for all victims, research show that this condition primarily affects girls over boys in several strands, including health (World Bank, 2017; Dietrich *et al.*, 2018). For instance, girls are prone to develop obstetric fistula⁴, particularly those who fall pregnant before the age of 15, because their bodies are not fully developed and the birth canal is too narrow. In northern Mozambique, tradition dictates that girls give birth at the house of her mother-in-law, without medical assistance. The belief that a problematic birth is synonymous with marital infidelity committed by the girl also delays the decision to seek for medical assistance. Several community members shared stories of girls who admitted to cheating on their spouses in order to be taken to a hospital. As a community member highlighted, “in this case, gender-based violence [against girls] is perpetrated by other women”.

5.1.3. *Masculinity*

Female and male interviewees were asked ‘what does it mean to be a man in Cabo Delgado?’. This question assists the researcher in comprehending the socially constructed male gender roles. The researcher identified a propensity among participants to answer this question by determining how male gender roles are related to female figures, as evidenced by the two statements below:

“In Cabo Delgado, being a man means being able to protect and provide for your family (...) if a woman is married, her and her children’s safety from predators [other men] is guaranteed” (community member).

⁴ According to the UNFPA (2022), an obstetric fistula is a “hole between the birth canal and bladder and/or rectum, it is caused by prolonged, obstructed labor without access to timely, high-quality medical treatment. It leaves women and girls leaking urine, feces or both, and often leads to chronic medical problems, depression, social isolation and deepening poverty”.

“A real man is capable of keeping his wife on the right track” (religious figure).

Several participants claimed that Cabo Delgado’s men avoid empowering female figures. On the contrary, they prefer subservient, passive, and submissive women – terms used by the participants. Two female participants argued vehemently that women must follow men’s lead because they are the ones making decisions within the family. As previously stated, the influence that socio-cultural traditions play in this dynamic must be acknowledged. Gender roles are strongly embedded in the culture; therefore, any action that does not conform to them is perceived as abnormal and, subsequently, undesirable. The change of gender roles is one of the examples observed by the researcher and discussed by the participants, as the following statement proves:

“Men like women to feel vulnerable and dependent on them because it makes them feel stronger. It is very typical in Metuge [district where several resettlement camps are located] to see women struggling to start a business because their husbands perceive it as a threat – it threatens man's virility and his societal role as a provider. When the woman finally succeeds, the man reappears to manage it” (community agent).

The exchange of gender roles induced by, among other causes, forced displacement disturbs male figures, which often escalates to marital violence. The researcher spoke to an NGO representative, who stated that some men request that their spouses be dismissed, without the wives’ knowledge. The request is frequently justified with the argument that “when she receives her salary, she does not give me the money”. According to Macia *et al.* (2011), real men in Mozambique feel obliged to provide for their families. A woman who is able to provide for her family becomes an insult to men’s capacity to interpret the role what society expects from him. The following testimony from an NGO representative backs up this point of view:

“In the district of Chiure [district where several resettlement camps are located], the organization equipped a tent with sewing supplies, capulanas, chairs, tables, alphabetization tables, and materials to produce canned goods. In order to organize the distribution, we selected four women who knew the community to help us. Suddenly, we realized that a group of men was looking at us while we interacted with these women. When one of these women reached home, four men were there convincing her husband to beat her since, according to them, what we were doing would bring cholera to the community. Her husband ended up beating her due to social pressure and was, then, arrested. While detained, he joined a programme against

domestic violence and became aware of his misbehavior. Now, he is the first one to call his wife whenever the organization needs to meet” (NGO representative).

During the fieldwork research, the researcher noticed a difference in how the way that socio-cultural norms affect girls and women’s lives in central and northern Mozambique in comparison to those living or coming from the southern provinces. To clarify this disparity, the researcher proceeded with the analysis of the country’s history, with a focus on the colonial period.

5.2. HISTORY

Mozambique’s pre-colonial period was characterized by a generally peaceful coexistence of various religious or tribal groups. Facing this reality, the former Portuguese colonial empire adopted a divide and conquer strategy, encouraging racial, ethnic, and religious divisions across the territory (Portal do Governo de Moçambique, 2015). As a consequence, social division and stratification resulted in various levels of development that can still be seen throughout the country. The majority of Portuguese colonists lived and worked in southern Mozambique, which had the most colonialist investment. Subsequently, the development of the then colony’s southern region and inhabitants had been prioritized at the expense of central and northern Mozambique provinces and populations (ibid.). This asymmetry also influenced how populations regard traditions: in central and northern Mozambique, cultural practices, of which rites of passage are an example, continue to have a considerable influence.

Following the country's independence in 1975, FRELIMO emerged as the dominant political party. This political party, whose militants are mostly from the country's southern region, launched a campaign in which it nominated southern nationals to take leadership positions in the country's central and northern regions (Rocha and Zavale, 2015). Along with it, an acculturation strategy was also imposed: southern cultural traditions – the *Makwayela* dance, for instance – were imposed across central and northern provinces. According to a community agent, this campaign is still ongoing:

“The leadership of political positions related to gender have been fulfilled by southern citizens, who are not familiar with Cabo Delgado’s culture nor traditions. This leads to inefficient strategies that do not meet girls and women’s needs and eternalizes gender-based violence” (community agent).

For this research, the socio-cultural and economic roots of the conflict outbreak in northern Mozambique are equally important. In 2007, a hopeless *Makua* youth started contesting the political and religious authority of the provincial authorities (International Crisis Group, 2021). Three years later, *Mwani* militants joined the fight with an Islamist strand, as they called for “a ban on alcohol while opposing the schooling of children in state schools and the right to work of women” (ibid.). In 2012, the country’s national authorities issued a provisional Land Use and Exploitation Right for natural gas exploration – 7.000 hectares –, which led to the resettlement of 663 households without any statal support (Lavieque, 2020: p. 243). These developments instilled in the population a generalized feeling of insecurity and vulnerability. The previous discontent, along with the province’s increasing enrichment as a result of natural resource exploitation, without being felt by the grassroots, fueled a sense of social and economic exclusion, as some ethnicities were already perceived as superior (International Crisis Group, 2021). In this context, the armed conflict in northern Mozambique, which began in October 2017, was driven by a widespread discontent of a specific population segment – young males – with national authorities and their passivity in improving people’s quality of life.

5.3. PEACE PROCESS(ES) AND OUTCOME AGREEMENT(S)

As noted previously in chapter 2, the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups in a country’s peace process is crucial for achieving inclusivity. Since the country’s independence, Mozambique’s political course has been disputed between the current ruling political party, FRELIMO, and its main opponent, RENAMO. In 1977, two years after the country’s independence, the rivalry that had seen its beginning during the colonialist period, saw its armed strands gaining force, eventually leading to a deadly civil war (Lavieque, 2020). This conflict lasted between 1977 and 1992 and saw its end with the signature of the General Peace Agreement of Mozambique in October 1992.

The first piece of evidence concerning this agreement is the complete lack of a female figure during its signature out of 17 participants (General Peace Agreement of Mozambique, 1992). Not once the terms ‘women’, ‘girls’, ‘gender’, or even ‘victims’ were written in this agreement. Several authors contend that women’s participation was minimal during the peace process (Lawyers Without Borders, 2018). This accord made no mention to the cases of gender-based violence that occurred throughout the civil war. Victims were thus sidelined during the conflict resolution process. As previously noted, no woman was invited to participate in the country’s first peace process in FRELIMO or RENAMO delegations,

despite the fact that “the popular consultation mechanisms led by the then President of the Republic, Joaquim Alberto Chissano, have involved women through a strong popular consultation campaign aimed at raising public awareness and gathering their opinion on the possibility of negotiating with RENAMO” (ibid.). As one of the community members stated:

“Women are agents of positive change and must be recognized as relevant contributors to decision-making; instead, we have been excluded and women’s absence from the two peace processes that took place in our country are a proof of that. We have women with many opinions, but they cannot express them. These difficulties are the result of a system that even took away women’s and girls’ rights to get an education” (community member).

Even though there is data that proves women’s contribution to the cessation of hostilities agreements, their contribution was superficial and far from decision-making positions. This reflected into the absence of proper initiatives aiming post-conflict reparations and national reconciliation (ibid.). As stated in Lawyers Without Borders (2018), “victims pointed out that they had to forgive the perpetrators of the atrocities of war in order to enjoy the benefits of peace” (p. 61).

In August 2019, another peace agreement was signed between the parties, after several years of armed hostilities: the Maputo’s Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement (Secretariado para o Processo da Paz, 2020). “Women consider that, even in the context of peace, they continue to be marginalized, and in the current process of peace negotiation (2019) there has not been a space where they can share their experiences and visions” (Lawyers Without Borders, 2018). In this peace process, women were, once again, excluded from the negotiation process by not being part of either the decentralization or the demilitarization committees (Secretariado para o Processo da Paz, 2020). Even though the term ‘women’ was never mentioned in the agreement nor its annexes, the official website on the agreement has a section focusing on the efforts that have been made in meeting the goals established by the UN concerning gender. However, the efforts mentioned concern the Secretariat for the Peace Process, which was established in 2017 “in the charge of the then Swiss Ambassador Mirko Manzoni, through a mandate given by the parties to Switzerland, which was then in charge of ensuring good offices for the peace process” (ibid.). As the researcher advances further, national authorities have been making an effort to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach – also named gender mainstreaming – within its legal framework since the signature of the 2019 reconciliation agreement.

5.4. STATE-CIVIC RELATIONSHIP

During a conference to celebrate the Mozambican Women Holiday (April 7th), an activist highlighted that “if there is a microphone, it will always be grabbed first by a man and, later, by a woman”. The activist continued this argument by affirming that the previous situation is the “result of a deeply-rooted socialization process that must be ended by a state-motivated cultural deconstruction”. Several participants highlighted the need to educate not only girls and women but all the different layers of society in order to provoke effective change. One of the participants told the researcher that activism concerning women empowerment and gender-based violence was strong across the province a couple of years ago, but, according to the participant:

“Priorities changed. Those who have the power to effectively change the current situation are not interested in doing it” (activist).

Another challenge, as previously stated, was the province’s leadership roles concerning gender-based violence being headed by non-locals who disregard cultural specificities. In addition to this, participants expressed concern about the detention of 19 activists in the sequence of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (from November 25th to December 10th). Still in the context of the abovementioned celebration, thousands of women dressed with *capulanas* left their homes to celebrate women’s empowerment. On that same day, protests in support of FRELIMO took place across the country. Called “Red Wave” in reference to the color used in the party’s flag, these demonstrations were wrapped in a great police apparatus; thus, were perceived, by several activists, as an attempt to control civil society organizations.

Facing the above-mentioned challenges, the researcher outlined a set of questions that were later asked to several significant figures of the Mozambican political and religious spheres concerning the strategies to address gender-based violence in alliance with civil society. One of the religious figures interviewed recognized the following:

“There is no political interest in publicizing themes such as women empowerment because those themes destroy synergies, create tensions, and negatively impact culture” (religious figure).

5.5. POLICIES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Mozambique has signed numerous conventions involving gender-based violence, women's and children's rights; yet, several participants argued that the government lacks effective practices to fight the gender-based violence phenomenon and address its effects. In order to properly analyze each one of these strands, the researcher proceeds with the analysis of the country's Constitution as well as legislative material involving women and children, with a focus on girls. The country has attempted to incorporate a gender mainstreaming approach into its legislation, as the researcher demonstrates in the following sections.

5.5.1. *Constitution*

According to Cassola *et al.* (2014), constitutions are the “basis for overturning discriminatory customary laws” (p. 204). However, some of the participants consider that Mozambique's Constitution falls short in providing this kind of expectation. The country's last updated Constitution, that dated November 2004, has only two articles concerning gender equality: article 36^o, which states “men and women are equal before law in all the domains of political, economic, social, and cultural life” and article 122^o, n^o 1, which states that “the State promotes, supports, and values women empowerment and encourages their growing role in society and in all the spheres of political, economic, social, and cultural activities” (Portal do Governo de Moçambique, 2004). In addition, the document does not use a gender-friendly approach. In comparison with other constitutions, gender equality is properly explained in different articles and some specific strategies are added – when it comes to Mozambique, this is all included in the same article, which does not incorporate any specific strategies like quotes for women in political spheres (*ibid.*; Cassola *et al.*, 2014).

5.5.2. *Girls and Women*

Political, community, and religious leaders interviewed by the researcher emphasized the importance of following international legal normative concerning female empowerment, as the researcher analyzes next. However, they also defend the need to respect and protect culture as it is, for them, key to the construction of social identities. When it comes to gender-based violence, the country's approach to dealing with the phenomenon and mitigating its repercussions does not appear to reunite consensus.

In 2019, the government began a gender mainstreaming policy by enacting new laws and amending others, such as the Family Law which states that “in the field of intra- and inter-

family relations, local customs and customs are recognized and valued in anything that does not conflict with the Constitution of the Republic and the present Law” (National Assembly, 2019: article 4). In addition, the Child Law was also amended. Now prohibiting the previous allowed exceptions concerning child marriage, this amendment (nº 19/2019) was not efficiently spread across the country due to Covid-19. It ended up being forgotten and today many people, especially in central and northern regions, do not know there was a modification in the legal age to get married. In addition to this, the country implemented a national mechanism that coordinates the actions of four sectors (security forces, health, justice, and gender) to implement strategies that combat gender-based violence and mitigate its effects. It is called the Multisectoral State Program (2012). However, despite the fact that it includes all of these sectors, culture, despite its importance, is not addressed.

5.5.3. *International Instruments*

Mozambique ratified a long list of international instruments concerning women and children aiming to fight discrimination. During the interview with one political figure, the participant recognized that:

“Mozambique has engaged in many efforts to achieve gender equality and boost women empowerment; however, culture law is very difficult to adapt, and the country, so far, has not been able to meet the requirements within the international instruments” (political figure).

The country ratified, in 2008, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which states a regional approach to reach gender equality and creates a forum to share concerns and strategies on the topic (SADC, 2008). The country also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1993, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2005 (Women and Law in Southern Africa, 2015).

5.6. INSTITUTIONS

As previously stated in the literature review, Mozambique has a panoply of formal and informal institutions dealing with gender-based violence; however, according to some participants, the fact that exists such a huge variety makes it more difficult for the victims to be informed on the path they should follow to proceed with a complaint, for example.

In the following sections, the researcher identifies and analyzes the institutions within the justice and security sectors along with a passage on international and non-governmental organizations and respective efforts in the field.

5.6.1. *Justice*

The researcher asked the participants about several hypothetical situations concerning gender-based violence and about the actions the participants would undertake in order to face the situation: “would you report the case? If yes, how and to who? If no, why?” (see Appendix). The researcher focused, for this part, on the question “if yes, how and to who?”.

By doing an analysis of the cases, it is possible to argue that victims of gender-based violence tend to avoid reporting it to formal institutions; instead, they prioritize informal institutions or customary law. As one of the interviewees shared:

“If there is a problem with the husband, women generally ask their mothers or grandmother for advice – these grew up in a different time, with old traditions and give their advice according to that knowledge they had or they implemented in their personal lives” (activist).

Therefore, victims are more likely to be told advice based on traditions or old perceptions of gender identities. Despite this informal advice mechanism, there are others. There are also neighborhood leaders who are not formally elected, but elected informally within a specific neighborhood. These figures hold power over the community members and, many times, are responsible for establishing a connection between the neighborhood and the community leader. There is no kind of vetting on these neighborhood leaders, which means that, as a service provider highlighted:

“Mechanisms such as the neighborhood leader sometimes do not work because those working there do not have the experience needed to work with gender-based violence victims nor know the procedures for the subsequent report” (service provider).

Finally, another figure of relevance must be mentioned under these informal institutions. One of the interviewees named Mamã Maincha Pitara is a key figure in fighting gender-based violence in Cabo Delgado. She started her career in the state in 1992, as a member of the *Gabinete dos Direitos Jurídicos da Mulher* (literal translation is Office for the Legal Rights of Women). She then was elected to join the Community court as elected judge and, later, as a member of the provincial court of Cabo Delgado. Today reformed, she built a small office in Pemba where she and her team receive community members, including internally

displaced people, suffering from gender-based violence. The process consists of the victim shows up at the office and explains the problem; after, depending on the case (this is arbitrary and depends on the decision of Mama Maincha and her team), the perpetrator is notified by Mama Maincha's team to participate in an advisement meeting or reported to the police. When the researcher was waiting for the interview with Mama Maincha to start, a man come in the door and said he has been notified after a physical disagreement with his wife. When the interview begun, the researcher started by asking Mama Maincha about the process she would take with the man. She stated, "we will conduct two or three meetings with him and his wife and we will see if he changes his violent behavior – if not, he might report him to the authorities and incentivize the wife to divorce". This woman is very respected with the community, for this reason, people who are notified to meet her to not dare to miss the appointment, as their image would be affected.

Concerning formal institutions, there are several options. As community agent also stated,

"The first level of complaint is to address the community level; but many women feel bad about going to talk about such an intimate subject with a man [the majority of community leaders are men]. Often this community leader drinks with the husband of the woman who went to make the complaint, so she is unprotected" (community agent).

Once again, community leaders are not prepared to deal with this kind of cases – several organizations mentioned they have been trying to change this by engaging community leaders a program where they are taught about women's and children's rights, gender-based violence and how to act when facing this kind of problems. Another option is the community court, which decides on "small cases within the community", including gender-based violence cases, based on the customary and cultural practices. As highlighted by a service provider, "community courts take decisions based on habits and customs. They are based on previous cases, when legislation has already been amended". There is also the *Instituto do Patrocínio e Assistência Jurídica, Social and Paralegal* (which the literal translation is Institute of Legal, Social, and Paralegal Sponsorship and Assistance), which is a formal entity responsible for assisting people with judiciary issues, including gender-based violence victims. During the two groups discussion that were carried out, the researcher asked the participants – community members, including internally displaced women and men – about this institute and none of the group discussions' participants were familiarized with it. Concerning internally displaced girls and women, as one of the service providers enhanced:

“The problem with some mechanisms is that they are far away from the victims. The camps are located in areas far from the city center, where there are no police stations or hospitals with the means to help the victim. The victims usually do not have enough money to spend on transportation, for example” (service provider).

5.6.2. Security

Several mechanisms were also approached by the participants concerning the security sector. The most cited one was the police; however, several participants referred that police officers were not prepared to deal with gender-based violence cases and even took advantage of the victims by demanding sexual or financial favors. As highlighted by a community agent:

“We [the organization] follow two cases of internally displaced women who were raped by Al-Shabaab fighters in different situations. They went to the police and were raped once again. Because police officers who were in Palma were relocated, it is very difficult to identify them” (community agent).

Another problem identified by the participants is the absence of police stations in remote or rural areas, where most of the resettlement camps are allocated. As a service provider highlighted:

“The problem is in finding the appropriate institutions for where to take the cases because of the distance – leaving a resettlement center to get to the police can go a long way; or if you’re hurt, you need the means to get to a health facility - there’s no financial means to get out of the resettlement camp” (service provider).

As a political figure stated when I asked to talk to police officers about gender-based violence cases, “Why? Police officers are often corrupted by the perpetrators of the violence by a few hundreds of meticaïs”. Another community agent highlighted that, due to fear, victims of domestic violence, for example, search for other informal means to solve the dispute, because contacting police might also mean the husband’s arrest, for example, who would not contribute to the house expenses nor provide protection to the family. As an activist also shared, many police officers refuse to receive the reports because, the activist shared they consider that gender-based violence situations must be to be “resolved at home and among the family”. Another situation named by several participants was the law and the way it is perceived in police stations: 1) police officers act accordingly to customary law; and 2) even though the law has been updated to protect the victims, nor the institutions nor

the training of police officers or military was updated due to the Covid-19 outbreak and other priorities such as the conflict in the province's northern area. As the following testimony highlight:

"We had the case of a woman, a teacher, who was the victim of sexual violence. She went to the police and they told her to go to the hospital - she went unaccompanied. Those women who are domestic, who have no education, or who are displaced and do not know the procedures, how do they get to the hospital? Or the police? Who is willing to take her to a community agent to tell them what happened?" (community agent).

Another case shared by a service provider was the following:

"Two months ago, we lost a girl in our neighborhood. She was raped when she was about 12/13 years old. She got pregnant, had the baby, started getting sick, passed away and left the baby. After she was raped, the 50-year-old man was identified. The family wanted to report it. They took the case to the police - all they did was looking at her and feeding her. In the end they asked the family 'if the rapist goes to jail, who will support the child?'. The family left without filling the complaint"(service provider).

Another aspect that is stopping internally displaced girls, especially unaccompanied, from seeking help in the police is the fact that they are afraid of their uniforms, as it reminds the children of the uniforms that Ansar al-Sunna's militants wear. Another thing that happens to victims is that they report the cases; however, the morosity related to it. In one of the cases shared by a service provider, an internally displaced women filled a complaint against a man who was demanding sexual favors in exchange for her registration. After reporting the case, it took six months for the man to be judged and the verdict to come out. According to the service provider, the victim considered to withdraw the complaint several times. As stated by a community member: "here [Cabo Delgado] it is normal for a woman to be harassed, it is normal for a woman to be beaten by her husband; the police are part of the culture, so they too commit such crimes".

The researcher saw, during the research, teenagers and women being harassed by several police officers. Also, participants complain that being reported to the police is not something that the perpetrators consider serious, because there are several stories of people who were arrested and dismissed the next day, as the following:

"A displaced man in Metuge [district where several resettlement camps are located] was upset with his wife. Then he came home at night and burned the house with his wife and children inside. He was arrested, but the next day he was free" (IO representative).

5.6.3. *International and Non-Governmental Organizations*

Dozens of international and non-governmental organizations have established themselves in Pemba, which, as previously said, received the highest number of internally displaced persons. According to some participants, they play an important role in fighting gender-based violence and have recently implemented several tactics in agreement with local groups. They frequently recruit community agents to operate as intermediates between the IO and NGOs and the community, including internally displaced people. They do it because these community agents are well-known in the community and are familiar with its particularities.

One of the IOs in Pemba established the Green Line 1458, which is free and used by victims of gender-based violence to report crimes. The fact that the IDP community speaks a variety of languages is not a problem: persons who speak all dialects are available on the phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week (Portuguese; Swahili, etc.). At the same time, several organizations are developing awareness campaigns and teaching authority figures, particularly police officers and military personnel, about gender-based violence and women's empowerment, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, which halted the dissemination of information on these topics.

6. DISCUSSION

This chapter aims to provide concrete responses to the research questions raised above. The researcher begins by examining the province's lack of preparedness in accommodating and assisting the 820.000 internally displaced people, the most of whom are children and women. According to the UNHCR (cited in Kuehnast *et al.*, 2011: p. 8), there is a substantial link between falling levels of assistance to displaced individuals and their future vulnerability to gender-based violence. Internally displaced girls and women are, therefore, under a situation of double vulnerability if the means to provide support are lacking.

According to a service provider, the cases of gender-based violence rose after the arrival of internally displaced people, being girls and women the primary victims.

"We [organization] received multiple cases of unaccompanied girls and women who were unable to proceed with the registration process that grants them food stamps

because people responsible for the registration demanded monetary compensation or sexual favors in order to proceed with their processes” (service provider).

Later, the researcher questioned the service provider regarding the reporting of such cases. According to the service provider, some of these girls and women, particularly those who are unaccompanied or are the primary source of support for their families, accept their vulnerable condition and succumb to these requests. Others are sometimes helped by local families and are attempting to integrate into the community. Reporting a case of gender-based violence would bring them and their family humiliation and social stigma, in their opinion. Because of the absence of community support, the victim is often afraid of retaliation from the perpetrator. Others are not aware that these acts are considered gender-based violence.

The researcher asked the participants in the group discussion if they considered transactional sexual relationships and marital sex as gender-based violence cases, and they all, women and men, answered negatively. According to the majority of them, in the first case, the girl or the women agreed on having sexual intercourse in exchange of something, thus, it is compared to prostitution in their opinion. Concerning the second situation, most of the group discussion participants agreed that when a woman marries a man, one of her responsibilities is to give him sexual pleasure whenever he wants. Here appears the concept of culture-blaming. Gender-based violence cases were, during the group discussion and some interviews, interpreted as part of the culture and, therefore, perceived as unchangeable or impossible to adapt.

In fact, when one walks through the Paquitequete slum, it is possible to see numerous people wearing t-shirts that state “humanitarian assistance is free” along with two drawings that pass the message that demanding something in exchange for humanitarian assistance is a crime and must be reported to what they call *Linha Verde 1458*, whose literal translation is Green Line 1458. Calling this line is free, it is open 24 hours, seven days a week, and the person who takes the call redirects it to someone who speaks the same language or dialect as the person who is calling. In addition to this, the researcher saw one poster that described through text and images six examples of gender-based violence – sexual violence, domestic violence, psychological violence, economic violence, child marriage, and physical violence – and another one that described the different kind of support that victims can have access to in case they suffer from this kind of violence: psychosocial services, health services, security services, and legal services. Although these posters were clear, they were not located in areas where they could be seen by internally displaced girls or women. The researcher found them inside one of the organizations she visited. In addition, the second poster’s images

show female professionals willing to help the victims, however, security forces for example, are rarely constituted by women – at least the researcher never saw a policewoman during the fieldwork research, but saw several men.

The acknowledgement concerning the rights of women and what gender-based violence refers to is also a challenge that explains the low levels of report concerning gender-based violence cases. In addition, a distorted perception of female and male identities was also a reason referred by several participants to justify the under-report of gender-based violence. Participants highlighted that violence, in general, within marriage is acceptable. As previously stated, during the rites of passage, girls are taught how to be submissive and passive, and boys are taught how to keep their wives in that register. A violent environment motivates the acceptance and normalization of violence, as the following testimonies demonstrate:

“It is normal here children asking relatives for advice; aunts, grandmothers end up giving outdated advice, such as accepting violence” (community agent).

“Women in northern Mozambique are formatted by culture. We followed the story of an internally displaced woman who suffered from domestic violence. One day, she left the house and went to her parents’ house (who also fled from Palma) to ask for help. When she reached there, they told her to go back to her house because she must submit to her husband’s will. The man is from Pemba” (service provider).

This brings us to another disincentive identified by several participants concerning the report of gender-based violence. According to several participants, it is neighborhood and community leaders’ responsibility to work as a person of contact between the community and the formal institutions, including customary courts. However, this does not always work like this. Sometimes the perpetrator is the neighborhood or the community leader, or someone that works for that person. In other cases, the leader is a good friend of the perpetrator and prefers not to incriminate. As an activist highlighted:

“Sometimes, the community leader drinks with the husband [meaning, they have a close relationship], thus, the victim knows that it is useless to report to the leader” (activist).

This takes us to the lack of preparedness that officials have to deal with this kind of cases. This also highlights the fact that most of the security and judicial professionals are men, thus girls and women do not trust them to share intimate situations. That is another reason why victims prefer to not report the case. The above-mentioned example is one of them, but there are so many others. As another activist mentioned:

"The police and judges themselves refuse to receive many of the complaints, as they say that 'these matters are to be resolved at home or among the family'. Some are also corrupted by the perpetrators themselves, though financial compensation to remove the change, for example" (activist).

This shows us once again the influence that culture has among not only the grassroots, but also officials working at formal institutions. The researcher saw several policemen talking in an inappropriate way to girls and women walking in the streets. Victims do not feel safe in the police station – stories about victims being raped, for example. The state's authorities are not seen as trustworthy (stealing and raping in Mocímboa and Palma). Those who should provide protection are clearly not doing it, which brings me to another reason: women's empowerment and emancipation are not priorities. As a political figure mentioned, these subjects create disputes within the community, thus, public authorities do not perceive it as a priority. In this sequence, informal institutions have to fill in the gaps left by formal institutions; however, these such as the rites of passage or the work being done by reconciliatory figures in the field is not supervised by public authorities. This can create a maintenance of traditional cultural values with sexist strands, as it depends on the person who is heading the informal institution.

In addition, official documents and decisions are not equally spread throughout the country's territory. Some of the participants the researcher interviewed did not know that the exceptions concerning child marriage were removed, and the phenomenon is forbidden across the country. Finally, participants also highlighted that the absence of a standardized formal reporting process was also highlighted by the participants along with the morosity of the trial. There are different organizations that handle GBV, but victims don't know which one they should contact. Especially IDPs who come from other places. Some victims withdraw the complaint due to the process morosity. The victim may report, but after that, doesn't have a place to go nor someone to help, as the following testimony demonstrates:

"Men arrive to Pema [from the northern districts] with their wives and children, but frequently they leave their wives and marry someone else. Those women who are abandoned by their husbands are left to chance; no one cares for them. This also encourages child marriage – if girls of 12 to 14 want to eat, they end up going with an old man and marry. We hear 12-year-old girls looking at a 50-year-old man and calling him their husband. There are also girls who do not want to leave their husband because it is the only source of sustenance. What happens to the man who marries girls? He is tried and sometimes condemned, but the percentage of men who are judged by premature unions is very low" (activist).

7. CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, the researcher answers the research questions through several generalizations that can be adapted and used in different contexts and for future researches. The chapter ends with a small contribution of the findings for the field.

The goal of this thesis was to identify and explain the reasons behind the under-reporting of gender-based violence against internally displaced girls and women. This analysis confirmed some of the aspects mentioned by previous researchers, such as fear of retaliation or social stigma, but also identified new disincentives to the report of gender-based violence. The barriers to the phenomenon's reporting are related to the victim but they mainly concern the environment surrounding the victim. The situation of being an internally displaced person increased the victim's vulnerability of suffering from gender-based violence; however, the majority of the reasons identified by the researcher are related to deep causes that concern culture, the state's functioning, and lack of supervision.

The framework worked to a certain extent. Other dimensions could be added, however, due to time constraints, this was not possible. The researcher would add some dimensions on ethnicity, religion, and education, for example. Ethnicity because of the evidence concerning different regional development and the apparent superiority of one ethnicity in detriment of the other. Religion because the majority of the population of Cabo Delgado is Muslim – the researcher met one Christian woman who never participated in the rites of passage and was less conservative. And finally, education to comprehend if the level of education influences one's perception of gender-based violence. The ecological model worked, but another theoretical framework could also be added to focus on specific concepts that needed more clarification. These findings resonate what is wrong about the way that traditional cultural values are influencing the state's institutions.

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9. APPENDIX

CONSENT FORM

By signing this form, I confirm the following:

- I, the undersigned, confirm that the research's purpose has been explained to me.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research.
- I understand that being part of the research will include being interviewed.
- I agree to take part in the research.
- I understand that my personal details will not be revealed.
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, but my name will not be used.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time and I will not be asked questions about why I no longer want to take part.

Name of the Participant: _____ Date: __/__/__

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ___

(Please sign two copies of this form, one copy is for you to keep).

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant Information Sheet (to use in every activity)

Good morning, (name). My name is Marta, I study Peace and Development Work and I am currently conducting research on the under-report of gender-based violence cases among internally displaced people in Cabo Delgado. You were invited to take part in this research because I think your experience will help me to identify the reasons behind its non-report. Before we start, I want you to know that: 1) your identity will never be disclosed; 2) you are not forced to answer to any of my questions; and 3) if you ever feel uncomfortable through this session, tell me and it will end immediately. Do you have any questions or comments? Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Group Discussion

Notes:

- Facing the possible limitation concerning the language, the researcher intends to create two different group discussions: those who speak Portuguese and those who speak other dialects – for the latter, an interpreter will be hired. Given the limited timeframe available, this strategy will allow the researcher to acquire more information in a shorter period of time.
- The researcher intends to select participants, based on their performance within this workshop, to engage in individual interviews in order to provide a safe space and, subsequently, gather more information.
- Consent form/recording.
- Individual info:
 - Name:
 - Age:
 - Education:
 - Marital status:
 - Religion:

Activity 1: What is gender equality?

I intend to stimulate a brainstorming session among the participants around different concepts related to gender equality. As the discussion ends, I want to question: do you consider both genders have the same opportunities and power? This will, hopefully, trigger

their sense of gender inequality based on the participants' experiences. I also intend to ask if there are specific roles that are "women's" or "men's" – cooking, working, taking care of children. Do you think that a forced change in these roles incentivizes violence between a husband and a wife?

Activity 2: What is gender-based violence?

I plan on doing a brainstorm session about gender-based violence and writing on a whiteboard – or whatever is available – the **concepts** identified by the participants. In order to stimulate the discussion, I will ask them about words that can be related to the phenomenon as well as **examples** of situations: 1) husband is violent towards his wife; 2) husband forces his wife to have sex with him; 3) a fourteen-year-old girl marries a 40-year-old man. I will also ask them the main **perpetrators** and **victims** of this phenomenon.

Activity 3: What would you do?

In this activity, I share some examples of hypothetical situations with the participants and ask them "what would you do?". I intend to use the following examples:

- a. Your mother went to the market to buy some ingredients. She reaches home and your **father** is enraged because she took too long and he ends up slapping her. You saw the whole episode – what would you do? What would your mother do? Would you/her report this case to the local authorities? Elaborate.
- b. You went to the school to pick up your children and you took them home. Once you reached, you started preparing dinner. Meanwhile, your **husband** reaches home drunk and he wants to have sex with you. You tell him that it is not possible because the children are there. He, then, sends the kids to a neighbor's house and forces you to have sex with him. What would you do? Would you report this case to the local authorities?
- c. A **random man** forces one of your neighbors – a girl who is 14 years old – to kiss him and threatens her saying that he will kill her if she shares this with anyone. This girl runs away and comes to you asking for help – what would you do? Now, imagine that this man was a **community leader** – what would you do? Would you report this case to local authorities?
- d. You went to a friend's wedding. You are dancing, singing, and having fun when suddenly you feel someone is touching you inappropriately. You then realize that the one touching you is the bride's **uncle** – what would you do? Would you report this case to local authorities? Now, imagine this happened and it was your uncle – what would you do?
- e. You know that one of your neighbors is having financial difficulties – she is a widow, has five children, and not enough money to feed all of them; thus, she decides to marry her **oldest daughter** who is 14 years old to a man who is 50 years old. Facing this situation, what would you do? Would you report this case?
- f. You discovered that your **cousin** was molested by his oldest brother. Facing this situation, what would you do? Would you report this to local authorities?
- g. You went to a lake with your friend and two **police officers** appear and try to rape both of you; fortunately, you and your friend manage to run away from them – what would you do? Would you report it to the local authorities?

Activity 4: Based on your answers to the previous examples, can we affirm that gender-based violence episodes are under-reported? Why? What kind of mechanisms exist to report gender-based violence cases? Could internally displaced people have access to them or are they limited to the citizens of Pemba?

Activity 5: What kind of changes would you make within society and/or local authorities to incentivize gender-based violence victims to report these cases?

Activity 6: Have you heard about any episodes of gender-based violence among internally displaced people? If so, could you share them with me?

Key informant

Information:

- Name (if given):
- Age:
- Country of origin:
- Date of arrival:
- Current address:
- Level of education:
- Organization:
- Profession:
- Contact:
- Date of the interview:
- Comment:

Questions:

1. According to your experience, what is the perception that internally displaced people have on gender-based violence?
2. What kind of gender-based violence types have your organization been able to identify among internally displaced people? Could you share some examples with me? Did the victims decide to report the cases?
3. According to the testimonies given by internally displaced people, has your organization perceived any difference concerning gender-based violence before and after the conflict?
4. What kind of strategies and mechanisms exist to assist gender-based violence victims?
5. I have been reading that gender-based violence victims often opt for non-report the cases nor the perpetrators. In your opinion and according to your experience, what are the reasons behind this under-report?