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Scott-Kloeck Jenson Fellowship Report

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Through the generous support of the Scott-Kloeck Jenson Pre-Dissertation Fellowship, I was able to conduct preliminary fieldwork in Mozambique this past summer. The ability to spend two months in Mozambique has been invaluable in shaping the direction of my dissertation project. My research focuses on the processes through which trust is built in post-conflict contexts. I am especially interested in the role of community-level authorities, including traditional leaders and *secretários de bairros* (neighborhood secretaries) in these processes in Mozambique. Scholars have shown that community-level actors play a central role in contemporary politics and society across Africa. These actors not only help individuals address everyday problems, but also play a crucial role in mediating citizens' relations with the state. Less is known, however, about how these actors influence trust-building and reconciliation efforts in war-affected societies.

During my time in Mozambique, I met with and interviewed numerous Mozambican scholars, NGO workers, traditional authorities, local state officials, and citizens. In addition to enabling me to build a network of contacts and resources in Mozambique, including several affiliations with Mozambican research institutes, these conversations have been critical in shaping my understanding of the numerous roles community authorities play in society, and the varying relations forged between citizens, traditional leaders, and local actors. Additional conversations with members of the international community including individuals working for

international organizations and foreign governments highlighted the importance of considering the role of international actors in shaping post-war dynamics, narratives, and outcomes in Mozambique. I also had the opportunity to travel to rural provinces in the center of the country with a team of Mozambican researchers, and to attend local community meetings, workshops, and traditional ceremonies. Traveling outside of Maputo, the capital city, was critical not only in helping me identify future research sites, but also in revealing significant differences in individuals' post-war experiences, as well as attitudes towards traditional leaders and state actors.

Listening to people's stories of war and its consequences revealed a multiplicity of ways through which violent conflict impacts both institutional and interpersonal trust. In a country like Mozambique where there has been little in terms of formal peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts, it was fascinating to learn of the different and informal ways individuals and communities have worked to process and heal from their experiences, as well as how they make sense of and approach trust-building efforts. While my project began predominantly as a study of how institutional trust is built after war, these conversations and experiences have expanded the scope of my project to include how informal and formal peacebuilding efforts, often led or organized by community-level authorities, shape and reshape social and political identities, as well as interpersonal relations in war-affected communities.

The opportunity to conduct preliminary fieldwork this past summer has been invaluable in shaping my dissertation project and laying the groundwork for future work. In addition to fostering relations with Mozambican scholars, organizations, and communities, I gained insight into the multiple and complex ways through which war impacts trust, as well as the ways

individuals and communities respond to this breakdown. I look forward to continue building on these questions moving forward.