

Midocean university

Faculty of Management

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**Research title: « Social protection programs and multidimensional poverty:
New approaches and applications in the union of Comoros »**

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I. Introduction:

Poverty remains one of the major development challenges facing many developing countries, particularly small island developing states such as the Union of the Comoros. Traditionally measured solely in terms of income or consumption, poverty is now increasingly understood as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing various forms of deprivation, including limited access to education, healthcare, employment, housing, social protection, and basic services.

The Union of the Comoros, comprising the Islands of Grande Comore (Ngazidja), Anjouan (Ndzuwani), and Mohéli (Mwali), exhibits distinctive socioeconomic characteristics marked by a strong reliance on family solidarity networks, remittances from the diaspora, the informal economy, and community-based support mechanisms.

Within Comorian society, traditional forms of mutual assistance have historically functioned as social protection mechanisms. Extended family networks, community contributions, local solidarity practices, and customary institutions play a significant role in supporting vulnerable households.

However, demographic changes, economic constraints, youth unemployment, territorial inequalities among the islands, and the effects of economic crises raise important questions regarding the effectiveness of these traditional mechanisms.

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 reinforced the necessity of establishing effective social protection systems capable of reducing vulnerabilities and promoting inclusive development.

This study is particularly relevant to the present research on social protection programs and multidimensional poverty in the Union of the Comoros, as it provides a valuable analytical and methodological framework for assessing the effectiveness of social interventions in addressing multiple dimensions of poverty.

Despite various poverty reduction initiatives, a significant proportion of the Comorian population continues to experience multidimensional deprivation. Existing social protection mechanisms remain fragmented, underfunded, and insufficiently coordinated. Many hypotheses are illustrated below to conduct clearly this topic.

II. Research Problem:

Despite national initiatives and support from development partners, a substantial proportion of the Comorian population remains exposed to various forms of vulnerability.

Social protection programs generally seek to:

- Reduce inequalities;
- Improve access to essential services;
- Strengthen household resilience; and
- Prevent social exclusion.

Nevertheless, several important questions remain:

Do existing programs adequately address the various dimensions of poverty?

Do institutional mechanisms sufficiently take into account the cultural and community realities of the Comoros?

Are there discrepancies between the stated objectives of these programs and their actual effects on the population?

How can social protection programs be effectively designed and implemented to reduce multidimensional poverty in the Union of Comoros within the framework of the Emergence Plan 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals?

Gender relations and social roles.

III. Significance of the Study:

1. Academic Significance:

This research will contribute to:

- Enhancing knowledge of social protection systems in small island developing states;
- Expanding the scholarly literature on multidimensional poverty in African island contexts; and
- Integrating ethnosociocultural dimensions into the analysis of social policies.

This study will allow the confronted societies in the multidimensional poverty to gain an equilibrium level in development acceptable matters.

2. Practical Significance:

This study will:

- Assist policymakers in adapting social policies to local realities;
- Improve the targeting of vulnerable populations;
- Propose more effective mechanisms linking public interventions with community-based solidarity systems; and
- Support national institutions and development partners in policy formulation and implementation.

IV. Research objectives:

i. General Objective:

- To analyze the impact of social protection programs on the reduction of multidimensional poverty in the Union of the Comoros.
- To assess the effectiveness of social protection programs in reducing multidimensional poverty in the Union of Comoros. Therefore, we should pay attention for a fair to analyze the current state of social protection programs in Comoros.
- To evaluate multidimensional poverty using recognized poverty measurement frameworks.
- To identify institutional, financial, and socio-cultural gaps affecting program effectiveness.
- To propose evidence-based policy recommendations for strengthening social protection systems.

ii. Specific Objectives:

- Identify the social protection programs implemented in the Comoros;
- Measure the principal dimensions of poverty affecting households;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing mechanisms;
- Examine the influence of local sociocultural practices; and
- Develop recommendations tailored to the Comorian context.

iii. Ethnosociological Perspective:

An ethnosociological approach is particularly relevant because poverty in Comoros is not solely an economic phenomenon. It is shaped by:

Traditional family solidarity networks.

Community-based mutual assistance practices.

Religious charitable systems (Zakat and Waqf).

An ethnosociological approach is particularly relevant because poverty in Comoros is not solely an economic phenomenon. It is shaped by:

- Traditional family solidarity networks.
- Community-based mutual assistance practices.
- Religious charitable systems (Zakat and Waqf).
- Gender relations and social roles.
- Rural-urban disparities.

Cultural perceptions of vulnerability and social exclusion.

Understanding these social dynamics is essential for designing effective and culturally appropriate social protection policies.

V. Research Questions:

a. Main Research Question:

To what extent do social protection programs contribute to reducing multidimensional poverty in the Union of the Comoros?

Does the Comorian society represent capacity to absorb this Sustainable Development Goals protocol?

How can multidimensional poverty measurement protocols be applied in the Comorian context?

What are the existing gaps and limitations in current social protection programs?

What socio-cultural and ethnosociological factors influence poverty and social protection effectiveness?

What policy reforms and institutional mechanisms can strengthen social protection systems in Comoros?

How can the Emergence Plan 2030 be aligned with social protection strategies to achieve sustainable development?

b. Secondary Research Questions:

What are the principal social protection programs currently available?

Which dimensions of poverty remain most prevalent?

Do community-based mechanisms complement public interventions?

Are there disparities among the islands regarding the effectiveness of social protection programs?

VI. Research Hypotheses:

a) General Hypothesis:

To guide the empirical investigation of the relationship between social protection programs and multidimensional poverty in the Union of Comoros, we are following to propose these hypotheses :

Social protection programs contribute to reducing certain dimensions of poverty; realities.

- ❖ Social protection programs significantly contribute to reducing multidimensional poverty in the Union of Comoros.
- ❖ Income and Poverty Reduction
- ❖ Access to Education
- ❖ Access to Health Services
- ❖ Living Standards Improvement
- ❖ Social Inclusion
- ❖ Institutional Effectiveness
- ❖ Ethnosociological Factors
- ❖ Financing Sustainability
- ❖ Social protection programs do not have a statistically significant impact on reducing multidimensional poverty in the Union of Comoros.

However, their impact remains limited when they fail to adequately account for local sociocultural.

b) Specific Hypotheses:

- ❖ Access to social protection programs improves the living conditions of beneficiary households
- ❖ Family and community networks enhance the effectiveness of social protection interventions.

- ❖ Territorial inequalities influence the effectiveness of social policies.

VII. Literature review:

Review of Previous Studies:

The international literature demonstrates an evolving understanding of poverty.

The work of Amartya Sen conceptualizes poverty as a deprivation of capabilities rather than merely a lack of income.

Subsequently, the multidimensional approach to poverty emphasized:

- ❖ Health;
- ❖ Education;
- ❖ Living standards; and
- ❖ Access to opportunities.

Within the African context, numerous studies like Abdelkhalek, T., and Boccanfuso examined the impact of social protection programs on multidimensional poverty in Morocco using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The authors developed two innovative ex-ante microsimulation approaches: one based on the random targeting of beneficiaries and another relying on a probabilistic Probit model, designed to provide a more objective targeting mechanism. Using data from the 2018 National Population and Family Health Survey (ENPSF) Morocco, the researchers assessed the potential effects of social protection reforms on the dimensions of health, education, and living standards.

The findings indicate that social protection programs contribute significantly to reducing both the incidence and intensity of multidimensional poverty. However, the study reveals that objective targeting through the Probit model is not consistently more effective than random targeting. The authors conclude that social protection policies constitute an essential instrument for reducing multidimensional deprivations and emphasize the importance of adopting an appropriate targeting mechanism to maximize their effectiveness. Abdelkhalek, T., & Boccanfuso, D. (2022)

VIII. Theoretical Foundations of the Study:

The study may draw upon 2 major approaches: (**Amartya Sen & Abdelkhalek, T., and Boccanfuso**)

A. Amartya Sen:

a) The Capability Approach (Amartya Sen)

Development is defined as the expansion of individuals' substantive freedoms and capabilities.

b) Social Protection Theory:

Social protection functions as a mechanism for reducing economic and social risks.

c) The Multidimensional Poverty Approach:

This approach simultaneously analyzes deprivations across multiple domains of well-being.

d) Monetary poverty:

Viable approaches (income variation and household costs).

e) Non monetary poverty:

Focuses on how individuals and groups become marginalized from social, economic, and political participation.

B. Abdelkhalek, T., and Boccanfuso:

f) Multidimensional Poverty Approach:

Poverty is as a multidimensional phenomenon rather than solely an income deficiency.

g) Ex-Ante Policy Evaluation Approach:

Impacts before policy implementation.

h) Microsimulation Approach:

Individual and household data to simulate policy outcomes.

i) Probabilistic (Probit) Targeting Model:

Probit regression model to estimate the probability that an individual benefits from social protection interventions.

IX. Research Methodology and Methods:

Type of Research:

I apply mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative techniques with some up listed approaches with an explanatory orientation.

Research Instruments:

1. Data Sources:

1.1. Secondary Data:

- National Institute of Statistics of Comoros
- World Bank reports
- International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- African Development Bank
- Government policy documents

1.2. Primary Data:

- Institutional stakeholders;
- Community actors; and
- Local associations.
- Sampling Strategy
- Purposive and stratified sampling across the three islands.
- Household surveys
- Interviews with government officials
- Community leaders
- National beneficiaries of social protection programs:
 - MAECHA
 - DAHARI
 - MSOMO NA HAZI
 - Support Funds for Alimentary Security

Data Collection Methods:

- Surveys
- Semi-structured interviews;
- Observation; and
- Documentary analysis.

Data Analysis method:

- Descriptive statistical analysis;
- Thematic analysis; and
- Comparative analysis across islands.

Research Instruments:

- Questionnaire
- Used to measure the various dimensions of poverty.
- Interviews
- Used to collect beneficiaries' perceptions and experiences.
- Observation
- Used to analyze local practices and social dynamics.
- Documentary Analysis
- Used to examine national and international reports and policy documents.

X. Scope and Limitations of the Study:

a. Geographical scope:

The study will cover the Union of the Comoros, including:

Grande Comore;

Anjouan; and

Mohéli.

Temporal Scope

The study will primarily focus on the period from 2018 to 2026.

a. Human scope:

The research will focus on vulnerable households and institutional stakeholders.

b. **Thematic Scope:**

The study is limited to issues relating to social protection and multidimensional poverty.

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