

Legacies of civil wars: A 14-year study of social conflicts and well-being outcomes in farming economies

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Abstract

Community processes to address fractured social relationships and well-being remain the least examined dimensions in studies of legacies of civil wars. This article addresses these limitations by analyzing how the wartime and post-war generations have negotiated the legacies of the civil war (1976–1992) in a farming economy region in Mozambique. Based on a 14-year (2002–2015) study of community courts in Mozambique, we analyzed the types of social conflicts and the associations with gender, age, risk factors, self-described health impairments, and the timing of farming activities. We identified $n = 3,456$ participants and found that perennial sources of disputes were related to family formation and maintenance, defamation, accusations of perpetration of serious civil wartime violations, mistrust, debts, and domestic violence. Furthermore, conflict relations were associated with gender, age, risk factors, and health problems. This study concludes that civil wars have lasting multifaceted legacies, but generational tensions, availability of community institutions, and economic resources shape social relationships and well-being outcomes while averting revenge cycles among civilian war survivors.

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KEYWORDS

Agrarian economies, community courts, conflict relations, gender and age, normalization strategies, post-civil wars, risk factors, socio-health impairments, transitional justice

1 | INTRODUCTION

The question of how civilian populations in the aftermath of wars and other forms of mass political violence engage in normalization strategies and actions (Herzog, 2005, p. 107) and rebuild their lives over time has animated scholarly work for the past three decades, mainly through disciplinary pigeonholes. In particular is psychological trauma and its discontents, and transitional justice and its emerging skeptics. Critical studies of psychological trauma have challenged the applicability of such approaches in non-Western war-affected zones and in its place, it was proposed the use of sociosomatic approaches, which focuses on the intersections of political violence, sociocultural processes, and the development of specific illness experiences and normalization actions (Kleinman & Becker, 1998). Several studies analyzed these intersections, but there was a marked focus on the spectacular phenomenon of spirits and spirit possession which is typical in many contexts of post-conflict transitions and transitional justice around the world (Baines, 2010; Becker, 1998; Kwon, 2008; Mueggler, 2001; Van der Merwe et al., 2009). Yet, such analytic emphasis on supernatural beliefs as mechanisms of redress and coping has been pursued to the neglect of an analysis of how the legacies of civil wars become implicated in social structures and generational tensions related to intimacy, marriage, and divorce (see Cole & Thomas, 2009; Herzog, 2005; Igreja, 2015a).

The other dimension of the disciplinary pigeonhole is firmly focused on transitional justice processes undertaken through tribunals, reparations, and truth commissions (Hayner, 2001) to the detriment of a focus on the long-term systematic analysis of transitional justice processes rooted in non-Western cultures and practices. One assumption driving mainstream transitional justice is that the alleged perpetrators of worst abuses must face criminal accountability to defend the honor or authority of the victims so that the failure to punish may not cause their indignation and degradation (Judge Gideon Hausner, cited in Arendt, 1994, p. 287). Linked to this assumption is the notion that the lack of transitional justice is problematic as this predicament can be “transformed into irrational vengeance” (Crocker, 1998, p. 496). Yet, in some societies impacted by civil wars (e.g., Mozambique, Angola), there were no criminal accountability as part of transitional justice processes, but still such absence did not lead to acts of revenge among ordinary war survivors (Nordstrom, 1997; Ruigrok, 2007). In Gorongosa, a rural district in the center of Mozambique and the focus of this paper, the civil war (1976–1992) between the Frelimo government and the Renamo rebels severely impacted the residents’ lives since the very beginning. The war violence was intercalated by periods of deadly famine (1988–1992) which smeared further conflicts and deepened divisions among the local populations over time (Igreja, 2019). The majority of the residents lived in the Gorongosa war zones the entire civil war period, and, as in many civil wars around the world, the gendered nature of the war had young males and females compulsorily recruited as soldiers and involved in forced labor (see Katto, 2014; Wiegink, 2020). Sexual violence against young girls and women was rampant, which further disrupted socialization processes and marital relations and deepened the gender fault lines. Likewise, in the intensity of the war conflicts, the violence was significantly shaped by local social tensions and micropolitical goals, defined and operating at the community and family levels (Lubkemann, 2005). Family and community members sometimes made alliances with soldiers to survive, which led to mutual acts of betrayal, corroded social trust, and led willingly and unwillingly to numerous detentions, forced marriages, torture, and murder of kin and neighbors. Following the peace agreement (October 1992) between the government and the rebels, the national political and military leaders passed amnesty laws, and used memories as weapons and violent retribution against one another (Igreja, 2008, 2015b). In contrast, at the community level, the civilian war survivors, and their offspring—alleged perpetrators, victims, and bystanders— as well as former soldiers particularly female soldiers, had to face by themselves the challenges of transition

from war to peace, particularly to deal with the legacies of the gender divide, family disputes involving alleged spirits of the war dead, and community betrayal that had deepened during the protracted armed conflict.

This complex predicament suggests that to address the shortcomings of the above identified academic pigeonholes and add further knowledge of normalization strategies and transitional justice processes rooted in non-Western beliefs and practices, it is necessary to analyze the legacies of violent collective processes and biographical paths of certain groups in society. We considered social structures as templates for action or inaction (Cohen, 1985) and the participants as agents involved in normalization actions through various negotiation processes. However, such actions can also contradict some of the purposes of the social structures (Giddens, 1986). We broadly chart here a sociology of legacies of civil wars focused on people's own voices of the perennial legacies in their lives, mindful that what people say, "by no means exhausts what they know about why they act as they do" (Giddens, 1986, p. 536). This means that the legacies of overwhelming events—be they colonialism, wars, or famines—in society are never linear (Moore, 1993, p. 314). To properly grasp the complexities of legacies of civil wars, it is necessary to consider the everyday confluence of unstable structures, agentive acts, and consequences, and how the efforts people make to set postwar relationality are hampered by their tendency to display an unequal distribution of attention in everyday life and the ways that the local economies shape definitions of some stressors as more costly than others.

In the context of wars, the mechanisms of defense available for relieving or buffering the shock can sometimes be depleted (Devereux, 1980, p. 9). In such cases, the impacts of wars are indirect in that they disrupt the social structures that were templates for different kinds of social relations. Yet, the surviving members of the community or cultural group can still rebuild social life based on templates or remnants of disrupted social structures (De Vries, 1996, p. 408). This normalization strategy is challenging, as the existing templates or remnants of social structures might be inadequate to face the evolving realities, because after protracted wars societies hardly remain the same (André & Jean-Philippe, 1998; Herzog, 2005). Thus, using the context of the civil war (1976–1992) in Mozambique, we suggest that in communities undergoing transitions from civil wars to peace and democratization, the use of remnants of disrupted social structures can (1) fuel conflicts in families and communities, (2) transform social structures into sources of risk, which can take the form of culturally embedded and general risk factors, (3) unleash social dynamics that reproduce intractable conflicts (Blood, 1960, p. 209) with well-being implications, but without necessarily igniting revenge cycles.

1.1 | War legacies, conflict relations, risk factors, and well-being outcomes

Several studies conducted immediately after the attainment of peace settlements (Lubkemann, 2008; Menon & Rodgers, 2015) have consistently referred to a disconnection between national projects undertaken by political and bureaucratic elites and the heterogeneity of people's aspirations at community level. Such mismatches are more salient in relation to the divide between Western (bureaucratic) and non-Western (cultural) notions of social relationships, and halting cycles of persecution, violence, and injustices (Kwon, 2008; Mueggler, 2001). The disconnect also takes different forms according to the local gender and intergenerational politics in specific locations (Argenti-Pillen, 2003; Nordstrom, 1997). Additionally, it has been suggested that in contexts of social change, the new generations often create new memories that are built on or replace the memories of older generations (Schwartz, 1982, p. 375). Based on these insights, we further considered the role of intergenerational factors by comparing the social conflicts of the wartime generations and those of the postwar generations.

Most studies of legacies of civil wars have not analyzed the associations between social conflict relations and well-being outcomes. Many of such analyses was made in social psychological studies in Western societies (Rook, 1984; Shye et al., 1995). A set of such studies suggested that dysfunctional social relationships are associated with symptoms of ill health (Rook, 1984; Sneed & Cohen, 2014). For instance, marital conflicts were found to exert significant influences on the health trajectories of individuals as they age (Umberson et al., 2006). These studies emphasize the links between (1) conflict relations (involving wives and husbands, children, other family

members, and friends) and adverse health impacts, (2) the moderating roles of age and gender, and (3) several risk factors (Shye et al., 1995). However, no similar studies of the burden of conflict relations hitherto were conducted in postwar non-Western societies.

Alongside the studies of quality of relationships and well-being outcomes, a growing body of research using the social capital concept has investigated similar patterns in a more expansive set of contexts. For instance, a study conducted in post-civil war Kosovo demonstrated that war violence pared levels of social trust (Kijewski & Freitag, 2018), but it remains unclear the types of social conflicts that the diminished trust generated in this setting. In some postwar contexts, the precarity of social trust has imposed serious limits on people's ability to develop common socioeconomic projects (Colletta & Cullen, 2000), but no associations to well-being outcomes were analyzed. We built on these studies while using protracted conflict relations as proxies to poor levels of trust and analyzed the role of community courts and agricultural economy in mitigating the implications of poor trust.

1.2 | War legacies, decline of family relations, and somatic distress

Despite the recognition that social relations mediate political and economic processes, hardly any empirical studies have examined the implications of civil wars on social relations and well-being outcomes. For instance, a long-term study (1988–1993) on responses to land scarcity following the war for independence in Rwanda, and before the 1994 genocide, demonstrated that extreme land shortages, coupled with unchanging cultural rules of inheritance, activated a self-perpetuating dynamic of conflicts in the father-son dyad (André & Jean-Philippe, 1998). This study, however, did not examine the associations of land scarcity, decay of family relationships, and somatic distress among the rural Rwandese in the sample.

Using the sociosomatic approach mentioned above, several qualitative and cross-sectional studies have demonstrated that survivors of political violence consider collective moral transgressions, spiritual malevolence (Becker, 1998), and feelings of indignation and anger (Groleau & Kirmayer, 2004) to be associated with somatic distress. This study expands this stream of literature by using quantitative methods to examine the types of social conflicts and specific relationships involved and the mediation of community courts. Additionally, given that the Gorongosa dwellers practice sustenance agriculture, the study also examined the role of yearly cyclical farming activities in the incidence of reporting in community courts, social conflicts, and well-being outcomes.

1.3 | Study goals

This study had four major goals: (a) to determine the types of intractable social conflicts present in Gorongosa community courts and the social relations involved in these conflicts. We also sought to examine the connections of these conflicts and disrupted relationships to gender, age, culturally embedded and general risk factors, and the self-described health impairments of the litigants; (b) to analyze the burden of conflict relations by comparing plaintiffs and defendants in terms of types of relations and self-described health impairments; (c) to determine the association between the rates of conflict relations, self-described health impairments, and the timing of the farming activities; and (d) to determine patterns of help-seeking behavior.

1.4 | Civil war, sociocultural disruption, and postwar challenges in Gorongosa

The study included qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative methods were applied between 1997 and 1999. At the time, it was observed that until the mid-1990s in Mozambique, "although there was much concern with redrafting a legal system, almost no research was conducted on community systems of justice that

developed to mitigate the abuses of war" (Nordstrom, 1997, p. 216). Subsequent socio-legal studies of community justice in postwar Mozambique adopted cross-sectional approaches (Santos, 2006), but still there was a lack of systematic analysis of the links between conflict relations, the age and gender of the litigants, and the health outcomes. Furthermore, numerous studies have examined the resourceful nature of local healing practices in post-conflict societies (De Jong, 2002; Hobfoll, 1998), but few studies have adopted longitudinal approaches to analyzing the interventions of community courts to address postwar family and community fractures.

At the outset of this study, we conducted in-depth interviews with judges of community courts ($n = 20$), war survivors ($n = 30$), and their offspring ($n = 25$), and the focus was on pre-civil war, civil war, and postwar life experiences, social structures related to birth, marriage and divorce, and death rituals, and interpersonal conflicts. We used these data to develop a questionnaire (described below).

As stated above, the region of Gorongosa was the epicenter of the Mozambican civil war (1976–1992) that pitted the Frelimo government against the rebel movement, Renamo. The armies in conflict divided the regions into their military zones of control, which had the effect of dividing families and communities, and subjected the populations to immense suffering and many deaths. The region possesses agricultural and water resources, which were significant in sustaining the war efforts and turned Gorongosa into the focal point of violent battles for over two decades. Thus, unlike the Rwandan context of extreme land scarcity (André & Jean-Philippe, 1998), the Gorongosa communities did not lack land resources (Igreja et al., 2009). Nevertheless, during the civil war, there were periods of severe drought and famine (1988–1992) that also claimed many lives (Igreja, 2019).

Population studies in the region revealed that many individuals lived in the Gorongosa war zones for a mean number of 15.6 (S.D. 2.0) years (Igreja et al., 2004). As in many war zones (Argenti-Pillen, 2003; Lubkemann, 2008; Menon & Rodgers, 2015; Nordstrom, 1997), in the Gorongosa war zones, family and community relations and local ways of living were also under sustained attack, which created a moral atmosphere of mutual suspicion and malicious rumors, erosion of trust, and betrayal among family and community members and contributed, either accidentally or deliberately, to the killings of family and community members. The forceful removal of people from their houses to labor for the soldiers (locally termed *gandira*), led to frequent rapes and forced marriage of young girls and adult women. The familiar mechanisms of control and socialization were disrupted, turning rumors and accusations of women being complicit in illicit sex into a widespread phenomenon. The expression *ku toera mabota* (to go after the boots, to mean to go after the soldiers) circulated widely in the Gorongosa war zones to throw into doubt the notion that women were innocent victims of sexual violence while they did *gandira*. Consequently, divorce also became a widespread phenomenon. Divorce is not a new phenomenon as Portuguese travelers, at the turn of the century, observed in Gorongosa the resolution of conflicts including divorce. Yet, at the time, conflicts over the control of chieftaincy and accusations of theft and witchcraft dominated the disputes.

Several population studies conducted in the Gorongosa region using longitudinal approaches and randomized controlled trials focused on the psychological impacts of the civil war and famine at 6 and 7 years (Igreja et al., 2004) after the civil war's end showed high rates of PTSD among the participants. Despite the complaints of discomfort created by psychological symptoms, such symptoms did not often reach the threshold to influence help-seeking behaviors. Only when such symptoms were associated with local idioms of distress, particularly harmful spirit possession (known as *gamba* spirits, which involve accusations of perpetration of serious violations during the civil war) (Igreja et al., 2010), people sought local help. While the phenomenon of harmful spirit possession involves conflict relations among the people involved, these previous studies did not analyze the links between experiences of assaults by harmful spirits, decay of relationships, and the burden of disrupted social relations.

The civil war also impacted the social structures of family and social organization. One way to understand this impact is by considering the intersections of historical processes and biographical paths and interests of certain groups in society (Mills, 1959), while looking at "how cultures work under conditions of relatively normal stress" (De Vries, 1996, p. 403). Our interviews revealed that before the civil war in Gorongosa, the local mechanisms of setting and expanding relationships consisted of parents arranging the premature engagements of their offspring. Various

studies have identified modes of creating and maintaining family and social relations involving forced marriage in several non-Western societies (Bunting et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2011); nevertheless, these differ from those found in Gorongosa in several ways. In Gorongosa, the premature engagement was undertaken in parallel with *ku fewa*, which was a socialization period that the betrothed boy (the fiancé) spent with the parents-in-law, and the gifts and labor that they and their parents invested in the evolving relationship between the two families. *Ku fewa* imposes on the fiancé and his family the obligation to care for the fiancée and her parents. Following the notion of the female body as a symbol of purity, the betrothed girl (the fiancée) was socialized and protected under the moral order of premarital heterosexual chastity for several years in the homestead of her future parents-in-law. She invested her labor, but her family did not invest gifts in the relationship. Thus, *ku fewa* reflected local gender politics that entailed mutual obligations but with different fallouts when the premature marriage agreement was broken. In case of a broken *ku fewa*, it became the name of the debt that results from the failure to fulfil its various obligations. Once the affianced young man (called the *pale*) and affianced young woman (called *nhamancunda*) reached puberty, the engagement period ended with the celebration of the “real” marriage involving sexual intercourse (*ku pita nhumba*, translated as “to get inside the hut”), in tandem with various rituals. Although Gorongosa is an aggregation of multireligious groups (ancestral worshipping, Christianity, and new established Muslim groups), they all share the worldview of the female body as symbolizing purity and they practice *ku fewa*, even if they might use a different name or no name at all.

Yet, the *gandira* contributed to intensify sexual violence against young girls and adult women and evinced the powerlessness of the male relatives to protect them. In attempts to maintain some sense of continuity in social structures and relations, many parents hastily committed their preteen daughters to premature engagements, hoping that their husbands and the girls’ parents-in-law would protect the girl against the wartime forced marriages and sexual assault. In this civil war context, premature engagement became a “structure of conjuncture” (see Sahlins, 2004, p. 10) as parents attempted to maintain some sense of norms continuity in midst of the chaos. Given the durability of the civil war, though, premature engagement became a deeply ingrained coping mechanism, but no analyses were undertaken on its ramifications.

Following the peace agreement in 1992, civilian war survivors faced the task of rebuilding their social lives alone, with little government intervention. A 2007 general population census determined that the population of Gorongosa district was 117,129. Official statistics of the Mozambican government have reported that, with the aid of international donors, there has been some progress through the construction of new roads, health posts, schools, and power stations in several districts. However, various reports from the government and World Bank have also indicated that despite the postwar increase of schools and the abolition of school fees in the country, primary school dropouts did not significantly decrease. International authorities identified “premature engagements” as the culprits (World Bank/UNICEF, 2009), without nevertheless presenting a comprehensive examination of this problem. The Mozambican government, following global agendas defining proper family relations, linked these social and family relations to poverty and approved the law no. 19/2019 which prohibits premature unions.

2 | RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 | Participants, study design, and procedures

The participants in this study were local inhabitants who lived in different villages of the Gorongosa district. Their past experiences and present life circumstances were very similar and revolved around the self-sustaining farming economy. The focal point of this study was in community courts. These courts have existed since the precolonial period but have gone through changes because of colonial and postcolonial interventions (Santos, 2006). In their modus operandi, the judges follow procedural justice mechanisms in that the courts are open and accessible forums where everyone, regardless of gender and age (except for minors regarded as being younger than 7 years old) has the right to participate by presenting and defending their cases. The courts provide public hearings,

preliminary diagnoses, and referrals of somatic problems, and they judge in accordance with equity and good sense and justice.

Thus, courts are important research sites given that the judges and the people in general follow the socio-somatic approach by considering that certain experiences of illnesses and a sense of injustice are inseparable. For instance, when individuals report an intractable social conflict, it is likely they also report somatic distress. In terms of accessibility, when litigants do not have the financial means to afford the court fees, the judges still litigate. Prior to the civil war, the extended family was at the center of resolution of conflicts (see Feierman & Janzen, 1992). Following the civil war and intensification of family conflicts, community courts in Gorongosa, as in other regions of Mozambique, played key roles in the resolution of various types of conflicts including marriage problems, petty crimes, and social distress (Santos, 2006).

The quantitative data gathering unfolded in community courts over 14 years (2002–2015). Ten research assistants collected data at different stages. Although people define and narrate problems in their own terms, the narrative followed a basic structure: (a) presentation of the conflict, (b) the context of the violation, and (c) evidence regarding the litigants' roles in the conflict. Following each presentation, the judges ask questions for clarification and cross-examine the litigants to test the credibility of the charges or defense. The narrative mode of case presentation allowed us to determine two dimensions in a conflict: the manifest conflict (e.g., divorce) and the latent conflict or risk factor (e.g., "It was my parents that chose my husband when I was still young; it was not my choice to live with this person"; we called this form of latent conflict "premature engagement"). It is not the manifest conflict that brings the plaintiff to the court, as parents have the authority to undertake this type of social linkage. Yet, the latent factor as described by the litigants contributed to increasing the likelihood of the divorce conflict. Another example, *ku fewa* (cultural debt), emerges because either the prospective husband and his family, or the prospective wife and her family, did not fulfil the obligations of the *ku fewa* arrangement. The reported conflict is *ku fewa*, the underlying trigger is mistrust; this often became tangible as the litigants explained the reasons for their indignation and the need to repair the breach.

2.2 | Conflict and relation network assessment questionnaire (CRNAQ)

The principal data were gathered using a semi-structured questionnaire, which we termed "Conflict and Relation Network Assessment Questionnaire" (CRNAQ) using a categorical format ("yes" or "no"):

Background information of the plaintiff and defendant (five items): Date of the conflict presentation in the community court (day, month, and year), Age, Gender, Place of residence, and Number of people in the dispute.

Type of relationship of plaintiff and defendant (four items): Spouses; Family members; Outsiders; In-laws.

Principal conflict (eight items; yes, no): Divorce; Defamation; Domestic violence; Gamba/war-related accusations of perpetration of serious offenses; General debt; Community violence; Cultural debt; Theft.

Risk factors (seven items; yes, no): Premature engagement; Mistrust; Alcohol abuse; Aggressive behavior; Harmful spirits; Lack of family support; Infertility/sexual impotence.

Symptoms (eight items; yes, no): Fear; Wounds; Various illnesses; Illnesses led to death; Nightmares; Headaches; Bodily weakness; Harmful spirit possession.

Help-seeking Behavior (three items; yes, no): Have you been to community court before? Have you searched for family support? Have you been to other community institutions?

2.3 | Statistical analysis

The first step in the analysis involved examining the descriptive properties of the litigants (gender, age, and relationships), their cases (types of conflicts and the time in the farming cycle), and outcomes (risk factors, symptoms,

and help-seeking behaviors) over the 14-year span of the study. Due to the categorical nature of many variables in this data set, and to analyze the overall associations between variables, we first used chi-square tests of association to examine the general associations between conflicts, relationships, and well-being outcomes. Here, phi coefficients are reported as a measure of effect size for the chi-square test. For many of the categorical variables in the data set, the litigants could respond with more than one answer for each variable. Therefore, we recoded the variables into dichotomized responses within each category. For example, for the “risk factors” variable with eight possible responses and 22% of cases reporting multiple unique risk factors, we recoded yes/no variables for each individual risk factor. Then, using these dichotomized variables, phi coefficients derived from 2×2 tables and interpreted the same as correlational analyses were calculated to quantify the significance and strength of the specific categorical associations between conflicts, relationships, and well-being. When continuous and categorical variables were examined together (e.g., age and risk factors), logistic regression analyses were used to determine the level of association and odds ratios. Using tests of independent proportions, we assessed the influence of the timing of disputes within the farming cycle.

3 | FINDINGS

3.1 | Goal one: Descriptive characteristics

A total of 3,456 participants aged between 8 and 87 years were included in the analysis. The mean age of the sample population was 33.5 years. For the plaintiffs, the mean age was 33.9, while for the defendants it was 33.1 years. In this sample, 67% ($n = 2,308$) were men and 33% ($n = 1,148$) were women. Approximately 50% ($n = 1,732$) were plaintiffs, with 60% males and 40% females. In turn, defendants comprised approximately 50% ($n = 1,724$) with 74% males and 26% females. The gender differences are significant as men are two times more likely to be involved in conflicts than women. Divided by the category of litigants, men are 1.5 times more likely to be involved as plaintiffs than women, and men are 2.8 times more likely to be involved as defendants than women.

Table 1 presents the types of interpersonal conflicts and the relationship of the litigants for each case by year for the study period (2002–2015). The main conflict type during the 14 years was divorce (32.3%), followed by defamation (13.8%), supernatural phenomena (known as *gamba* spirits, which involve accusations of perpetration of serious violations during the civil war) (11.4%), general debts (11.0%), domestic violence (10.9%), community violence (9.8%), cultural debt (*ku fewa*) (7.2%), and theft (3.6%). While most conflicts varied in the annual percentages, throughout the period of study, divorce was consistently at the top of the list.

The types of relationships involved in conflicts during the study period (Table 1) were spousal relationships (39.5%), followed by relationships between family members—parents, children, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews (25.8%), outsiders (mainly neighbors) (19.6%), and in-laws (15.0%). Table 1 also shows yearly variations in the frequencies with which different types of relationships were involved in conflicts, particularly during the years 2004, 2005, and 2007. Yet, spouse versus spouse conflicts topped the list most of the time during the study period.

3.2 | Risks associated with conflict relations

Of all participants, 59.1% ($n = 2,042$) reported at least one risk factor. Table 2 presents the percentages of risk factors for all participants and for plaintiffs and defendants. The major risk factors identified were premature engagement (30.0%), mistrust (14.5%), and alcohol abuse (17.0%).

Chi-Square tests were conducted to determine the associations between the type of conflict and whether the plaintiffs reported a risk factor (recoded as yes or no). The test showed a strong association between the type

TABLE 1 Case characteristics: Frequencies of types of cases by year 2002–2015

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	All years
<i>Type of interpersonal conflicts (n)</i>															
Divorce	12	10	29	36	46	35	57	57	43	49	51	63	23	49	560
Defamation	11	16	18	35	22	19	33	24	7	14	16	16	6	2	239
Domestic violence	2	8	17	14	17	14	14	16	23	18	13	9	8	15	188
Gamba/War-related serious offenses	12	5	11	23	18	18	21	11	16	16	19	15	4	9	198
General debt	0	13	17	21	19	28	27	20	14	6	13	13	0	0	191
Community violence	9	13	19	29	16	6	12	16	5	9	8	8	7	13	170
Cultural debt	0	0	3	3	8	6	6	4	3	6	11	17	30	27	124
Stealing	3	3	5	8	5	3	6	6	3	6	4	4	1	5	62
<i>Relationship of litigants (n)</i>															
Spouse vs. Spouse	14	19	32	46	55	31	62	61	56	73	63	71	42	57	682
Family members	13	7	34	62	33	37	56	42	31	23	41	44	6	18	447
Outsiders	15	19	24	42	24	31	34	28	17	20	17	19	24	25	339
In-laws	7	23	29	19	39	30	24	23	10	8	14	11	7	20	264
Total	49	68	119	169	151	129	176	154	114	124	135	145	79	120	1732

TABLE 2 Personal outcomes by litigants: Risk factors, symptoms, and help-seeking behavior

	All Participants (N = 3,456)	Plaintiffs (N = 1732)	Defendants (N = 1724)
<i>Risk factor (%)</i>			
Premature engagement	30.0	38.6	21.3
Mistrust	14.5	21.1	7.8
Alcohol abuse	17.0	13.9	20.2
Aggressive behavior	9.6	11.8	7.4
Harmful spirits	7.4	10.4	4.3
Lack family support	4.2	4.8	3.7
Infertility/Sexual impotence	2.6	3.9	1.4
<i>Symptoms (%)</i>			
Fear, wounds	10.5	16.4	4.5
Various illnesses, illness led to death	7.3	9.8	4.7
Nightmares, headaches, bodily weakness, harmful spirit possession	7.8	10.5	5.2
<i>Help-seeking behavior (%)</i>			
First time in court	62.2	61.7	62.7
Family counselors & healers	19.5	20.4	18.7
Other neighborhood authorities	12.4	13.6	11.2
Had been to court before	10.5	12.1	8.9
State authorities	4.5	5.6	3.4

Note: These percentages may not add up to 100% because participants were able to report more than one risk factor/symptom/help-seeking behaviour.

of conflict and the reporting of risk factors $\chi^2 = 162.50$ (7, $N = 1,732$), $p < .001$, $\phi = .306$, $p < .001$. The conflicts with the highest percentages of risk factors were *gamba*/war-related conflicts (92.9% of individuals involved in this type of conflict reported risk factors), domestic violence (82.7%), defamation (76.5%), divorce (71.4%), and community violence (68.0%).

As shown in Table 3, the phi coefficients were then calculated to measure the strength and significance of the associations between principal conflicts and each individual risk factor, as reported by plaintiffs. Due to the large number of research participants in these analyses, only the phi coefficients greater than .15 were considered. These analyses indicated that, of the plaintiffs who reported risk factors, "premature engagement" was positively associated with general debt conflicts, cultural debt conflicts, and theft conflicts. "Lack of family support" was positively associated with divorce conflicts. "Infertility/sexual impotence" was positively associated with divorce. "Belief in harmful spirits" was strongly and positively associated with *gamba*/war-related conflicts. "Aggressive behaviours" and "Alcohol abuse" were meaningfully associated with domestic and community violence. In addition, "Mistrust" was meaningfully associated with defamation conflicts.

3.3 | Conflict relations and symptoms of health impairments

Of all participants, 22.4% ($n = 773$) reported at least one symptom of ill health. When examining this data, three consistent categories emerged within the reported ailments: (1) wounds and fear, (2) various illnesses that led to death, and (3) nightmares, headaches, bodily weakness, and possession by harmful spirits. These categories were

TABLE 3 Phi coefficients (ϕ) of associations between risk factors and conflicts

Conflicts	Conflicts							
	Divorce	General Debt	Defamation	Gamba/ War-Related	Domestic Violence	Community Violence	Cultural Debt	Stealing
<i>Risk factors</i>								
Premature engagement	.03	.12***	-.03	-.15***	-.02	-.09**	.14***	.11***
Lack of family support	.07**	.01	.01	-.02	-.02	-.06	.01	-.04
Infertility/sexual impotence	.06*	-.01	-.01	.05	-.04	-.05	-.02	-.04
Belief in harmful spirits	-.15***	-.10***	-.10**	.59***	-.07*	-.09**	-.09**	-.06*
Aggressive behaviors	-.11***	-.07*	-.11***	-.02	.28***	.18***	-.10**	-.05*
Alcohol abuse	-.13***	-.09**	-.03	-.14***	.30***	.27***	-.09**	-.08**
Mistrust	.03	-.06*	.17***	-.14***	.12***	-.07*	-.09**	-.08**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .025$; *** $p < .001$.

used for all subsequent analyses. Table 2 indicates the symptoms of ill health reported for all participants, as well as for plaintiffs and defendants. The most reported symptoms of ill health for all participants were fear and physical wounds (10.5%). When reported from the perspective of the plaintiffs, "fear and wounds" (16.4%) was the major category of presenting symptoms. Defendants presented all categories of symptoms nearly equally.

Chi-Square tests were conducted to determine the association between type of conflict and symptoms as reported by the plaintiffs, which was categorized into binary (yes or no). The tests showed a strong association between the type of conflict and whether or not plaintiffs reported symptoms $\chi^2 = 393.08$ (7, $N = 1,732$), $p < .001$, $\phi = .476$, $p < .001$. The conflicts associated with the most symptoms were "gamba/war-related offences" (78.8%) and domestic violence (55.3%). Phi coefficients were then calculated to measure the strength and significance of each specific association between individual symptoms of ill health and conflict types. As shown in Table 4, these analyses indicated that, of the plaintiffs who reported symptoms, "wound and fear" symptoms were positively associated with "domestic and community violence." Additionally, "various illness and death" was positively associated with "gamba/war-related conflicts."

3.4 | Associations between age of litigants, conflicts, and risk factors

A chi-square test of association between conflict types and six age categories indicated that there was a significant association between age and conflict type $\chi^2 = 142.60$ (35, $N = 1,732$), $p < .001$, $\Phi = .287$, $p < .001$ such that younger individuals were more likely to be involved in conflicts. As such, the age group 15–29 accounted for 40.1% of all cases and age group 30–44 accounted for 47.1% of all cases. No other age groups accounted for more than 15% of any individual conflict category. The percentage of cases within these two age groups are reported in Table 5.

Using age as a continuous variable, logistic regression analyses show that for every 1-year increase in age, individuals were 2% more likely to be involved with general debt ($\beta = .017$, $p = .002$; $\chi^2(1) = 9.0$, $p = .003$) and 3% more likely to be involved in gamba/war-related conflict ($\beta = .034$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2(1) = 38.8$, $p < .001$). On the contrary, with every 1-year increase in age, individuals were 3% less likely to be involved with divorce ($\beta = -.03$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2(1) = 50.7$, $p < .001$) and 2% less likely to be involved in domestic violence ($\beta = -.017$, $p = .008$; $\chi^2(1) = 7.4$, $p = .006$). This indicates that younger individuals were more likely to be involved in divorce and domestic violence conflicts, while older generations were more likely to be involved in gamba, which from local perspectives are directly related to the civil war fallouts and general debt.

Regarding age groups and risk factors, there was a significant association between age and type of risk factor $\chi^2 = 75.18$ (40, $N = 1,732$), $p < .001$, $\Phi = .208$, $p < .001$. As with conflict types, the highest percentages of reported risk factors were within age groups 15–29 and 30–44 and are reported in Table 5. In addition, however, age group 45–59 accounted for one-third (33.3%) of reports of alcohol abuse. No other age group accounted for more than 15% of any individual risk factor category.

Using age as a continuous variable, the logistic regression analyses show that for every 1-year increase in age, an individual was 2% more likely to report harmful spirits ($\beta = .02$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2(1) = 15.9$, $p < .001$), 4% less likely to report infertility or sexual impotence ($\beta = -.037$, $p = .002$; $\chi^2(1) = 11.5$, $p = .001$), and 3% less likely to report mistrust ($\beta = -.026$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2(1) = 30.1$, $p < .001$). This result suggests that as the age of participants increases, they tended to report more harmful spirits related to the civil war, while young people were more likely to report risk factors of mistrust, which are linked to the setting of new families, and therefore, the indirect fallouts of the civil war, and infertility/sexual impotence.

3.5 | Goal two: Associations of conflicts, relationships, and well-being

The analysis focused on determining the relationships most frequently implicated in conflicts and the associations of these conflicts with self-described health problems. First, we conducted Chi-Square tests to determine the associations between conflict relations and symptoms of ill health. The results indicated a significant association between

TABLE 4 Phi coefficients (ϕ) of associations between symptoms and conflicts

Conflicts	Divorce	General Debt	Defamation	Gamba/ War-Related	Domestic Violence	Community Violence	Cultural Debt	Stealing
<i>Symptoms</i>								
Wounds, fear	-.06	.01	.02	-.39***	.31***	.21***	.08	.06
Nightmares, headaches, bodily weakness, harmful spirit possession	-.01	-.03	-.02	.04	.07	-.11**	-.02	-.04
Various illnesses, illness led to death	-.17***	-.03	-.10*	.50***	-.18**	-.13**	-.06	-.04

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .025$; *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 5 Characteristics of age groups: Conflicts and risk factors

	Age group	
	15–29	30–44
<i>Conflict type (%)</i>		
All	40.1	37.1
Divorce	50.5	30.1
Defamation	45.0	33.2
Gamba/war-related serious offenses	21.8	47.2
General debt	28.3	44.4
Domestic violence	44.3	42.7
Community violence	29.0	42.6
Cultural debt	44.4	26.6
Theft	37.1	50.0
<i>Risk factor (%)</i>		
All	40.1	36.7
Premature engagement	40.4	33.4
Mistrust	49.7	34.7
Alcohol abuse	33.3	30.3
Aggressive behavior	41.2	38.2
Harmful spirits	22.8	46.7
Lack family support	41.7	35.4
Infertility/Sexual impotence	56.0	25.0

litigants and whether or not they reported symptoms $\chi^2 = 139.38$ (1, $N = 3,456$), $p < .001$, $\Phi = .201$, $p < .001$. The results also indicated that, over the 14-year time span, plaintiffs were 2.17 times more likely to report symptoms than defendants were. Thus, the plaintiffs complained not only because of the impact of intractable conflicts in their social relationships, but also because ongoing experiences of ill health aggravated the burden of conflict relations.

Among those who reported symptoms, there was a significant association between types of relationships and the symptoms they reported $\chi^2 = 63.30$ (9, $n = 773$), $p < .001$, $\Phi = .286$, $p < .001$. Phi coefficients measured the strength and significance of each specific association between relationships and symptoms (see Table 6). These tests indicate a positive association between spouse versus spouse cases and reported symptoms of wounds and fear. Additionally, family member cases were positively associated with symptoms of various illnesses, and with symptoms that led to the death of family members. This means that in this sample, conflict relations between spouses and family members were linked to significant burdens to the well-being of the complainants.

To examine the relationships most frequently implicated in conflicts, we conducted Chi-Square tests to determine the associations of networks of relations and conflicts. When examining family relationships versus outsiders (binary), relationships within families (spouses, family members, or in-laws) constituted the center stage of most conflicts (80.4% of all conflicts), $\chi^2 = 325.78$ (7, $N = 1,732$), $p < .001$, $\Phi = .434$, $p < .001$. When examining specific networks of relations, phi coefficients measured the strength and significance of each association between relationship types and conflicts. These analyses indicate that conflicts between spouses were positively associated with divorce and domestic violence. Conflicts between family members were related to accusations of gamba spirits/war-related serious offenses. Finally, conflicts involving outsiders were positively related to community violence and cultural debt disputes. In-laws were not significantly related to any conflict (see Table 7).

TABLE 6 Phi coefficients (ϕ) of associations between types of symptoms and relationship of litigants

Type of symptoms	Relationship of litigants		
	Wounds, fear	Various illnesses, illness led to death	Nightmares, headaches, bodily weakness, harmful spirit possession
Espouse vs. Espouse	.14***	-.19***	.03
Family members	-.22***	.21***	.01
Outsiders	.13**	-.09*	.03
In-laws	-.00	.07	-.08*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .025$; *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 7 Phi coefficients (ϕ) of associations between relationship of litigants and conflicts

Conflicts	Relationship of litigants							
	Divorce	General Debt	Defamation	Gamba/War-Related	Domestic Violence	Community Violence	Cultural Debt	Stealing
Espouse vs. Espouse	.42***	-.23***	-.09***	-.13***	.20***	-.21***	.08**	-.15***
Family members	-.21***	.14***	.01	.22***	-.67*	.02	-.08**	.07**
Outsiders	-.27***	-.07**	.12***	-.11***	-.13***	.25***	.16***	.12***
In-laws	-.02	.07**	-.02	.03	-.05*	-.01	.03	-.02

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .025$; *** $p < .001$.

3.6 | Associations of gender, conflict status, and health impairments

When analyzing those who reported symptoms, a binomial test indicated that significantly more male plaintiffs reported symptoms of ill health (60%) than male defendants (40%; $p < .001$). A similar trend was observed for female plaintiffs (78%) and female defendants (22%), and the difference was significant, $p < .001$. These differences suggest that male and female plaintiffs reported more symptoms of ill health than the male and female defendants did. A comparison of the gender differences within the categories of plaintiffs demonstrated that significantly more female plaintiffs (55%) than male plaintiffs (45%) reported symptoms ($p < .05$). This indicates that female plaintiffs experienced more health difficulties than male plaintiffs did.

3.7 | Goal three: Association of timing of farming cycle, rates of conflicts, and well-being outcomes

Table 8 shows the rates of conflict in the four periods of the farming cycle. This is an important analysis because it explores the relations between people's labor cultures and social conflicts in everyday life. Further statistical analysis indicated that the stage in the farming cycle influenced the association between the reporting of conflicts and the presence of self-described health impairments. Tests of independent proportions indicate that, overall,

TABLE 8 Association of conflicts, time of the farming cycle, and symptoms

Period	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Participants who reported symptoms (%)
Time I: Outset of AC Sept./Oct./Nov.	427	24.7	17.0
Time II: Mid-term of AC Dec./Jan./Feb.	442	25.6	24.4
Time III: First Harvest Mar./Apr./May	391	22.6	17.7
Time IV: End of AC Jun./Jul./Aug.	472	27.1	29.2

Abbreviation: AC = farming cycle.

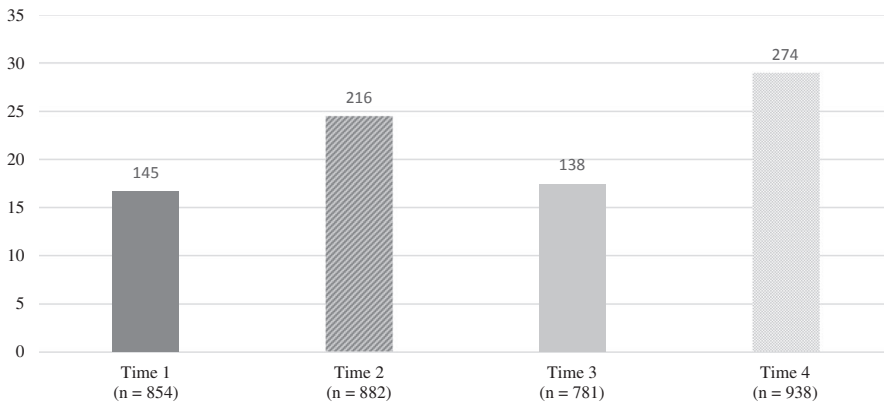


FIGURE 1 Proportion of individuals reporting symptoms in each of the four farming cycle terms. Proportions (y-axis) represent the percentage of the total research subjects within each farming cycle term to report any type of symptom(s). Figures above bars represent absolute frequency for each term. Figures below farming term labels represent total Ns for each term

there was a significantly higher percentage of cases in Time 4 than Time 3 ($\chi^2 = 10.23, p < .001$). Furthermore, litigants in Time 4 reported more symptoms than litigants in any other Time (Figure 1; all comparisons $p < .025$) and litigants in Time 2 reported more symptoms than Times 1 and 3 (Figure 1; all comparisons $p < .001$). Specifically, litigants in Time 4 reported significantly more fear and wounds and nightmares, headaches, bodily weakness, and spirit possession than at any of the other Times (Figure 2; all comparisons $p < .001$). Finally, litigants in Times 2 and 4 reported significantly more illnesses and death than those in Times 1 and 3 (Figure 2; all comparisons $p < .025$).

3.8 | Goal four: Help-seeking behavior

Most plaintiffs were in community courts for the first time (61.7%), while 12.1% had been in the courts before (Table 2). Before requesting the intervention of the courts, some had consulted family counselors and healers (20.4%); others had requested the intervention of neighborhood authorities such as village chiefs (13.6%), and still others had sought help in state institutions (5.6%). This pattern of help-seeking behavior was analogous to that of the defendants who had to appear before the community courts because of the discomfort experienced by the plaintiffs.

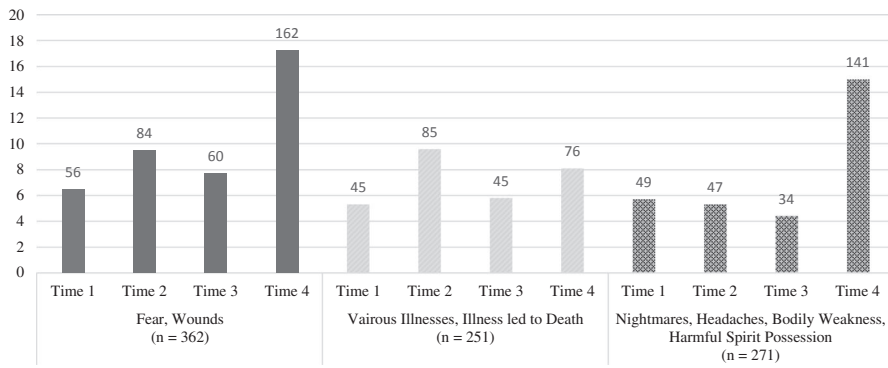


FIGURE 2 Proportion of symptom categories reported in each of the four farming cycle terms. Proportions (y-axis) represent the percentage of the total research subjects within each farming cycle term to report specific symptoms. Figures above each bar represent absolute frequency for each bar. Figures below symptom labels represent total Ns for each symptom

4 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This empirical study has shown that the legacies of civil wars endure in multifaceted ways, destabilizes social structures with implications in everyday social relations, but those mostly affected unleash diverse normalization strategies and transitional justice processes rooted in non-Western cultures and practices. The long-term focus of this study in Gorongosa on conflict relations at the family and community level, the gender and age divides and dynamics, the risk factors of “premature engagement” and “mistrust,” and the role of local economies had not been comprehensively identified in previous regional studies in Mozambique (Bertelsen, 2016; Katto, 2014; Lubkemann, 2008; Nordstrom, 1997; Santos, 2006; Sheldon, 2002; Wiegink, 2020). Nor had similar analyses been undertaken in other studies of legacies of civil wars and other types of collective violence around the world (Argenti-Pillen, 2003; Kijewski & Freitag, 2018; Kwon, 2008; Menon & Rodgers, 2015; Mueggler, 2001; Ruigrok, 2007). Thus, this study provides a meaningful contribution to understanding through people’s own perspectives the sociological dimensions of legacies of civil wars and the implications for diverse groups in society (see Moore, 1993).

The local community normalization actions were rooted on non-Western notions of relationships, social conflicts, trauma, and postwar accountability. Community courts in Gorongosa have played a meaningful role in litigating numerous social conflicts including accusations of wartime serious violations using the vernacular discourses of *gamba* spirits and spirit possession (Igreja, 2013, 2018), which takes different forms and dynamics in several African contexts of transitional justice (Baines, 2010; Shore, 2009). Yet, the interventions of community courts is further significant because the community judges in Gorongosa operate in a national political context dominated by amnesty laws and the government abandonment of the war survivors, without nevertheless such abandonment spilling over into irrational vengeance (see Crocker, 1998). The comparison between the Gorongosa’s predicament with the Rwandan study, as well as studies in non-affected war zones, demonstrates interesting parallels and contrasts. The Rwandan study identified the family niche—in particular, the father–son dyad—as central in conflict relations (André & Jean-Philippe, 1998); other studies revealed strained relations between husbands and wives (Vogli et al., 2007), and conflict relations involving partners, children, and friends (Sneed & Cohen, 2014). Our study identified conflict relations involving “husband-wife,” “family members,” “neighbours,” and “in-laws,” but spousal relationships were central in family conflicts over more than a decade.

In our analysis, we traced back the sources of the intractable conflicts around family formation and maintenance to the use of destabilized social structures in communities that have also changed. This mismatch was graspable through “premature engagement” and “mistrust,” which were the risk factors associated with perennial

social conflicts. Comparatively, these risks differed from those identified in studies of postwar low-income countries, which were poor economic performance and development as risks for conflict reversion (Collier et al., 2008) and land scarcity and cultural inheritance rules in the case of Rwanda (André & Jean-Philippe, 1998).

In this study, the sociological imagination (Mills, 1959) focused on local histories of violence, biographies and interests of certain groups, and social change provided further intelligibility for the dynamics of risk factors of premature engagement and mistrust. Prior to the civil war, premature engagement was a socialization mechanism with differential assigned expectations for parents and offspring, which were also differentiated by gender. During the civil war, it became profoundly disrupted, but in the aftermath of the war, certain groups did not reverse it back to the pre-civil war status or simply leave it behind. Instead, many parents and other adult guardians continued the civil war trend of hastily promoting premature engagements. The continuity of the wartime patterns was linked to erosion of trust in the post-civil war era. As such, the decline in relations of trust is consistent with the results of studies conducted in other post-conflict communities (Colletta & Cullen, 2000; Kijewski & Freitag, 2018) or societies undergoing rapid changes. What is specific in this study is that the decay in relations of trust varied with age and further corroded the sense of post-civil war moral crisis by further disrupting the already unstable social structures.

For example, the girls' parents suspected that their daughters might engage in intimate relations outside the *ku fewa* agreement, thus, the resolve to hastily bind their preteen daughters to premature engagements through the *ku fewa*. Thus, most of the responsibility to watch and protect the betrothed girl (the fiancée) fell on her de facto parents-in-law. The boys' parents suspected that their sons might lose the *ku fewa* if they did not exert an earlier and strict control of the fiancées' behavior. Yet, the gradual increase in boys' and girls' access to schooling, access to new media technologies, and Christian conversion which often introduce new ideas of intimacy, love, and romance (see Cole & Thomas, 2009; Sheldon, 2002; van de Kamp, 2011), turned the familiar mechanisms of control inept. Thus, the boys often involved in spreading rumors or their own heightened alert made them susceptible in responding to rumors of alleged intimate and sexual misbehavior of their fiancées. Furthermore, the associations between mistrust and the "defamation" conflict are indicative of the prevalence of suspicions and rumors around family creation and family maintenance among young people. Although when the relationship is broken the return (or payback) of the *ku fewa* (debt in cultural terms) is theoretically guaranteed, it is not easy in practice. It is understood that the returned *ku fewa* cannot replace the original *ku fewa* because as people say, "the water that was dropped cannot be recovered."

This continuity of premature engagement in the changed postwar environ turned it into a continuous generator of conflicts (see Blood, 1960). The local populations appear conscious of this predicament as reflected by a common story presented in a quiz-like genre that the young people told during our interviews: "A young man goes fishing and he catches three fishes. One he gives to his father. One to his mother and the third fish he throws away. What does it mean?" Most often outsiders answer, "We don't know." They then explain "The young man gave the third fish to his parents-in-law." The locals give an outburst of laughter which contributes to reaffirm the floundering predicament of *ku fewa*. Despite this complex predicament, the wartime generations were unable to shift their attention from the notion that hastiness decreases risks of unwitting consequences. The focus was on reinstating their interests by considering hierarchy, control, and respect as paragons of relationships. This was made possible as the ownership of land was a source of power which allowed the wartime generations to keep underscoring the belief that these types of social conflicts were still less costly than the potential loss of their investments in agriculture. Thus, once igniting premature marriage, families sold their agricultural surplus to sustain the relations of their male offspring by giving gifts (*ku fewa*) to their younger fiancées and their adult guardians. In case agricultural surplus was not available, they incurred financial debts expecting that once agricultural surpluses were attained, they could settle their debts. Yet, in numerous occasions there were delays settling the *ku fewa* debt, which also became a conflict brought to the court.

The postwar generations challenged the premature engagement, not by rejecting it upfront or loudly protesting, but by breaking in disguised ways the relationships their parents established. Young people (male and

female) broke their premature relationships by becoming involved in real or suspected premarital heterosexual intercourse to pursue the relationships and partners of their choice, and when the judges in the community courts many times confronted the litigants, they were open about it. For example, "Yes I slept with this person because this is the person of my choice." Such conflictual relationships broke the *ku fewa* agreement and triggered divorce, which had social and financial consequences. The parents of the premature fiancée had to pay back the gifts (*ku fewa*), the social reputation of the premature fiancé was tainted because it indicated his and the family group's inability to expand their social networks according to the social expectations. We observed in the community courts that often as the litigants negotiated the terms of the divorce, the young male fiancés were visibly distressed and conveying a sense of loss while the fiancées and their groups vowed to invest in agriculture and sell the surplus or acquire debts to pay back the *ku fewa*. In this context, the prevalence of divorce conflicts among the younger generations evoked a kind of disguised protest.

This type of postwar moral predicament partially resonates with the results of the historical analysis undertaken by Dagmar Herzog (2005) of the earlier normalization process in Germany following World War II. Herzog demonstrates how some sectors of the German society believed that the enforcement of family and sexual conservative practices (under the banner of re-Christianization) was the solution to the post-World War II moral crisis. The younger generations exposed to moral and sexual conservatism faced serious conundrums, which in some cases were detrimental to their well-being (Herzog, 2005). In the case of Gorongosa, the implications of the postwar relationships were that premature engagement and mistrust became a burden that affected both sides (fiancé and fiancée) in the relationship. But the young people also resisted the moral impositions by constantly uncommitting to the premature agreements their parents made on their behalf. Within this set of complex circumstances, the solution does not seem to simply outlaw premature marriages as the Mozambican government did.

4.1 | Conflict status, age and gender, symptoms of ill health, and help-seeking behaviors

The analysis also showed that most plaintiffs and defendants were young males. This result is generally consistent with global trends indicating higher prevalence of males involved in conflicts than females (WHO, 2002). Regression analysis of the associations between age increase and variations on the types of conflicts and risk factors allowed us to separate direct and indirect legacies of the civil war (see Schwartz, 1982). For instance, the direct consequences of the civil war as expressed by *gamba* spirits were more burdensome among older individuals, precisely those who had direct experiences of the civil war. In contrast, younger individuals were more likely to be involved in conflicts related to disrupted social structures instigating divorce, defamation, cultural debts, and domestic violence.

The conflict relations were associated with several self-reported health problems, which is consistent with studies that found associations between poor close relationships and different types of illnesses (Umberson et al., 2006; Vogli et al., 2007). Although the objective medical records of the research participants were not possible to obtain during the study period due to unavailability of biomedical resources in the region to undertake such a task, the obtainment of self-reported health information provided valuable insight into the health-related consequences of these conflicts. These self-reported health problems were not psychological but broad health issues such as bodily weakness, headaches, fear, wounds, nightmares, and harmful spirit possession, which were consistent with the results of the sociosomatic studies (Becker, 1998; Groleau & Kirmayer, 2004), as well as studies that examined legacies of conflicts culturally expressed through spirits and spirit possession (Kwon, 2008; Mueggler, 2001; Van Duijl et al., 2014). This study, however, added further insights by revealing the associations between the domains of conflict relations (e.g., spouse vs. spouse; family members; in-laws; and outsiders) and well-being outcomes. Our study also highlighted the centrality of manual farming in people's lives, and its moderation in the reports of social conflicts and well-being outcomes. During the period of intense agricultural activities and coordination, the rates of conflict reports and health complaints dropped, whereas in the slack times the

reports of conflicts and health problems increased. This result confirmed previous trends observed through a population survey of psychological traumas and the moderating role of the farming economy (Igreja et al., 2009). However, what emerged as a new finding was that during Time 2, the participants reported experiences of illnesses that led to death of family members. This could be related to the fact that Time 2 is the local rainy season, which triggers the spread of malaria-infected mosquitoes and diarrhea and cholera. These diseases, coupled with the lack of adequate health care, exerted a serious toll on people's health. Finally, the fact that most of the people in this sample (62%) used community courts for the first time, while 11% had visited more than once, is an indication of the linchpin position of this resource in the postwar era. This suggests the need to expand the analysis of community resources literature focused on healers (De Jong, 2002) to include the role of community courts and local economies in mediating recovering after war violence.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data available on request from the authors: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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