

## 'The everyday work of repair'

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# 'The Everyday Work of Repair': Exploring the Resilience of Victims-/Survivors of Conflict- Related Sexual Violence

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## Abstract

This interdisciplinary article uses what Das has termed 'the everyday work of repair' as a framework for thinking about resilience. It is not the first to discuss resilience and the everyday. What is novel is the context in which it does so. Extant scholarship on conflict-related sexual violence has largely overlooked the concept of resilience. Addressing this gap, the article draws on semi-structured interviews with victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Colombia and Uganda to examine what everyday resilience 'looks' like and how it is expressed within and across highly diverse social ecologies. In so doing, it reflects on what everyday resilience means for transitional justice, through a particular focus on hybridity. It introduces the term 'facilitative hybridity', to underscore the need for transitional justice processes to give greater attention to the social ecologies that can crucially support and enable the everyday work of repair and everyday resilience.

## Keywords

'the everyday work of repair', resilience, conflict-related sexual violence

'The everyday. . . is a vast, variegated and porous realm, whose ragged edges are subject to constant rending and mending'.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Audra Mitchell, 'Quality/Control: International Peace Interventions and the Everyday', *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 4 (2011): 1623–45, 1630.

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## Introduction

Discussing ongoing conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, an official from the United Nations (UN) recently declared: ‘There is no doubt that sexual violence is being used in this conflict as a weapon of war’.<sup>2</sup> Many scholars, however – and in particular feminist scholars – are highly critical of such portrayals of conflict-related sexual violence, arguing that they detract from everyday forms of gendered violence and continuities of violence across war and ‘peace’.<sup>3</sup> According to Boesten, ‘The exceptionalization of sexual violence in conflict as something divorced from the gendered dynamics of both war and peace. . . stands in stark contrast to feminist analysis of gender-based violence, which has long emphasized that such violence is part of a continuum’.<sup>4</sup> More broadly, Gray underlines that ‘From a policy perspective, a definition of war which assumes that it is ontologically distinct from “everyday” or private sphere experiences will only grasp a limited slice of the social spaces in which war is enacted’.<sup>5</sup>

While feminist scholars have underscored the everyday as a site of complex, structural and intersecting forms of violence, this article adopts a different focus. Exploring how ‘the vitality of the everyday allows people to live around, through, and beyond violence’,<sup>6</sup> it examines some of the ways that women and men who have suffered conflict-related sexual violence, as well as other co-occurring forms of violence, engage in what Das has called ‘the everyday work of repair’.<sup>7</sup> To be clear, it is not suggesting that lives ripped and torn apart by violence and conflict can simply be ‘mended’ and ‘fixed’, as though nothing ever happened. Rather, it uses the concept of repair to refer to some of the diverse ways that victims-/survivors<sup>8</sup> of conflict-related sexual violence actively seek to get on with their lives and move forward,<sup>9</sup> making small ‘stitches’ as they do so. It thus

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2. Cited in Michelle Nichols, “Sexual Violence Being Used as Weapon of War in Ethiopia’s Tigray”, U.N. Says’ (16 April 2021). Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sexual-violence-being-used-weapon-war-ethiopia-tigray-un-says-2021-04-15/>. Last accessed November 10, 2021.

3. Pertinent in this regard is Enloe’s observation that ‘Wars don’t simply end, and wars don’t end simply’. Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 193.

4. Jelke Boesten, ‘Of Exceptions and Continuities: Theory and Methodology in Research on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19, no. 4 (2017): 506–19, 511–12.

5. Harriet Gray, ‘The “War”/“Not-War” Divide: Domestic Violence in the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative’, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 21, no. 1 (2019): 189–206, 191.

6. Rebecca Walker, ‘Violence, the Everyday and the Question of the Ordinary’, *Contemporary South Asia* 18, no. 1 (2010): 9–24, 11.

7. Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 62.

8. The article uses the terminology of ‘victims-/survivors’, based on the fact that some of the men and women who participated in the underpinning research primarily (or only) identified with one term, and some viewed themselves as both victims and survivors.

9. This is similar to what Gilmore and Moffett refer to as ‘self-repair’. Sunneva Gilmore and Luke Moffett, ‘Finding a Way to Live with the Past: “Self-Repair”, “Informal Repair” and

broadly contributes to an expanding body of research<sup>10</sup> exploring the social and political agency of individuals (and communities) affected by conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. The article uses the idea of ‘the everyday work of repair’, in turn, as a framework for thinking about resilience, defined as ‘the qualities of both the individual and the individual’s environment that potentiate positive development’.<sup>11</sup>

The originality of the article is threefold. First, although it is not the first to discuss resilience and the everyday,<sup>12</sup> what is novel is the context in which it does so. To date, existing scholarship on conflict-related sexual violence has largely overlooked resilience.<sup>13</sup> Arguably part of the explanation is that resilience is in various ways a gendered and intersectional concept; the stressors and adversities to which resilience is a response often reflect deeper inequalities and power imbalances.<sup>14</sup> Discussing three villages prone

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Reparations in Transitional Justice’, *Journal of Law and Society* 48, 3. (2021): 455–80. However, the term ‘self-repair’ itself is problematic because it does not sufficiently reflect the fact that repair is a process that involves and affects the wider environments with which the ‘self’ is inextricably interwoven.

10. See e.g. Julia Zulver, ‘High-Risk Feminism in El Salvador: Women’s Mobilisation in Violent Times’, *Gender & Development* 24, no. 2 (2016): 171–85; Marie E. Berry, *Women, War and Power: From Violence to Mobilization in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Anne-Kathrin Kreft, ‘Responding to Sexual Violence: Women’s Mobilization in War’, *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 2 (2019): 220–33; Heleen Touquet and Philipp Schulz, ‘Navigating Vulnerabilities and Masculinities: How Gendered Contexts Shape the Agency of Male Sexual Violence Survivors’, *Security Dialogue* 52, no. 3, 213–30.
11. Michael Ungar and Linda Liebenberg, ‘Assessing Resilience across Cultures Using Mixed Methods: The Construction of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure’, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 5, no. 2 (2011): 126–49, 127.
12. Caroline Lenette, Mark Brough and Leonie Cox, ‘Everyday Resilience: Narratives of Single Refugee Women with Children’, *Qualitative Social Work* 12, no. 5 (2012): 637–53; Caitlin Ryan, ‘Everyday Resilience as Resistance: Palestinian Women Practising *Sumud*’, *International Political Sociology* 9, no. 4 (2015): 299–315; Brittany Betteridge and Sophie Webber, ‘Everyday Resilience, Reworking and Resistance in North Jakarta’s Kampung’, *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 2, no. 4 (2019): 944–66.
13. There are some exceptions. See e.g. Maggie Zraly, Sarah E. Rubin and Donatilla Mukamana, ‘Motherhood and Resilience among Rwandan Genocide-Rape Survivors’, *ETHOS* 41, no. 4 (2013): 411–39; Relebohile Moletsane and Linda Theron, ‘Transforming Social Ecologies to Enable Resilience among Girls and Young Women in the Context of Sexual Violence’, *Agenda* 31, no. 2 (2017): 3–9 (although this article is not specifically about conflict-related sexual violence); Carlo Koos, ‘Decay or Resilience? The Long-Term Social Consequences of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Sierra Leone’, *World Politics* 70, no. 2 (2018): 194–238. Even when scholars mention resilience, however, there is a common lack of in-depth engagement with the concept. See e.g. Jerker Edström, Chris Dolan and Thea Shahrokh, *Therapeutic Activism: Men of Hope Refugee Association Uganda Breaking the Silence over Male Rape in Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, Institute of Development Studies, Brief Supporting Evidence Report 182, March 2016, 5. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jerker\\_Edstroem/publication/299784497\\_ERB182\\_AccompanyingBrief/links/57053aae08ae13eb88b944be/ERB182-AccompanyingBrief.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jerker_Edstroem/publication/299784497_ERB182_AccompanyingBrief/links/57053aae08ae13eb88b944be/ERB182-AccompanyingBrief.pdf)
14. Valerie Nelson and Tanya Strathers, ‘Resilience, Power, Culture and Climate: A Case Study from Semi-Arid Tanzania and New Research Directions’, *Gender & Development* 17, no.

to drought and flooding in coastal south Gujarat, India, for example, Ahmed and Fajber point out that ‘Caste intersects with gender in all three villages to determine who is vulnerable, where they live, and their access to resources, including communication and information systems’.<sup>15</sup> On one hand, thus, it is easy to see why the concept of resilience may not sit comfortably in discussions about conflict-related sexual violence. On the other hand, however, taking resilience seriously draws attention to the very power dynamics that also underpin the use of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. In other words, and as this article seeks to demonstrate, resilience has an important and legitimate place in studies of such violence.<sup>16</sup>

Second, there is a vast body of cross-disciplinary scholarship exploring resilience.<sup>17</sup> Yet, ‘most resilience research has focused on the experiences of children and adolescents. . . Far less is known about resilience in adulthood and later life’.<sup>18</sup> While addressing this gap, this research is about more than just individual victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Resilience scholarship has increasingly moved beyond the field of psychology, shifting the focus to complex social-ecological systems (SES) that recognise ‘interdependent relationships between people and eco-systems’.<sup>19</sup> Drawing

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1 (2009): 81–94; Anna Kaijser and Annica Kronsell, ‘Climate Change through the Lens of Intersectionality’, *Environmental Politics* 23, no. 3 (2014): 417–33; 844–862; Ines Smyth and Caroline Sweetman, ‘Introduction: Gender and Resilience’, *Gender & Development* 23, no. 3 (2015): 405–14; Jordana Ramalho, ‘Hope, Home and Insecurity: Gendered Labours of Resilience among the Urban Poor of Metro Cebu, the Philippines’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 39, no. 5 (2020).

15. Sara Ahmed and Elizabeth Fajber, ‘Engendering Adaptation to Climate Variability in Gujarat, India’, *Gender & Development* 17, no. 1 (2009): 33–50, 40.

16. See also Janine N. Clark, ‘Beyond “Bouncing”: Resilience as an Expansion–Contraction Dynamic within a Holonic Frame’, *International Studies Review* 23, no. 3 (2020): 556–79; Janine N. Clark, ‘Resilience, Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Transitional Justice: An Interdisciplinary Framing’, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2021.1912990>

17. W. Neil Adger, ‘Social and Ecological Resilience: Are They Related?’ *Progress in Human Geography* 24, no. 3 (2000): 347–64; George A. Bonanno, ‘Loss, Trauma and Human Resilience: Have we Underestimated the Human Capacity to Thrive after Extremely Aversive Events?’ *American Psychologist* 59, no. 1 (2004): 20–28; Fikret Berkes and Helen Ross, ‘Panarchy and Community Resilience: Sustainability Science and Policy Implications’, *Environmental Science & Policy* 61 (2016): 185–93; Jonathan Joseph, ‘Governing through Failure and Denial: The New Resilience Agenda’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 44, no. 3 (2016): 370–90.

18. Linda Leibenberg and Jeff Christopher Moore, ‘A Social Ecological Measure of Resilience for Adults: The RRC-ARM’, *Social Indicators Research* 136, no. 1 (2019): 1–19, 4.

19. Joshua E. Cinner and Michele L. Barnes, ‘Social Dimensions of Resilience in Social-Ecological Systems’, *One Earth* 1, no. 1 (2019): 51–6, 52. See also Brian Walker, C. S. Holling, Stephen R. Carpenter and Ann Kinzig, ‘Resilience, Adaptability and Transformability in Social-Ecological Systems’, *Ecology and Society* 9, no 2. (2004): 5; Carl Folke, ‘Resilience: The Emergence of a Perspective for Social-Ecological Systems Analyses’, *Global Environmental Change* 16 (2006): 253–67. Holling’s pioneering work on ecological resilience fundamentally informed and laid the foundations for research on SES. C. S. Holling, ‘Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems’, *Annual Review of Sociology* 4 (1973): 1–12.

on semi-structured interviews with female and male victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), Colombia and Uganda, this article makes a novel contribution to this SES literature. It examines what everyday resilience ‘looks’ like and how it is expressed within and across highly diverse social ecologies – ‘the social and physical environments that constitute people’s habitats’<sup>20</sup> – and it unpacks the role that these social ecologies play in ‘the everyday work of repair’. In so doing, it explores not only how interviewees drew on these ecologies but, also, how they were ‘giving back’ to them through everyday acts of care.

Third, the linkage that the article posits between ‘the everyday work of repair’ and resilience has wider implications for transitional justice – meaning judicial and non-judicial processes for dealing with the legacies of the past,<sup>21</sup> and which themselves seek to contribute to repairing the torn fabric of societies affected by conflict and violence.<sup>22</sup> The article ultimately uses its analysis of everyday resilience to argue the case for a social-ecological reframing of transitional justice. As part of this proposed reframing, it develops what it terms ‘facilitative hybridity’. Writing from a peacebuilding perspective, Richmond describes ‘a liberal-local hybrid form of peace – the post-liberal peace – which intellectually enables an engagement with the lives of ordinary people, in their own everyday rather than in a static and distant state context’.<sup>23</sup> Facilitative hybridity is about much more than an ‘intellectual’ engagement with the everyday. It is about practical engagement, in the context of transitional justice processes, with individuals’ social ecologies – and about strengthening the resources within these ecologies that support everyday resilience. In other words, facilitative hybridity is about creating new possibilities for transitional justice – a field which, to date, has ‘remained relatively indifferent to the concept of resilience’<sup>24</sup> – to facilitate and enable resilience as part of its core goals.

The first section draws on existing scholarship to elucidate the concepts of ‘everyday’ and ‘repair’, exploring their particular relevance in the context of conflict-related sexual violence. The second section discusses methodology and the fieldwork that informs the article’s analysis. Drawing on a unique dataset, the third section empirically examines and reflects on everyday dimensions of resilience in three diverse case study settings. The final section develops the concept of facilitative hybridity and demonstrates its significance as a basis for thinking in more social-ecological ways about transitional justice processes – and how they might contribute to fostering resilience.

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20. Shigehiro Oishi and Jesse Graham, ‘Social Ecology: Lost and Found in Psychological Science’, *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 5, no. 4 (2010): 356–77, 356.

21. United Nations, *Guidance Note of the Secretary-General: United Nations Approach to Transitional Justice* (March 2010). Available at: [https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/TJ\\_Guidance\\_Note\\_March\\_2010FINAL.pdf](https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/TJ_Guidance_Note_March_2010FINAL.pdf)

22. Ismael Muvingi, ‘Donor-Driven Transitional Justice and Peacebuilding’, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 11, no. 1 (2016): 10–25, at 14.

23. Oliver P. Richmond, ‘Becoming Liberal, Unbecoming Liberalism: Liberal-Local Hybridity via the Everyday as a Response to the Paradoxes of Liberal Peacebuilding’, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 3, no. 3 (2009): 324–44, 333.

24. Philipp Kastner, ‘A Resilience Approach to Transitional Justice?’ *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 14, no. 3 (2020): 368–88, 369.

## The 'Everyday' and 'Repair'

Maintaining that there is something 'vaguely oxymoronic about the idea of everyday life', Back asks: 'Is there any form of life that does not happen everyday?'<sup>25</sup> If this question underscores the sheer breadth of the 'everyday' and the concomitant challenges of defining it, the bigger point is that in societies that have experienced conflict and large-scale violence, the 'everyday' – as people once knew it – may no longer exist. Intra-state conflicts, for example, 'introduce an expansion of war into the sphere of everyday life'.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, large-scale violence can exacerbate everyday socio-economic conditions and inequalities;<sup>27</sup> human rights violations may have their roots in 'quotidian acts that produce the violence of a system like apartheid';<sup>28</sup> and an event such as a massacre or shelling 'attaches itself with its tentacles into everyday life and folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary'.<sup>29</sup> This article, thus, is mainly concerned not with delineating the boundaries of the 'everyday', but, rather, with exploring the everyday practices – as "ways of operating" or doing things"<sup>30</sup> – through which individuals affected by conflict and human rights abuses seek to recreate a sense of 'normality' and get on with their lives.

There are numerous examples of these everyday practices within extant scholarship relating to conflict and violence. Based on her research with families who fled from the Punjab during riots linked to the Partition of India in 1947, Das comments: 'my engagement with the survivors of riots. . . showed me that life was recovered not through some grand gestures in the realm of the transcendent but through a descent into the ordinary'.<sup>31</sup> Discussing the McGurk's Bar massacre, a Loyalist bombing that took place in 1971 in Northern Ireland and left 15 civilians dead, Brown notes that 'Memory work by the families of the victims in no way displays the ethnonational narrative in terms of symbolism or ritual. Rather, it seeks to mark the ordinariness of those killed, their everyday lives, occupations and interests'.<sup>32</sup> Focused on more recent violence during Sierra Leone's civil war (1992–2002), and drawing on fieldwork in five rural communities, Martin argues that 'many Sierra Leoneans were able to find peace and justice by regaining a sense of

25. Les Back, 'Why Everyday Life Matters: Class, Community and Making Life Livable', *Sociology* 49, no. 5 (2009): 820–36, 820.

26. Teresa K. Beck, *The Normality of Civil War: Armed Groups and Everyday Life in Angola* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2012), 13.

27. Linda J. Laplante, 'Transitional Justice and Peace Building: Diagnosing and Addressing the Socioeconomic Roots of Violence through a Human Rights Framework', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 2, no. 3 (2008): 331–55, 351.

28. Anne Orford, 'Commissioning the Truth', *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law* 15, no. 3 (2006): 851–84, 863.

29. Das, *Life and Words*, 11.

30. Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), xi.

31. Das, *Life and Words*, 7.

32. Kris Brown, "'What It Was Like to Live through a Day': Transitional Justice and the Memory of the Everyday in a Divided Society', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6, no. 3 (2012): 444–66, 457.



normality and were able to do this through everyday practices and pre-existing communal structures'.<sup>33</sup>

In the context of conflict-related sexual violence, however, these everyday practices remain under-explored. Scholars have particularly emphasised the everyday to challenge narrow and decontextualised formulations of rape as a weapon of war that neglect the deeper underlying factors that enable and sustain sexual and gender-based violence across war/peace binaries.<sup>34</sup> Kreft, for example, asserts that 'the simplified "weapon of war" narrative embraced by international actors detaches CRSV [conflict-related sexual violence] from its structural underpinnings'.<sup>35</sup> This detachment occurs when such violence is 'reduced to a war crime or a problem of law rather than a more comprehensive social problem'; or when 'services are provided only to victims of CRSV and not to victims of other forms of gender-based conflict violence or "everyday" sexual violence'.<sup>36</sup> What also merit attention, however, are the various ways that victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence develop ways of dealing with everyday stressors and challenges – and engage in 'the everyday work of repair'.

It is essential at the outset to acknowledge the limitations of 'repair' in societies that have experienced large-scale violence. In particular, the idea that a pre-war/pre-conflict state of 'repair' ever existed may be highly chimeric. In their work on northern Uganda, for example, Meinert and Reynolds Whyte argue that:

A historical background to violence in the Acholi subregion of northern Uganda could go back to the slave raiding of precolonial times. There was never a pure and peaceful past, which then got polluted with violence and war. Long strains of violence seem to run through the region and contribute to contamination of context and experience.<sup>37</sup>

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33. Laura S. Martin, 'Practising Normality: An Examination of Unrecognizable Transitional Justice Mechanisms in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10, no. 3 (2016): 400–18, 401.
34. See Megan MacKenzie, 'Securitizing Sex? Towards a Theory of the Utility of Wartime Sexual Violence', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12, no. 2 (2010): 202–21, 205; Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, 'Reframing Conflict-Related and Gender-Based Violence: Bringing Gender Analysis Back In', *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 6 (2015): 495–512, 501; Paul Kirby, 'Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict: The Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its Critics', *International Affairs* 91, no. 3 (2015): 457–72, 472; Aisling Swaine, 'Beyond Strategic Rape and Between the Public and Private: Violence against Women in Armed Conflict', *Human Rights Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2015): 755–86, 759; Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, 'The Futures Past of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda', *International Affairs* 92, no. 2 (2016): 373–92, 381; Boesten, 'Of Exceptions and Continuities', 514; Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, 'Curious Erasures: The Sexual in Wartime Sexual Violence', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 20, no. 3 (2018): 295–314, 297.
35. Ann-Kathrin Kreft, 'Civil Society Perspectives on Sexual Violence in Conflict: Patriarchy and War Strategy in Colombia', *International Affairs* 96, no. 2 (2020): 457–78, 461–62.
36. *Ibid.*, 462.
37. Lotte Meinert and Susan Reynolds Whyte, "'These Things Continue": Violence as Contamination in Everyday Life after War in Northern Uganda', *ETHOS* 45, no. 2 (2017): 271–86, 274–75.



Moreover, the possibilities of ‘repair’, and what it might look like, are necessarily shaped and constrained by the harms done, which often have gendered and intersectional dimensions<sup>38</sup> and ‘reflect survivors’ long-term lived realities’.<sup>39</sup> It is also important to underline that the achievement of ‘negative peace’, in the sense of an absence of physical violence,<sup>40</sup> can co-exist with ongoing structural violence that further limits the scope for ‘repair’ in any meaningful sense. In their work with Mayan women in Guatemala, for example, Crosby and Lykes note that despite various truth-telling processes, ‘for many women, particularly Mayan rural women, the traumatic effects of their racialized gendered experiences of the genocidal violence have persisted’.<sup>41</sup> These women, the authors stress, still live in situations in which ongoing stressors, such as violence and poverty, ‘constitute a “normal abnormality”<sup>42</sup>. . .of their everyday lives that they carry in their bodies’.<sup>43</sup>

My intention in writing this article is not, therefore, to banalise the notion of repair. Rather, I want to counter-balance the common emphasis on the widespread harms that result from conflict-related sexual violence<sup>44</sup> by exploring some of the ways that victims-/survivors in different socio-cultural contexts endeavour to effect repair. In so doing, the article seeks to address a significant gap within extant scholarship on conflict-related sexual violence by exploring the issue of resilience, and more specifically using the concept of ‘the everyday work of repair’ as a framework for thinking about resilience.

Aligning the two concepts underscores that resilience is not about the exceptional and extraordinary; and nor is it about placing unrealistic burdens on individuals who have experienced trauma and adversity – often not as one-off events but as ongoing and cumulative stresses – to ‘be resilient’. Rather, resilience is fundamentally about ordinariness – the ‘everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources’.<sup>45</sup>

38. Julieta Lemaitre and Kristin B. Dandvik, ‘Beyond Sexual Violence in Transitional Justice’, *Feminist Legal Studies* 22, no. 3 (2014): 243–61; Diana Sankey, ‘Gendered Experiences of Subsistence Harms: A Possible Contribution to Feminist Discourse on Gendered Harm?’ *Social & Legal Studies* 24, no. 1 (2015): 25–45; Ronlil Sifris and Maria Tanyag, ‘Intersectionality, Transitional Justice and the Case of Internally Displaced Moro Women in the Philippines’, *Human Rights Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (2019): 399–420.

39. Philipp Schulz, ‘Displacement from Gendered Personhood: Sexual Violence and Masculinities in Northern Uganda’, *International Affairs* 94, no. 5 (2018): 1101–19, 1107.

40. Johan Galtung, ‘Violence, Peace and Peace Research’, *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–91, 183.

41. Alison Crosby and M. Brinton Lykes, *Beyond Repair? Mayan Women’s Protagonism in the Aftermath of Genocidal Harm* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 5.

42. Citing Ignacio Martín-Baró, *Toward a Liberation Psychology: Writings for a Liberation Psychology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

43. Crosby and Lykes, *Beyond Repair? 5*.

44. However, some of the important work now being done on the socio-political agency of victims-/survivors, noted in the introduction, reflects a conceptual broadening beyond harm and trauma (which of course is not to say that agency cannot coexist with harm and trauma). Kreft, for example, argues that ‘Amid the much-needed attention to the different manifestations of CRSV and its detrimental consequences, the possibility that women mobilize in response to this violence remains unexplored’. Kreft, ‘Responding to Sexual Violence’, 221.

45. Ann S. Masten, ‘Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development’, *American Psychologist* 56, no. 3 (2001): 227–38, 235.

Drawing on their research with female refugees in Australia, for example, and locating the women's resilience 'in daily routines',<sup>46</sup> Lenette et al. have proposed a conceptualisation of resilience as 'the dynamic progression of mundane activities and the ordinary process of moving through daily life challenges and opportunities'.<sup>47</sup> In their research with Palestinian youth, Nguyen-Gillham et al. found that 'a unique feature of resilience lies in its very ordinariness. . . The capacity to endure has to be understood within a micro context of ordinary life, all too often obscured by the harsh political realities'.<sup>48</sup> Looking at resilience in the context of conflict-related sexual violence, thus, usefully draws attention to dimensions of 'ordinariness' and the 'everyday' that are so often overlooked within policy frameworks that 'render sexual violence in war exceptional or extraordinary'.<sup>49</sup>

By thinking about resilience as 'the everyday work of repair', this article also emphasises a crucial synergy between the two concepts, which has wider policy implications for dealing with conflict-related sexual violence. The starting point for this argument is that neither repair nor resilience occurs in isolation. The former 'is built into the fabric of everyday interactions, both with other humans and with the material infrastructures that support and shape our activities and interests'.<sup>50</sup> In other words, repair is a relational process, which, like resilience,<sup>51</sup> occurs through engagement between individuals and their social ecologies – including family, community, cultural traditions and institutions. The significance of these social ecologies – explored in various writings about everyday resilience<sup>52</sup> – problematises the assertion that resilience forms part of a neoliberal policy agenda.

This agenda, according to scholars critical of the concept of resilience, essentially redistributes responsibility by detracting from the obligations of governments and putting the onus of dealing with crises and uncertainty on individuals themselves.<sup>53</sup> Thinking

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46. Lenette et al., 'Everyday Resilience', 640.

47. *Ibid.*, 648.

48. Viet Nguyen-Gillham, Rita Giacaman, Ghada Naser and Will Boyce, 'Normalising the Abnormal: Palestinian Youth and the Contradictions of Resilience in Protracted Conflict', *Health and Social Care in the Community* 16, no. 3 (2008): 291–98, 296.

49. Baaz and Stern, 'Curious Erasures', 307. See also Sara Meger, 'The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in International Security', *International Studies Quarterly* 60 (2016): 149–59, at 152.

50. Christopher R. Henke, 'Negotiating Repair: The Infrastructural Contexts of Practice and Power', in *Repair Work Ethnographies*, ed. I. Strebel, A. Bovet and P. Sormani (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 255–82, 257.

51. Carl Folke, Stephen R. Carpenter, Brian Walker, Marten Scheffer, Terry Chapin and Johan Rockström, 'Resilience Thinking: Integrating Resilience, Adaptability and Transformability', *Ecology and Society* 15, no. 4 (2010): 20; Michael Ungar, 'Resilience, Trauma, Context and Culture', *Trauma, Violence and Abuse* 14, no. 3 (2013): 255–66, 256.

52. See e.g. Nguyen-Gillham et al., 'Normalising the Abnormal', 295; Sara E. Lewis, 'Resilience, Agency and Everyday *Lojong* in the Tibetan Diaspora', *Contemporary Buddhism* 19, no. 2 (2018): 342–61; Betteridge and Weber, 'Everyday Resilience, Reworking and Resistance'.

53. Mareile Kaufmann, 'Emergent Self-Organisation in Emergencies: Resilience Rationales in Interconnected Societies', *Resilience* 1, no. 1 (2013): 53–68; David Chandler, 'Beyond Neoliberalism: Resilience, the New Art of Governing Complexity', *Resilience* 2, no. 1

about resilience as ‘the everyday work of repair’ is not, however, about leaving individuals to ‘get on with’ such repair or about diluting state responsibilities. Rather, it is about ‘making social and physical ecologies facilitative’,<sup>54</sup> including in response to conflict-related sexual violence. Indeed, this point is central to the article’s use of the term ‘facilitative hybridity’, a concept discussed in the final section.

At the same time, resilience as ‘the everyday work of repair’ is not only about how individuals use their social ecologies to recreate a sense of ‘normality’ within their lives. It is also about the different ways that they give back to these ecologies through care. In their research on everyday practices of resilience vis-à-vis frequent flooding in *kampungs* (urban villages) in Jakarta, Indonesia, for example, Betteridge and Webber underline the significance of ‘everyday acts of care’ – including activities such as cleaning, repairing damaged homes and collectively building rafts from bamboo or wood to move through the flood water.<sup>55</sup> They argue that ‘In the face of shock events, such as flooding, kampung residents draw on these structures of communal care in order to return, as much as possible, to previous livelihoods’.<sup>56</sup> Caring is not only about caring for others. According to Tronto, care is ‘everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair “our world” so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web’.<sup>57</sup> This image of a life sustaining web beautifully captures some of the myriad connections between individuals and the wider ‘world’ that are central to social-ecological approaches to resilience, and further underscores that social ecologies crucially matter for dealing with conflict-related sexual violence.

In summary, utilising Das’ idea of ‘the everyday work of repair’, this research foregrounds some of the everyday ways that victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence demonstrate resilience, in the context of and through interactions with their wider social ecologies. Returning to Back’s aforementioned question ‘Is there any form of life that does not happen everyday?’,<sup>58</sup> the point is that life does not just happen in the everyday. Life is made, and remade, in the everyday.<sup>59</sup> Looked at through an everyday lens, thus, resilience can be theorised as ‘grounded in the resumption of the ordinary rhythms of everyday life – the familial, sociocultural, religious, and economic activities

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(2014): 47–63; Jonathan Joseph, ‘Resilience as Embedded Neoliberalism: A Governmentality Approach’, *Resilience* 1, no. 1 (2014): 38–52, 40; Marc Welsh, ‘Resilience and Responsibility: Governing Uncertainty in a Complex World’, *The Geographical Journal* 180, no. 1 (2014): 15–26.

54. Michael Ungar, ‘The Social Ecology of Resilience: Addressing Contextual and Cultural Ambiguity of a Nascent Construct’, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 81, no. 1 (2011): 1–17, at 6.

55. Betteridge and Webber, ‘Everyday Resilience, Reworking and Resistance’, 953.

56. *Ibid.*

57. Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 103.

58. Back, ‘Why Everyday Life Matters’, 820.

59. Anna Rönkä and Pirjo Korvela, ‘Everyday Family Life: Dimensions, Approaches, and Current Challenges’, *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 1, no. 2 (2009): 87–102, 88.

that make the world intelligible'.<sup>60</sup> The article's empirical section explores these 'rhythms'.

## Methodology and Fieldwork

In music, major and minor keys are associated with different affective qualities. The major expresses 'varying degrees of joy and excitement; it sounds bright, clear, sweet, hopeful, strong, and happy'. In contrast, the minor 'expresses gloom, despair, sorrow, grief, mystery, longing, obscurity, restlessness, melancholy'.<sup>61</sup> Katz's 'minor theory' brings a different dimension to the latter concept. The minor, for her, is not the opposite of major, but rather a way of thinking critically about what she calls "'major" productions of knowledge'.<sup>62</sup> More particularly, 'thinking in a minor key opens many spaces of betweenness from which to imagine, act, and live things differently'.<sup>63</sup> Demonstrating this point, this article focuses on resilience and victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to show that 'something else is possible, happens, is glimpsed from the interstices'.<sup>64</sup>

In 2014–2015, I made a 12-month field visit to BiH to research the issue of conflict-related sexual violence.<sup>65</sup> From the outset, different actors – from leaders of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to journalists and ministers – were keen to explain what women<sup>66</sup> who had suffered sexual violence in the 1992–1995 Bosnian war needed and why they would not want to speak about their experiences. However, as the fieldwork progressed and as I started to engage directly with victims-/survivors, it became apparent that some of these women (and men) were thinking – and living – in a different key. Their stories were not only about suffering and trauma; they had a richer tone that included 'notes' of resilience. In the context of scholarship and policy discourse on conflict-related sexual violence, where such notes are rarely 'played' or heard, resilience offers an important frame for thinking about the topic in a 'minor' key. According to Wolfe, 'A minor approach understands. . .fluid, embodied, and situated subjectivities within the messiness of everyday life'.<sup>67</sup> This article, rather than emphasising this

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60. Derek Summerfield, 'Effects of War: Moral Knowledge, Revenge, Reconciliation and Medicalised Concepts of "Recovery"', *British Medical Journal* 325, no. 7372 no. 3 (2002): 1105–7, 1107.

61. Kate Hevner, 'The Affective Character of the Major and Minor Modes in Music', *American Journal of Psychology* 47, no. 1 (1935): 103–18, 103.

62. Cindi Katz, 'Revisiting Minor Theory', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 4 (2017): 596–9, 598.

63. *Ibid.*, 597.

64. *Ibid.*, 598.

65. See Janine N. Clark, *Rape, Sexual Violence and Transitional Justice Challenges: Lessons from Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

66. They never mentioned men.

67. Sven D. Wolfe, 'The Great Pause: A Minor Theory Exploration of COVID-19 Response in Switzerland', *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 61, nos. 4–5 (2020): 606–19, 608. See also Katz, 'Revisiting Minor Theory', 598.

'messiness', locates its minor approach within the everyday – and specifically within the framework of Das' 'everyday work of repair'.

The underpinning research on which this article draws forms part of a five-year comparative study (2017–2022) about resilience and victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The study analyses some of the different ways that victims-/survivors demonstrate resilience in their daily lives, how their social ecologies shape and support resilience and how common protective factors and resource clusterings function in diverse socio-cultural environments. Precisely because 'resilience and risk are multifaceted',<sup>68</sup> it is important to explore whether and to what extent our analyses and understandings of resilience 'travel' across different contexts. There is also 'a pressing need to add to the comparative literature on wartime sexual violence'.<sup>69</sup> What makes the study innovative in this regard is its comparative methodology focused on three maximum diversity case studies – BiH, Colombia and Uganda.

All three countries have experienced high levels of conflict-related sexual violence over different temporal periods.<sup>70</sup> However, there are salient differences between them as regards the nature of the conflicts, the actors involved and the methods of violence used. There is also substantial variation within and across these three countries, including politically, economically and culturally. As just one example, Colombia has a long tradition of women's activism, linked to its colonial history.<sup>71</sup> This undoubtedly contributed to the strong sense of female (and experiential) solidarity that many Colombian interviewees expressed (discussed more in the empirical section) and to the significance that they frequently attached to women's organisations – vital resources within their social ecologies. In BiH, however, this sense of solidarity and togetherness was far less evident, reflecting not only the ethnic nature of the Bosnian war, but also, *inter alia*, the political instrumentalisation of victims-/survivors<sup>72</sup> and the fact that NGOs rarely work with women (men are largely overlooked) from all three main ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats).

Combining such diverse case studies within a comparative research design potentially contributes to the broader generalisability of the study. It also facilitates a maximal application of the study's approach to resilience, which foregrounds the critical importance of

68. Steven J. Condly, 'Resilience in Children: A Review of Literature with Implications for Education', *Urban Education* 41, no. 3 (2006): 211–36, 224.

69. Michelle Leiby, 'Wartime Sexual Violence in Guatemala and Peru', *International Studies Quarterly* 53 (2009): 445–68, 447. Even though Leiby made this point more than a decade ago, it remains highly pertinent today; many studies of conflict-related sexual violence focus on a single case study, although there are some exceptions (e.g. Touquet and Schulz, 'Navigating Vulnerabilities and Masculinities').

70. See e.g. Inger Skjelsbaek, *The Political Psychology of War Rape: Stories from Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012); Holly Porter, *After Rape: Violence, Justice and Social Harmony in Uganda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Kreft, 'Responding to Sexual Violence'.

71. See e.g. Julia M. Zulver, 'Building the City of Women: Creating a Site of Feminist Resistance in a Northern Colombian Conflict Zone', *Gender, Place & Culture* 27, no. 10 (2017): 1498–516.

72. Berry, *Women, War and Power*, 188.

social ecologies – from the resources that they offer to the various ways that violence affects them – for how we deal with conflict-related sexual violence and undertake transitional justice.

The study uses a mixed-methods design, aimed at exploring what insights quantitative and qualitative data, individually and combined, bring to our understanding of resilience. The idea of thinking about resilience as ‘the everyday work of repair’, and unpacking what this ‘repair’ looks like in BiH, Colombia and Uganda, emerged from my analysis of the qualitative data, which is the focus of this article. It is important, however, to briefly explain that the 63 interviewees (21 in each country) were selected from a larger dataset of 449 participants (BiH  $n = 126$ ; Colombia  $n = 171$ ; Uganda  $n = 152$ ), all of them victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, who completed a study questionnaire between May and December 2018. The questionnaire included the Adult Resilience Measure (ARM),<sup>73</sup> a 28-item scale grounded in a social-ecological approach to resilience. Each item is scored from one to five, and higher overall ARM scores are indicative of a greater number of protective resources that potentially support resilience. The rest of the questionnaire – see Appendix 1 – was designed to help explicate variations in ARM scores and the correlations between ARM scores and other factors, including number of traumas and current problems.<sup>74</sup>

The author, two postdoctoral researchers employed at the host institution, several in-country organisations<sup>75</sup> and two independent psychologists, in BiH and Colombia respectively, were involved in applying the questionnaires. Extensive efforts were made to reach particular groups of victims-/survivors in each country whose experiences have often been overlooked or received limited attention. These include male victims-/survivors in all three countries,<sup>76</sup> Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats in BiH, Indigenous women in Colombia and Lango people in Uganda. The analysis in the next section will accordingly note participants’ gender and ethnicity.

73. Resilience Research Centre, *The Resilience Research Centre Adult Resilience Measure (RRC-ARM): User’s Manual* (May 2016). Available at: <https://cyrm.resilienceresearch.org/files/ArchivedMaterials.zip>. Last accessed November 13, 2021.

74. For an analysis of the quantitative data and its limitations, see Janine N. Clark, Philip Jefferies, Sarah Foley and Michael Ungar, ‘Measuring Resilience in the Context of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: A Novel Application of the Adult Resilience Measure (ARM)’, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211028323>. Online First.

75. These organisations were the following: *Snaga Žene* and the Centre for Democracy and Transitional Justice in BiH; *Profamilia*, *Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres* and *Colombia Diversa* in Colombia; and Facilitation for Peace and Development (FAPAD) and the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) in northern Uganda. The *Red de Mujeres Víctimas i Profesionales* and the association *El Meta con Mirada de Mujer* in Colombia also played crucial supporting roles.

76. Only 27 of the 449 participants across the three countries were men. While this number is small, it attests to some of the immense challenges of locating and establishing contact with male victims-/survivors in all three countries. As Schulz points out, ‘Gender-sensitive support services for male survivors of sexual violence remain elusive, especially in societies affected by conflict’. Philipp Schulz, ‘The “Ethical Loneliness” of Male Sexual Violence Survivors in Northern Uganda: Gendered Reflections on Silencing’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 20, no. 4 (2018): 583–601, 587.



As the starting point for the qualitative stage of the research, respondents in each country were divided into four quartiles based on their ARM scores. To explore whether and how differences in ARM scores would translate into the qualitative data, and whether the latter would help to elucidate these differences, interviewees were selected from each country set of quartiles. Particular care was taken to ensure that the choices made captured the demographic diversity within the quartiles. With logistical support from the aforementioned in-country organisations, 63 interviews were conducted between January and July 2019 by the author (in BiH) and two postdoctoral researchers (in Colombia and Uganda). The interviews were undertaken in the relevant local language/s and all interviews, with the participants' informed consent, were recorded using encrypted voice recorders. Ethics approval was granted by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee at the University of Birmingham, the research funder and relevant authorities in BiH, Colombia and Uganda.

The research necessarily raises complex ethics issues,<sup>77</sup> including informed consent. The study proceeded on the basic assumption that prospective research participants – all of whom were over 18 – had the capacity to give informed consent.<sup>78</sup> However, it was essential to be sure that they were in fact giving informed consent. Accordingly, after key information about the study was relayed to participants, they were asked to answer the following two questions: 1. Based on the information that you have been given, please could you briefly explain the purpose of this research study as you understand it? 2. If you choose to take part in this study, please could you give me two examples of your rights as a research participant? Participants could withdraw from the study at any time, meaning that they would not be contacted again,<sup>79</sup> and they were given the details of the particular in-country administrator (an individual from one of the aforementioned organisations) whom they could contact in the event that they wished to withdraw. No participant has opted to do so.

The interviews were semi-structured and an interview guide was used – see Appendix 2. Some of the questions were directly linked to the questionnaire. ‘What are the main difficulties that you currently experience in your everyday life?’, for example, gave interviewees an opportunity to elaborate on some of the problems and challenges that they first highlighted during the quantitative part of the research. Other questions were more broadly designed to foster crucial insights into the interviewees' lives, social ecologies and experiences (if any) of transitional justice.

All of the interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. Several translators (all of whom signed confidentiality agreements with the host institution) were

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77. In order to secure ethics approval from the research funder, which took many months, I had to address in depth a range of issues, among them confidentiality, data storage, data transfer, participants' safety and wellbeing, unexpected findings and fair benefit sharing.

78. Department for Constitutional Affairs, *Mental Capacity Act 2005: Code of Practice* (2005), Chapter 1, Section 1.2. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/921428/Mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921428/Mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice.pdf). Last accessed February 3, 2017.

79. Withdrawing participants' data would not have been possible as it would have necessitated re-doing all of the quantitative analyses.

involved in this process. Once completed, the transcripts were uploaded into NVivo, together with a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet containing all of the questionnaire data (to enable intersectional and mixed-method queries). I developed the interview codebook in NVivo over a period of approximately 12 months, amending it and refining it as the coding process progressed. After two rounds of coding, I used thematic analysis<sup>80</sup> to identify and develop the overarching themes. Connectivity, as the common thread that links the eight themes – some of which are noted in the next section – forms the conceptual framework within which the study develops a narrative about resilience that brings the social and ecological dimensions of SES together in novel ways.

Many of the interviewees continued to face problems, from economic worries and security issues to health concerns and social stigma. However, the qualitative data also provided deep insights into the various ways that these men and women were confronting and tackling everyday challenges, their concerted efforts at problem solving and, above all, their determination to get on with life and undertake their own forms of repair. A female Croat interviewee in BiH, for example, explained:

We have, in one phase of our lives, experienced this [referring to sexual violence and war more broadly]. I think that we all, with work and some normal life, should push it back. And I see this, as with everything in life, when it is hard, I see it as one notch in my life. This, those three years [of the Bosnian war], they cannot be stronger than my other 60, in fact 59 years. Indeed, then, well, everything happened more intensively, but it cannot prevail.<sup>81</sup>

This interviewee had a relatively high ARM score (120 out of a possible 140) which put her in the third quartile, indicating that she had considerable protective resources in her life. ARM scores in themselves, however, were limited; and notwithstanding a huge diversity of scores across the entire dataset (a Ugandan participant had the lowest overall ARM score, 64, and three participants – one in each country – had a score of 140), this article does not adopt ‘the resilient/non-resilient dichotomy’.<sup>82</sup> Embracing Lenette et al.’s argument that there are ‘plural pathways to resilience’,<sup>83</sup> it unpicks what these pathways look like in the context of the interviewees’ everyday lives and social ecologies – and how these pathways incorporate ‘the everyday work of repair’.

## **An Empirical Analysis of Resilience and Everyday Repair**

According to Graham and Thrift,

The world constantly decays. Moisture gets in. Damp hangs around. Ice expands joints. Surfaces wear thin. Particles fall out of suspension. Materials rot. Insects breed. Animals chew.

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80. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, ‘Thematic Analysis’, in *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology: Volume 2 Research Designs*, ed. Harris Hooper (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2006), 57–71.

81. Interview, BiH, 30 January 2019.

82. Lenette et al., ‘Everyday Resilience’, 639–40.

83. *Ibid.*, 642.

All kinds of wildlife war with all kinds of fabric. Humans make errors. . . [T]he world is involved in a continuous dying that can only be fended off by constant repair and maintenance.<sup>84</sup>

Interviewees had experienced and witnessed multiple types of ‘decay’ and dying. Fundamentally, all of them were more than victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence – highlighted by the theme “‘I am all that I’ve lived’”:<sup>85</sup> ‘Connectivities of violence’. They had dealt with, *inter alia*, forced displacement, loss of loved ones, beatings, physical detention and ‘sensory’ violence – i.e. seeing and hearing violence being committed against others, including family members. Illustrative of the aforementioned continuum of violence concept, some participants had experienced violence not directly connected to war/armed conflict – such as physical and sexual abuse from family members. Some of them also talked about ongoing violence, including domestic violence and (indirectly) broader structural violence linked to gender inequality and intersectional aspects of their identities. An Acholi interviewee in Uganda, for example, emphasised the difficulties that she had faced in finding work, including a job spraying mosquitoes. Maintaining that no woman had been given the job, she recalled ‘they said women cannot manage that work’. Abducted by members of Joseph Kony’s Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) when she was 12 or 13 years-old, she had been infected with the HIV virus, which, she stressed, had further limited her employment prospects.<sup>86</sup> In Colombia, an interviewee who did not identify with any particular ethnic group<sup>87</sup> maintained that growing up in the countryside had taught her a lot, including a strong work ethic, but it had also further fuelled the frequent discrimination that she faced as a woman. Insisting, for example, that justice does not exist, she maintained that:

nobody cares about any of the things that have happened to us. At least, I think. . . if I were a magistrate, or if I were a president and somebody went and raped one of my children. Well! What would happen? But if it’s a poor countrywoman, then that has no importance; it’s not worth anything. A countrywoman isn’t valued anywhere.<sup>88</sup>

Hill reflects that ‘The rhythms of life churn us like a great sea churns under a rising full moon’.<sup>89</sup> The fact that interviewees had gone through multiple ‘churnings’ – and many of them continued to do so – means that it is essential to locate the concepts of resilience and repair within this context. Interviewees were not ‘bouncing back’ from adversity<sup>90</sup> because most of them continued to live with it; and ‘the everyday work of repair’ was often occurring in a broader environment of structural and political ‘disrepair’. The

84. Graham and Thrift, ‘Out of Order’, 6.

85. Each of the eight themes begins with a direct quote taken from the interview data.

86. Interview, Uganda, 20 March 2019.

87. This interviewee, like several of the Colombians who took part in the research, simply viewed herself as Colombian. She also strongly emphasised her *campesina* identity, as a woman from the countryside.

88. Interview, Colombia, 3 April 2019.

89. Roberta J. Hill, ‘Immersed in Words’, in *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing*, ed. Simon J. Ortiz (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 73–91, 73.

90. Bruce W. Smith, et al., ‘The Brief Resilience Scale: Assessing the Ability to Bounce Back’, *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 15, no. 3 (2008): 194–200.

larger point, as Walker underlines in her research in the city of Batticaloa in Sri Lanka, is that ‘people cannot so much repair and remake their lives through a return to the ordinary as remake their lives as an ongoing process in and around violence’.<sup>91</sup>

A potential issue with foregrounding the everyday is that we cast the resilience net too widely. The possibilities of what might constitute everyday acts of resilience – or everyday practices associated with resilience – are almost endless, from simply getting up in the morning and leaving the house to caring for others and holding down a job. However, depending on the context and on a person’s particular experiences, such examples may indeed constitute expressions of resilience. In this regard, Lenette et al. insist that ‘The idea of ordinary achievements in everydayness, even when perceived as relatively minor triumphs, deserves more attention’.<sup>92</sup> This idea of everyday achievements offers a useful entry point into the data.

Interviewees gave examples of their own achievements, albeit not necessarily framing them as such. One of the male Bosniak interviewees had testified in court against the man who forced him to engage in sexual acts while detained in a camp in 1992. Speaking about this, the interviewee reflected: ‘The only, my, let’s say, satisfaction in life is that I have succeeded and I was persistent, well, for the war criminal to be convicted, the one who did this crime. Well, and I succeeded in it’.<sup>93</sup> In Uganda, a male Lango interviewee was raising his three children alone and stressed the economic challenges that he faced in doing so. Like many of the Ugandan interviewees, he was a subsistence farmer and explained: ‘I struggled very hard and I bought one bull. And so this bull of mine, this very year, I will team it with that of another person and use it to dig my fields. . . It is very important in my life and it makes me happy’.<sup>94</sup>

In Colombia, an interviewee who did not identify with any particular ethnic group described how, at one point, she had ‘reached rock bottom’ and tried to commit suicide while her daughter was in the corner watching. From that point on, the interviewee resolved to get her life back on track; ‘I told myself that I couldn’t keep hurting the people I love’. Going on to speak about some of the positive changes in her life, including her relationship with her husband, she explained: ‘I felt like. . . like a bird who has had their wings broken in some act of violence and who keeps trying. . . Launching back into flight was very hard, but I managed it. I mean, at this moment in my life, I’ve managed it’. This interviewee had also written a book (unpublished) called *The Bird that Learned to Fly*. In her words, ‘I hope that some day my children will read it and learn about the trials I. . . that, basically, I went through, but also I’ve filled it with all the triumphs I’ve had’.<sup>95</sup>

All of the above achievements provide examples of everyday repair and resilience that were common across the interviews. Ednie-Brown argues that ‘life is the activity of living’.<sup>96</sup>

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91. Walker, ‘Violence, the Everyday and the Question of the Ordinary’, 15. See also Erin Baines and Lara Rosenoff Gauvin, ‘Motherhood and Social Repair after War and Displacement in Northern Uganda’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 27, no. 2 (2014): 282–300, 282.

92. Lenette et al., ‘Everyday Resilience’, 648.

93. Interview, BiH, 11 February 2019.

94. Interview, Uganda, 22 February 2019.

95. Interview, Colombia, 11 February 2019.

96. Pia Ednie-Brown, ‘Architecture on Wire: Resilience through Vitality’, *Log* 25, (2012): 15–22, 15.

What interviewees expressed, in different ways and to different degrees, was a determination to get on with life and ‘the activity of living’ (captured in the theme “‘We have to live’”: Reconnecting with life’). Interviewees from all three countries, for example, talked about not looking backwards and letting go of the past. As one illustration, a female Acholi interviewee contemplated: ‘Things passed through my body in the past, and so if I keep thinking a lot about it [the past], it can bring problems to the body. . . So, for me, I let it go’.<sup>97</sup> Bosnian interviewees frequently stressed the importance of having a focus and pushing away negative thoughts. A male Serb interviewee who spent more than a year detained in various camps in the early part of the Bosnian war explained:

I healed myself with work [in construction]. Mostly with work. Work and work and work because I did not have time to think about what happened, but instead, instead I focused on what will be. Create something for the children, for myself, and this is how I went on. I mean, I did not have time to go back to what happened.<sup>98</sup>

One way that some of the Colombian interviewees expressed a desire to get on with life and move forward was by articulating their goals and dreams for the future. A mixed race (Mestizo) interviewee who used the word ‘dream’ 28 times spoke about broken dreams, but also about the importance of having dreams. In her words, ‘I want to achieve my dreams and I say to my children: “It’s not too late to start studying.” You see, even at my age [she was 51 at the time of the interview] I want to keep studying’. Emphasising her right to keep on dreaming, she opined: ‘for me, dreams are the last thing you should give up on – they’re hope’.<sup>99</sup>

Like several of the Colombian interviewees, this particular woman was the leader of a victims’ organisation. Those interviewees who were not leaders were often closely involved in feminist organisations like *Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres*. This highlights a bigger point about the significance of participants’ social ecologies. Discussing ‘tentacular thinking’, of which connectivity and the relationalities it reflects is itself an example, Haraway observes: ‘Nobody lives everywhere; everybody lives somewhere. Nothing is connected to everything; everything is connected to something’.<sup>100</sup> Reflected in the theme “‘It isn’t there anymore’”: Broken and ruptured connectivities’, many of the interviewees spoke about lost connections – with loved ones, with the community, with land. However, as part of the process of repairing their lives, they drew on the crucial connectivities they had (and in some cases formed new ones). The theme “‘With them I get through it’”: Supportive and sustaining connectivities’ highlights these connectivities and the social-ecological resources that constitute the ‘infrastructure of everyday life’, which Jarvis defines as ‘encompassing all that it takes in a practical sense for individuals and households to “go on” from one day to the next’.<sup>101</sup>

97. Interview, Uganda, 29 May 2019.

98. Interview, BiH, 2 July 2019.

99. Interview, Colombia, 29 March 2019.

100. Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 31.

101. Helen Jarvis, ‘Moving to London Time: Household Co-ordination and the Infrastructure of Everyday Life’, *Time & Society* 14, no. 1 (2005): 133–54, 135.

For many of the Colombian interviewees, women's organisations (and their connections with other victims-/survivors through these organisations) were a crucial part of their social ecologies that were helping them to get on with their lives and go forward. The importance that interviewees attached to these organisations illustrates Zulver's argument, in the context of her work in El Salvador, that 'women are empowered by the social capital generated through interpersonal bonds and support'.<sup>102</sup> A female Mestizo interviewee, for example, explained: 'coming to places like this, I've learned a great deal and gained skills – for me it's where I get strength. It's where I've learned to cope with the pain; sharing with other people has let me see that it wasn't just me who suffered these things'.<sup>103</sup> More broadly, a strong activist dimension within the Colombian interviewees' social ecologies<sup>104</sup> was encouraging them to dream and to think big.

In Uganda, some of the interviewees also spoke about NGOs and local associations. In particular, they talked about Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), which were aiding 'the everyday work of repair' in an economic sense. These associations also provided opportunities to develop new connectivities and supportive relationships. When asked what factors had helped her in rebuilding, or starting to rebuild, her life, for example, one of the Acholi interviewees answered: 'Interacting with other people. . . Women actually started a village saving scheme, and that helped us in interacting'.<sup>105</sup> Musinguzi's research on VSLAs, similarly, notes that these associations provide women, *inter alia*, with 'a space where they can interact with friends' or 'reach out to each other to diversify their incomes', further underlining that women 'deploy networks to solve everyday problems'.<sup>106</sup> Only five of the 21 Ugandan interviewees were men and they said little about local associations. However, Schulz's research in northern Uganda has highlighted the crucial importance of male survivors' support groups and their role in promoting connections. Such groups aid men, *inter alia*, 'in (re-)establishing relationships' with fellow group members and, more broadly, with their families and communities.<sup>107</sup>

In BiH, and reflecting the influence of what Pupavac has termed 'therapeutic governance',<sup>108</sup> NGOs that work with victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence often have a strong psychosocial focus.<sup>109</sup> An internally displaced Bosniak interviewee,

102. Zulver, 'High-Risk Feminism in El Salvador', 178.

103. Interview, Colombia, 4 February 2019.

104. Kiran Asher, 'Texts in Context: Afro-Colombian Women's Activism in the Pacific Lowlands of Colombia', *Feminist Review* 78, no. 1 (2004): 38–55, 45.

105. Interview, Uganda, 15 April 2019.

106. Laban K. Musinguzi, 'The Role of Social Networks in Saving Groups: Insights from Village Savings and Loan Associations in Luwero, Uganda', *Community Development Journal* 51, no. 4 (2016): 499–516, 512.

107. Philipp Schulz, "'To Me, Justice Means to be in a Group": Survivors' Groups as a Pathway to Justice in Northern Uganda', *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 11, no. 1 (2016): 171–89, 180.

108. Vanessa Pupavac, 'Therapeutic Governance: Psycho-Social Intervention and Trauma Risk Management', *Disasters* 25, no. 4 (2001): 358–72, 358.

109. Janine N. Clark, 'Helping or Harming? NGOs and Victims-/Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina', *Journal of Human Rights* 18, no. 2 (2019): 246–65.



for example, spoke at length about the support that she had received from a local NGO. Referring specifically to a psychologist working at the organisation, she explained:

She brought me back to life. The only person in this whole state. Really. When it was hardest, when I could have, could have done everything to myself, when I had nothing, when my mother went to America, when she left me. . . This woman [the psychologist] took me in then and she has proven to me. . . She pushed, pushed me forward.<sup>110</sup>

The broader environment, however, is arguably not conducive to facilitating this process of moving forward. First, more than 20 years after the Bosnian war ended, BiH remains a deeply divided society. This fosters ‘hierarchies of victimhood’<sup>111</sup> and impedes the building of cross-ethnic solidarity among victims-/survivors. Second, within the socio-political milieu, there is little incentive or opportunity for women who experienced conflict-related sexual violence to *be* something other than ‘women victims of war’ (a term that is often used to mean victims of sexual violence). During her own research in BiH, for example, Močnik found that:

What continuously emerged in workshops and group conversations was the “totalizing narrative of victimization”<sup>112</sup>. . . Over the years, survivors have learned that this narrative is powerful and beneficial in attracting and engaging with representatives of various media and institutions (e.g. academic, humanitarian, political, etc.).<sup>113</sup>

Notwithstanding the contextual differences between the three countries, which translated into variations in the resources that interviewees’ social ecologies provided, common across the three datasets was the importance of children (and in some cases grandchildren) as a crucial protective and sustaining connectivity that motivated ‘the everyday work of repair’. Children (often regardless of age) were a significant protective factor in the interviewees’ lives, giving them a major reason to get on with living. In Colombia, an interviewee who did not identify with an ethnic group described her 11-year-old daughter as ‘my anchor’ and ‘a reason to carry on fighting’.<sup>114</sup> Using similar combative rhetoric, which was common in both Colombia and BiH, a male Bosniak interviewee whose marriage had broken down (he attributed this to his experiences during the Bosnian war) described his 20-year-old son as a source of ‘inner strength’ and ‘a friend and everything I have’. He added: ‘When I see him, then I see that there is a reason to live, to fight, not

110. Interview, BiH, 3 February 2019.

111. Marie E. Berry and Trishna R. Rana, ‘What Prevents Peace? Women and Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Nepal’, *Peace & Change* 44, no. 3 (2019): 321–49, 335.

112. Citing Olivera Simić, ‘Challenging Bosnian Women’s Identity as Rape Victims, as Unending Victims: The “Other” Sex in Times of War’, *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 13, no. 4 (2012): 129–42, 133.

113. Nena Močnik, ‘Collective Victimhood of Individual Survivors: Reflecting the Uses and Impacts of Two Academic Narratives Two Decades after the War-Rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina’, *East European Politics* 35, no. 4 (2019): 457–73, 467. See also Berry, *Women, War and Power*, 181.

114. Interview, Colombia, 13 March 2019.

to give in'.<sup>115</sup> Asked at the start of the interview if she could say a few sentences about her life today, an Acholi interviewee explained: 'At the moment, I feel at ease. Because I am doing my best to pay fees for my children in school. I farm a lot so the children may find ways to get education and live well'.<sup>116</sup>

In their interviews with 63 women who suffered rape during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Zraly et al. found that 'motherhood situated Rwandan genocide-rape survivors. . .at an intersection of different potential futures that were not overdetermined by their personal biographies involving brutal violence, excruciating pain, myriad illnesses, and disease'.<sup>117</sup> The authors concluded that motherhood constitutes a resource 'for daily-life resilience among Rwandan women affected by genocide-rape'.<sup>118</sup> Beyond simply motherhood and resilience, however, what the interviews from BiH, Colombia and Uganda illustrate is a broader relationship, linked to the concept of connectivity that is central to the study,<sup>119</sup> between caring practices and resilience.

According to Philipps, 'An ethics of care begins from an understanding of human interaction such that people are constantly enmeshed in relationships. . .Indeed personhood is relational, a becoming-in-the-world-with-others'.<sup>120</sup> Caring for these relationships, which for Puig de la Bellacasa is 'an ontological requirement of relational worlds',<sup>121</sup> is an important dimension of everyday repair and getting on with life. It is not something that only women do;<sup>122</sup> and it necessarily extends beyond relationships with children. Interviewees variously spoke about caring for infirm and elderly loved ones, for fellow victims-/survivors, for the members of their organisations (in the case of those who led their own NGOs or victims' groups), for their homes and their land.

Caring is an example of how people draw on their social ecologies as part of 'the everyday work of repair', but also of how they give back to them. Highlighting this point, Fischer and Tronto argue that '*Caring about* is the phase of the caring process in which we select out and attend to the features of our environment that bear on our survival and well-being'.<sup>123</sup> As an illustration of this, some of the interviewees manifested everyday resilience through their efforts to effect social-ecological repairs in the sense of bringing about positive changes within their environments. This was particularly the case in Colombia, where, as previously noted, several of the interviewees were victims'

115. Interview, BiH, 4 March 2019.

116. Interview, Uganda, 12 June 2019.

117. Zraly, Rubin and Mukamana, 'Motherhood and Resilience', 430.

118. *Ibid.*, 435.

119. Janine N. Clark, 'Beyond a "Survivor-Centred Approach" to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence?' *International Affairs* 97, no. 4 (2021): 1067–84.

120. Mary Phillips, 'Embodied Care and Planet Earth: Ecofeminism, Maternalism and Postmaternalism', *Australian Feminist Studies* 31, no. 90 (2016): 468–85, 475.

121. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, "'Nothing Comes Without Its World": Thinking with Care', *The Sociological Review* 16, no. 2 (2012): 197–216, 199. See also Fiona Robinson, 'Stop Talking and Listen: Discourse Ethics and Feminist Care Ethics in International Political Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 3 (2011): 845–60, 847.

122. Jean Keller, 'Autonomy, Relationality and Autonomy', *Hypatia* 12, no. 2 (1997): 152–64, 153.

123. Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto, 'Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring', in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, eds. Emily K. Abel and Margaret K. Nelson (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 35–62, 41.

leaders. One of the three Indigenous interviewees, for example, talked about the problem of child prostitution in her neighbourhood and explained:

I mean, people say it's not happening but you *can see it* because, well, suddenly lots of girls drop out of school because they have no guidance – their parents are out working all day and they're alone looking after their younger siblings. Then those younger kids grow up and they don't need her to be there anymore. So what happens – everything happens. You have to focus on doing something useful for that young girl and what she's doing. . . We get together and organise dances, bands, recycling gangs and we get the kids working in the spare time they have after coming out of school.<sup>124</sup>

A Mestizo interviewee, also a victims' leader, talked about the work that she does to combat structural violence, and in particular gender-based violence. 'Why do women have to put up with being trampled over?' she asked. Further expanding on the work that she does in the community, she continued: 'I've always been interested in community matters and as a community leader, fighting for people's rights has always given me. . . Oh, the way that some people disrespect the rights of others has always struck me as a terrible thing'.<sup>125</sup> These examples are highly context-specific, and it is important to note that those interviewees who occupied leadership roles in Colombia had frequently faced threats of violence.

The bigger point is that resilience partly reflects 'the loss and recovery of the everyday',<sup>126</sup> as well as attempts at remaking the everyday for the benefit of self and others. This further accentuates the importance of social ecologies in thinking about resilience and everyday repair. Additionally, it underscores the bigger point that 'interventions and governance processes that continue to separate the social and ecological. . . will lead to outcomes that fail to adequately address both, thus highlighting the importance of hybrid approaches'.<sup>127</sup> In the final section, I underline the value of 'hybrid approaches' to dealing with conflict-related sexual violence – specifically in the context of transitional justice – that give more attention to social ecologies, a concept which is itself a hybrid. While transitional justice processes, and in particular reparations, place a strong emphasis on repair, the field has largely overlooked resilience.<sup>128</sup> Accenting the significance of

124. Interview, Colombia, 6 March 2019.

125. Interview, Colombia, 10 February 2019.

126. Pilar Riaño-Alcalá, 'Emplaced Witnessing: Commemorative Practices Among the Wayuu in the Upper Guajira', *Memory Studies* 8, no. 3 (2015): 282–97, 284.

127. Derek Armitage, Chris Bene, Anthony T. Charles, Derek Johnson and Edward H. Allison, 'The Interplay of Wellbeing and Resilience in Applying a Social-Ecological Perspective', *Ecology and Society* 17, no. 4 (2012): 15.

128. See however, Eric Wiebelhaus-Brahm, 'After Shocks: Exploring the Relationships between Transitional Justice and Resilience in Post-Conflict Societies', in *Justice Mosaics: How Context Shapes Transitional Justice in Fractured Societies*, ed. Roger Duthie and Paul Seils (New York: International Center for Transitional Justice, 2017), 140–65; Kastner, 'A Resilience Approach to Transitional Justice?'; Janine N. Clark, 'Thinking Systemically about Transitional Justice, Legal Systems and Resilience', in *Multisystemic Resilience: Adaptation and Transformation in Contexts of Change*, ed. Michael Ungar (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 530–50; Janine N. Clark and Michael Ungar, eds. *Resilience, Adaptive Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice: How Societies Recover after Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

the everyday as a basis for exploring how transitional justice processes themselves might foster and support resilience, the final section links this, in turn, to a reconceptualisation of hybridity within a transitional justice context.

## Facilitative Hybridity and Why Social Ecologies Matter

The concept of hybridity has been extensively discussed within the field of peacebuilding,<sup>129</sup> particularly in critical reflections on the ‘liberal peace’.<sup>130</sup> To cite Forsyth et al., ‘With its focus on interactions between “the international” or “the global” and “the local”, the hybridity lens critiqued the top-down character and universalist assumptions of liberal peacebuilding and state-building interventions’.<sup>131</sup> Beyond critical peacebuilding, Clark observes that ‘Hybridity is an increasingly common theme in the study and practice of transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction’.<sup>132</sup> One example is the development of ‘hybrid’ courts, such as the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which, according to Mégret, ‘deal with the artificial distinction between the domestic and the international by simply collapsing it’.<sup>133</sup>

In relation to transitional justice, scholars have also invoked the concept of hybridity to illuminate disconnects between top-down institutions and on-the-ground experiences.<sup>134</sup> On this point, Jones notes that ‘the recognition that transitional justice as a normative ambition is in fact political and contested has led to a plethora of work exploring the reactions and perspectives of affected populations as well as the biases and practices of marginalization within transitional justice itself’.<sup>135</sup> In assessing the impact and achievements of transitional justice mechanisms, thus, ‘the concept of “hybridity” provides an additional layer of complexity and critique, asking us to think about the intricate

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129. Richmond, ‘Becoming Liberal’; Roger Mac Ginty and Oliver Richmond, ‘The Fallacy of Constructing Hybrid Political Orders: A Reappraisal of the Hybrid Turn in Peacebuilding’, *International Peacekeeping* 23, no. 2 (2016): 219–39; Dahlia Simangan, ‘When Hybridity Breeds Contempt: Negative Hybrid Peace in Cambodia’, *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 8 (2018): 1525–42.

130. Michael W. Doyle, ‘Three Pillars of the Liberal Peace’, *The American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (2005): 463–66.

131. Miranda Forsyth, Lia Kent, Sinclair Dinnen, Joanna Wallis and Srinjoy Bosse, ‘Hybridity in Peacebuilding and Development: A Critical Approach’, *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 2, no. 4 (2017): 407–21, 408.

132. Phil Clark, ‘Hybridity, Holism and Traditional Justice: The Case of the Gacaca Courts in Post-Genocide Rwanda’, *George Washington International Law Review* 39, no. 4 (2007): 765–838, 765.

133. Frédéric Mégret, ‘In Defense of Hybridity: Towards a Representational Theory of International Criminal Justice’, *Cornell International Law Journal* 38, no. 3 (2005): 725–52, 747.

134. Renee Jeffery, ‘Enduring Tensions: Transitional Justice in the Solomon Islands’, *The Pacific Review* 26, no. 2 (2013): 153–75, 167; Cynthia M. Horne, ‘Reconstructing “Traditional” Justice from the Outside In: Transitional Justice in Aceh and East Timor’, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 9, no. 2 (2014): 17–32, 28.

135. Briony Jones, ‘Analyzing Resistance to Transitional Justice: What Can We Learn from Hybridity?’ *Conflict and Society* 2, no. 1 (2016): 74–86, 74.

interaction between “top-down” and “bottom-up” forces and processes<sup>136</sup> – and directing attention towards ‘the multifarious ways in which top-down and bottom-up forces interface and produce something contextually unique’.<sup>137</sup>

The interview data illustrate the importance of hybridity in this regard – reflected in the theme “‘It didn’t change anything’: Justice that connects/makes a difference’. Some of the interviewees had not experienced any form of transitional justice. Those who had were often dissatisfied, pointing to procedural flaws and outcomes divorced from their needs. A Serb interviewee who had testified in a local court, for example, stressed that ‘no one has ever asked me: “How did you feel?” “How did you feel?” How was it on my soul?’ These were questions that mattered to her, and she regretted not having had the opportunity to tell the court how she felt when she was detained in a camp and subjected to sexual violence and other human rights violations. She had also never received the acknowledgement that mattered to her; ‘To acknowledge the experience, what you went through and how you are. Well, you are a victim. If only that was said to me. No one said it to me. Well, and this is why I am totally, totally dissatisfied and disappointed with the judicial system’.<sup>138</sup>

An Afro-Colombian interviewee spoke about the reparations that she had received from Colombia’s Victims’ Unit, a state institution created in 2012. While grateful that she had received something, she underlined that the award of reparations in the form of a one-off payment did not sufficiently respond to her needs. As she explained:

A person can easily spend so many millions and then life continues just the same and those millions of pesos – ten million pesos [nearly £2,000] – and then you’re just there sitting with your arms crossed. I begin to think that, well, I’ve always said. . . we think that it should have been done differently. I mean to say, they should have been giving us some help but over a certain period of time. . . [L]ife goes on and the same problems carry on being there – problems with money and that’s how I am at the moment.<sup>139</sup>

Ugandan interviewees overall had the least experience of transitional justice, reflecting the slow pace of transitional justice work in the country.<sup>140</sup> Some of them, however, had been awarded amnesty under the provisions of the Amnesty Act 2000 for their time spent in the bush with the LRA (following their abduction and forced conscription).<sup>141</sup> Here, too, certain disconnects emerged between the operationalisation of the process and the

136. Dustin N. Sharp, ‘Emancipating Transitional Justice from the Bonds of the Paradigmatic Transition’, *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 9, no. 1 (2015): 150–69, 165.

137. Anna Macdonald, ‘Transitional Justice and Political Economies of Survival in Post-Conflict Northern Uganda’, *Development and Change* 48, no. 2 (2017): 286–311, 495.

138. Interview, BiH, 3 July 2019.

139. Interview, Colombia, 4 March 2019.

140. Anna Macdonald, ‘“Somehow this Whole Process became so Artificial”: Exploring the Transitional Justice Implementation Gap in Uganda’, *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 13, no. 2 (2019): 225–48, 227.

141. See Cecily Rose, ‘Looking beyond Amnesty and Traditional Justice and Reconciliation Mechanisms in Northern Uganda: A Proposal for Truth-Telling and Reparations’, *Boston College Third World Law Journal* 28, no. 2 (2008): 345–400, 353.

desires/needs of those on the ground. One of the Acholi interviewees wanted understanding of what she had gone through. Instead, she was given amnesty and thus ‘forgiven’, but she questioned what she had done wrong. In her words:

It was never my decision to go [to the bush]. I was abducted, taken by force and that’s why I went. . . I went and returned, and was given amnesty to say I had been forgiven. . . but what had I done? [T]hat was what I kept thinking about it. That there was nothing {wrong} that I did, yet I was given amnesty.<sup>142</sup>

On one hand, thus, the interviews support the case for more hybrid ways of doing transitional justice that potentially reduce the space for political and elite agendas to dominate the process of dealing with the past. Millar’s work in Sierra Leone, however, is an important reminder that we should not idealise hybridity or its potential outcomes. ‘Hybrid institutions can be planned and administered’, he argues, ‘[b]ut no assumptions should be made about the experiences that will result among local populations’.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, the interviews also have a broader significance for hybridity, and in this regard the article approaches the concept from a distinct and novel angle.

In her work on Timor-Leste, Kent has pointed to the need for ‘a richer, more dynamic, conception of hybrid transitional justice’ that widens the focus beyond structures and institutions and ‘pays more attention to the ongoing process of rebuilding everyday life, and renegotiating relationships, in the wake of conflict’.<sup>144</sup> Taking Kent’s argument a step further, this article maintains that paying more attention to the process of rebuilding everyday life and, relatedly, ‘the everyday work of repair’ means placing a greater accent on the social ecologies which, as the previous section illustrated, fundamentally shape and inform these processes. To this end, it proposes what it terms ‘facilitative hybridity’. This is a multi-level and transverse hybridity that recognises and engages with social ecologies as potential ‘infrastructures of possibility’<sup>145</sup> – and harnesses this potential by ‘caring for’ and investing in these ecologies, including the resources that they provide. In this regard, facilitative hybridity also means locating current injustices within the context

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142. Interview, Uganda, 19 March 2019.

143. Gearoid Millar, ‘Disaggregating Hybridity: Why Hybrid Institutions do not Produce Predictable Experiences of Peace’, *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 4 (2014): 501–14, 511. While beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note that there are various critiques of hybridity, many of them linked to concerns about power imbalances. See e.g. Chih-Yu Shih and Josuke Ikeda, ‘International Relations of Post-Hybridity: Dangers and Potentials in Non-Synthetic Cycles’, *Globalizations* 13, no. 4 (2016): 454–68, 456; Nicole George, ‘Policing “Conjugal Order”: Gender, Hybridity and Vernacular Security in Fiji’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19, no. 1 (2017): 55–70, 57; Deepika Bahri, ‘Gendering Hybridity: The Womb as a Site of Production in Globalization’, *Interventions* 21, no. 3 (2019): 301–17, 302.

144. Lia Kent, ‘Engaging with “the Everyday”: Towards a More Dynamic Conception of Hybrid Transitional Justice’, in *Hybridity on the Ground in Peacebuilding and Development: Critical Reflections*, eds. Joanne Wallis, Lia Kent, Miranda Forsyth, Sinclair Dinnen and Srinjoy Bose (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2018): 145–61, 146.

145. Davarian L. Baldwin and Emma S. Crane, ‘Cities, Racialized Poverty and Infrastructures of Possibility’, *Antipode* 52, no. 2 (2020): 365–79.



of wider structural forms of injustice;<sup>146</sup> and, hence, working with an extended conceptualisation of repair that goes beyond recent harms and facilitates local efforts to redress systemic dimensions of disrepair.

Facilitative hybridity offers a different way of thinking about conflict-related sexual violence that moves and widens the focus beyond a ‘survivor-centred approach’, currently the dominant international policy rhetoric,<sup>147</sup> by drawing attention to ‘deeply interactional relationships’<sup>148</sup> between victims-/survivors and their social ecologies – and why these relationships matter. It also offers a framework for thinking about the largely unexplored relationship between transitional justice processes and resilience – and how the former might facilitate the latter. Underlining linkages between resilience and neoliberal modes of governance, Kastner argues that ‘resilience can potentially be redesigned, including with respect to the pursuit of transitional justice’.<sup>149</sup> Rather than ‘redesigning’ resilience, this article theorises facilitative hybridity as part of a broader reframing of transitional justice that co-opts social ecologies – while also recognising how they have been affected by violence – in the process of dealing with the past and facilitating ‘the everyday work of repair’. When asked about transitional justice, a female Indigenous interviewee in Colombia pondered: ‘Ehhh transitional. . .but it shouldn’t be something that passes, it should stay and endure. It’s like planting a seed for a tree to grow’.<sup>150</sup> This crucial ‘growth’ process, like repair and resilience, is a relational one between individuals and their wider ecologies.

## Conclusion

According to Heller, ‘It is in everyday life that human beings are tested as to whether they are – in Goethe’s words – “grain or husk”’.<sup>151</sup> This article is not about dividing people into grain or husk. It is about exploring some of the diverse ways that the women and men who participated in the underpinning research engaged in what Das has termed ‘the everyday work of repair’ – as everyday expressions of resilience – in the context of their

146. Jennifer Balint, Julie Evans and Nesam McMillan, ‘Rethinking Transitional Justice, Redressing Indigenous Harms’, *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 8, no. 2 (2014): 194–216; Eilish Rooney and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, ‘Transitional Justice from the Margins: Intersections of Identities, Power and Human Rights’, *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 12, no. 1 (2018): 1–8.

147. In Resolution 2467, the newest addition to its Women, Peace and Security agenda, the UN Security Council embraced the idea of a ‘survivor-centred approach’ to preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence. For a critical analysis of this approach, see Clark, ‘Beyond a “Survivor-Centred Approach”?’

148. Cindy A. Sousa, Susan P. Kemp and Mona El-Zuhairi, ‘Place as a Social Determinant of Health: Narratives of Trauma and Homeland among Palestinian Women’, *British Journal of Social Work* 49, no. 4 (2019): 963–82, 964.

149. Kastner, ‘A Resilience Approach to Transitional Justice?’ 384.

150. Interview, Colombia, 4 February 2019.

151. Ágnes Heller, *Everyday Life* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 7.

particular social ecologies and environments. While other scholars have examined quotidian forms and expressions of resilience, this article is the first to do so specifically with reference to victims-/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. In this way, it has addressed a notable gap within extant scholarship on conflict-related sexual violence, which, for some of the reasons discussed, has largely overlooked the concept of resilience – and the myriad ways that victims-/survivors of such violence demonstrate resilience in their efforts to rebuild and get on with their lives.

Lykes and Crosby note that ‘Narratives of sexualized harm can overwhelm and subvert stories of resistance and struggle, of endurance or “survivance”<sup>152</sup> within the violence and hardship of everyday life’.<sup>153</sup> In foregrounding such stories, this article has sought to locate their significance within a broader transitional justice framework. Beyond demonstrating the need for new storytelling spaces within transitional justice processes that enable ‘the possibility of telling more complex and messy stories’,<sup>154</sup> it has introduced the concept of facilitative hybridity. This is about more than the relations between top-down processes and bottom-up needs. It is also about multi-dimensional interactions between individuals and their social ecologies that potentially play an important role in fostering everyday expressions of resilience. Transitional justice that facilitates the supportive functions of these social ecologies, and enhances the resources within them, would advance the field – and the concept of repair – in new directions.

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152. Gerald Vizenor, ed., *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

153. Crosby and Lykes, *Beyond Repair?*, 89. See also Janine N. Clark, ‘Storytelling, Resilience and Transitional Justice: Reversing Social Bulimia’, *Theoretical Criminology* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1362480620933230> Online First

154. Ibid.

## Appendix I: Study Questionnaire (Bosnian version)

Participant ID. . . . .

Date. . . . .

Administrator name. . . . .

### SECTION A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your sex?
2. When were you born?  
*(day/month/year, if known)*
3. What is your ethnic group? *(Please read aloud all the options and mark the answer with X)*<sup>155</sup>

Bosniak	
Croat	
Serb	
Other <i>(please specify)</i>	

4. What is your marital status? *(Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X)*

Single		Divorced	
Married		Separated	
Living with partner but not married		Widowed	

5. Who lives with you?
6. Who is the head of your household? (e.g. the main decision-maker)
7. Do you have any children? If yes, how many?
8. Which of the following do you live in? *(Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X)*

Village	
Town	
City	

9. Which of the following have you completed? *(Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X)*

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155. Instructions to the person administering the questionnaire.

Primary school	
High school	
University	
Did not complete any of the above	

10. What is your occupation?

11. Do you currently work? (*Please read aloud all the options and mark the answer with X*)

Yes	
No	
Sometimes	

**SECTION B: ADULT RESILIENCE MEASURE<sup>156</sup>**

*Now read the following to the research participant: ‘Listed below are a number of questions about you, your family, your community and your relationships. These questions are designed to help us better understand how you cope with daily life and what role the people around you play in how you deal with daily challenges’.*

1. To what extent do each of the statements below describe you? (*Please read aloud each statement and mark each answer with X*)

**Side A of the visual aid<sup>157</sup> should be used for this table.**

	Not at all	A little	Some what	Quite a bit	A lot
1. I have people I can respect in my life					
2. I cooperate with people around me					
3. Getting and improving qualifications or skills is important to me					
4. I know how to behave in different social situations					
5. My family have usually supported me through life					
6. My family know a lot about me					
7. If I am hungry, I can get food to eat					

(Continued)

156. Resilience Research Centre, *The Resilience Research Centre Adult Resilience Measure*.

157. The visual aid consisted of five glasses from empty to full.

**Table.** (Continued)

	Not at all	A little	Some what	Quite a bit	A lot
8. I try to finish what I start					
9. Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me					
10. I am proud of my ethnic background					
11. People think that I am fun to be with					
12. I talk to my family/partner about how I feel					
13. I can solve problems without harming myself or others					
14. I feel supported by my friends					
15. I know where to get help in my community					
16. I feel I belong in my community					
17. My family stands by me during difficult times					
18. My friends stand by me during difficult times					
19. I am treated fairly in my community					
20. I have opportunities to show others that I can act responsibly					
21. I am aware of my own strengths					
22. I participate in organised religious activities					
23. I think it is important to support my community					
24. I feel secure when I am with my family					
25. I have opportunities to apply my abilities in life (life skills, a job, caring for others)					
26. I enjoy my family's/partner's cultural and family traditions					
27. I enjoy my community's culture and traditions					
28. I am proud to be a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina					

## SECTION C: TRAUMATIC EVENTS CHECKLIST

Now read the following to the research participant: 'In this part of the questionnaire, you will be asked some sensitive questions about your experiences during the war. These questions are important to give us a better understanding of what you have personally gone through'.

1. Which of the following situations have you experienced? (*Please read aloud each statement and mark the answer with X*)

### **HAVE YOU EVER:**

ITEM	NO	YES	PREFER NOT TO SAY
1. Been forcibly displaced from your home/community			
2. Witnessed/seen your home being destroyed			
3. Lived in temporary accommodation for displaced persons			
4. Been unable to feed yourself or your family			
5. Been forcibly separated from your family			
6. Been seriously injured/wounded			
7. Been abducted/kidnapped			
8. Been forcibly detained in a camp			
9. Experienced the death of a child			
10. Had members of your family 'disappear' (go missing)			
11. Had members of your family killed			
12. Witnessed (seen) people being beaten or tortured			
13. Witnessed (seen) people being killed			
14. Experienced torture (physical or psychological)			
15. Experienced sexual violence (including rape, forced marriage, forced pregnancy, sexual enslavement, forced abortion, sexual torture or genital beatings)			
16. Witnessed (seen) an act of rape or sexual violence			
17. Been forcibly recruited into an armed group			
18. Been forced to participate in a massacre, act of torture, abduction, rape, etc.			
19. Been forced to participate in acts of looting/plunder			
20. Been betrayed by a family member or neighbour during the war			
21. If you answered YES to more than one of the items above, which is the one most distressing to you now?	<i>Write answer</i>		
22. How long ago did the most distressing event happen?			



**SECTION D. IMPACT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Now read the following to the respondent: ‘In this section of the questionnaire, you will be asked a number of questions specifically about sexual violence. This will enable us to better understand the impact that sexual violence has had on you and your life, as well as some of your personal beliefs about sexual violence’.

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below? (*Please read aloud each statement and mark the answer with X*)

**Side B of the visual aid<sup>158</sup> should be used for this table.**

**Note to Administrator: If a respondent does not understand a question, please read aloud the explanation in the squared bracket and put a tick (✓) next to the explanation to indicate that you have read it to the participant.**

Centrality of Event Scale <sup>159</sup>	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Totally agree
1. I feel that this event (i.e. sexual violence) has become part of my identity  <i>[Explanation: The sexual violence has become part of how I define myself as a person]</i>					
2. This event has become a reference point for the way I understand myself and the world  <i>[Explanation: To explain myself and the world around me, I always refer back to the sexual violence I experienced]</i>					
3. I feel that this event has become a central part of my life story  <i>[Explanation: If I were to tell the story of my life, my experience of sexual violence would be a central event]</i>					

(Continued)

158. The visual aid consisted of a bar chart displaying the different answer options.

159. Dorte Berntsen and David C. Rubin, ‘The Centrality of Event Scale: A Measure of Integrating a Trauma into One’s Identity and its Relation to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms’, *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 44, no. 2 (2006): 219–31.

**Table.** (Continued)

Centrality of Event Scale <sup>159</sup>	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Totally agree
4. This event has coloured the way I think and feel about other experiences <i>[Explanation: My experience of sexual violence has affected how I think and feel about other things that happen in my life]</i>					
5. This event permanently changed my life <i>[Explanation: The sexual violence has had a lasting impact on my life]</i>					
6. I often think about the effects this event will have on my future					
7. This event was a turning point in my life <i>[Explanation: The sexual violence took my life in a new direction]</i>					

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the statements below?  
(Please read aloud each statement and mark the answer with X)

**Side B of the visual aid should be used for this table.**

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Totally agree
1. Nobody who suffers sexual violence should blame themselves					
2. To experience sexual violence is shameful					
3. A community has the right to exclude a person who has experienced sexual violence					

3. What have been the main consequences of the sexual violence that you experienced during the war? *(Please read aloud the list below and mark with X all affirmative answers)*

1. Problems with body image	
2. Low self-esteem	
3. Altered sexual desire (e.g. loss of sexual desire, increased sexual desire, etc.)	
4. Difficulty trusting other people	
5. Sense of guilt/self-blame	
6. Child/children born of rape	
7. HIV/AIDS	
8. Other sexually transmitted infections (e.g. syphilis)	
9. Gynaecological problems	
10. Stigmatisation (e.g. insults/abuse from the community, social exclusion, etc.)	
11. Rejection by family	
12. Broken relationships	
13. Other	

**SECTION E: LIFE TODAY**

Now read the following to the respondent: “In this final section of the questionnaire, you will be asked some questions about the present. This will help us to better understand your life today”.

1. What are the principal problems that you face today? *(Please read aloud the list below and mark with X all affirmative answers)*

1. Physical health problems (e.g. high blood pressure, diabetes, chronic pain, heart conditions, cancer, etc.)	
2. Psychological problems (e.g. depression, anxiety, nightmares, insomnia, mood swings, etc.)	
3. Economic insecurity/poverty	
4. Unemployment	
5. Housing problems (e.g. unable to pay rent, poor living conditions, don't have own home)	
6. Land issues (e.g. lack of access to land, unable to return to own land, etc.)	
7. Living as an internally displaced person	

*(Continued)*

**Table.** (Continued)

8. Difficulty in meeting basic everyday needs (e.g. water, food, electricity, sanitation, clothing)	
9. Lack of access to healthcare	
10. Lack of access to education (for self or children)	
11. Problems with partner	
12. Other family and relationship problems	
13. Abuse/bullying from community members	
14. Loneliness	
15. Addictions (e.g. alcoholism)	
16. Domestic violence	
17. Threats (e.g. death threats, threats against family members)	
18. Other (please specify)	

2. Of the problems that you identified above, which has been the biggest for you over the last month? Please specify.
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you feel safe in your community? *(Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X)*

1. Never	2. Occasionally	3. Sometimes	4. Most of the time	5. Always
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4. Do you feel able to ask for help when you need it? *(Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X)*

1. Never	2. Occasionally	3. Sometimes	4. Most of the time	5. Always
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5. When you need help, who do you turn to? *(Please read aloud the list below and mark with X all affirmative answers)*

1. Family	
2. Friends	
3. Neighbours	
4. Local organisations/NGOs	
5. State/government institutions	
6. Religious institutions	
7. Cultural institutions	
8. Other	
9. No one	

6. Are you in contact with any of the following organisations? (*Please read aloud the list below and mark with X all affirmative answers*)

1. Local NGOs (e.g. victims' groups, human rights groups)	
2. Women's and/or feminist organisations	
3. Men's support groups	
4. Political activist groups	
5. Religious organisations	
6. Cultural organisations	
7. Trade unions	
8. Other ( <i>please specify</i> )	

7. Do you play a leadership role in any of the above organisations? (*Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X*)

1. No	2. Yes	3. Not applicable
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8. In general, how would you rate your health? (*Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X*)

1. Poor	2. Fair	3. Good	4. Very good	5. Excellent
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9. How would you rate your quality of life? (*Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X*)

1. Poor	2. Fair	3. Good	4. Very good	5. Excellent
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10. Do you have goals that you want to achieve in your life? (*Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X*)

1. No	2. Yes	3. Don't know
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11. And finally, do you feel optimistic about the future? (*Please read aloud all the options and mark the respondent's answer with X*)

1. No	2. Yes	3. Don't know
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## **Appendix 2: Interview Guide**

### **A. Life Today**

1. Can you start by telling me in a few sentences something about your life today?
2. If you were to tell the story of your life, what title would you give it?
3. What are the main difficulties that you currently experience in your everyday life?
4. Can you think about the last time that you experienced something very stressful that you feel comfortable sharing. How did you deal with that experience and who did you turn to?

### **B. War Experiences**

5. Could you briefly tell me your story relating to the war/armed conflict?
6. Are there parts of your war story which are important to you and which you are never asked about? Can you tell me more?

### **C. Sexual Violence**

7. How has your experience of sexual violence impacted on your life and your relations with others?
8. As someone who has suffered sexual violence, can you give me three words that you would use to describe yourself?
9. Can you tell me a little more about the three words that you have chosen to describe yourself?
10. Some people describe those who have suffered sexual violence as victims. How do you understand the term 'victim'?
11. Some people describe those who have suffered sexual violence as survivors. How do you understand the term 'survivor'?
12. Do you see yourself as a victim, as a survivor, as a victim and a survivor, or as neither a victim nor a survivor?

### **D. Resources and Support**

13. What resources do you have that help you deal with the challenges that you face (e.g. your own inner resources, services within your community, government institutions)?
14. What do you do to get the resources you need?
15. Who or what are the sources of support in your life?

### **E. Resilience and Coping**

16. After everything that you have gone through, what are the factors that have been most important in helping you to rebuild/start to rebuild your life?

17. What are the factors that have made it difficult for you to rebuild/start to rebuild your life?
18. Do you think that being a man/woman has influenced how you deal with challenges and adversity in your life? If yes, can you give me an example?
19. Do you think that being a [reference to ethnicity] has influenced how you deal with challenges and adversity in your life? If yes, can you give me an example?
20. Has the place where you grew up, or the place where you currently live – if different – affected how you deal with challenges and adversity in your life? If yes, can you give me an example?
21. Given all that you have been through, how well do you think you are doing? Would you say that you are doing better than can be expected, as expected or worse than expected?
22. What words do you use to describe people who do better than expected after experiencing many challenges in life?

#### **F. Justice**

23. In societies that have experienced war, armed conflict and large-scale human rights abuses, people often talk about the need for ‘justice’. Thinking about your own life, what does ‘justice’ mean to you?
24. Transitional justice refers to the process of dealing with past human rights abuses in a society. It can take many forms, including criminal prosecutions, truth commissions and reparations. Have you experienced any form of transitional justice?
25. If yes, did it change your life in any way and how?
26. What do you need from transitional justice (or still need) for it to make a meaningful difference to your life and why?
27. Reparations are an important part of transitional justice because they seek to repair some of the damage that has been done to victims of crimes and their communities. Reparations can be individual (e.g. the payment of monetary compensation) and/or collective (e.g. the building of a school). What sort of reparations would mean the most to you and why?

#### **G. Closing questions**

28. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me today?
29. At the start of the interview, I asked you to tell me what title you would give your life story. You answered ‘XXX’. If I ask you the same question again now, would you answer it differently? If yes, can you tell me why?
30. Finally, how was your experience of talking to me today and telling me your story?