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DOI:
10.1093/ia/iiab055

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (Harvard):
Clark, J 2021, 'Beyond a 'survivor-centred approach' to conflict-related sexual violence?', *International Affairs*, vol. 97, no. 4, pp. 1067-1084. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiab055

Beyond a 'survivor-centred approach' to conflict-related sexual violence?

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Following the UN Security Council's adoption in October 2000 of Resolution 1325, 'women, peace, and security has become one of the main thematic pillars of the Security Council's work'.[1] In Resolution 2467, the most recent addition to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, the Security Council embraced the idea of a 'survivor-centred approach' to preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence.[2] Discussions of Resolution 2467 have noted, *inter alia*, its explicit acknowledgement of men and boys as victims of conflict-related sexual violence;[3] its recognition of 'children "born of war" as a particular victim group';[4] and its failure to mention sexual and reproductive health services.[5] What is striking is the general absence—including in international policy documents[6]—of critical reflection on the concept of survivor-centrism, which is 'often positioned as self-evidently positive'.[7]

This interdisciplinary article makes an original contribution to WPS scholarship by problematizing a 'survivor-centred approach' using the lens of connectivity. A central concept within the science of ecology, connectivity refers to connections that enable and facilitate vital ecological processes. According to

* This research was supported by the European Research Council under grant number 724518.

1 UN Women, *Women, Peace and Security in the work of the UN Security Council* (New York, n.d.), https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/un-security-council. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 21 April 2021.)

2 UN Security Council Resolution 2467, 23 April 2019, https://undocs.org/S/RES/2467(2019).

3 Paula Drumond, Elizabeth Mesok and Marysia Zalewski, 'Sexual violence in the wrong(ed) bodies: moving beyond the gender binary in International Relations', *International Affairs* 96: 5, 2020, pp. 1145–9 at p. 1145.

4 Camile Oliveira and Erin Baines, 'Children "born of war": a role for fathers?', *International Affairs* 96: 2, 2020, pp. 439–55 at p. 440.

5 Emma K. Macfarlane, 'Resolutions without resolve: turning away from UN Security Council resolutions to address conflict-related sexual violence', *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law* 27: 2, 2021, pp. 435–72 at p. 448.

6 See e.g. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *Minimum standards for prevention and response to gender-based violence in emergencies* (New York, Nov. 2015), https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GBVIE.Minimum.Standards.Publication.FINAL_.ENG_.pdf; Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), 'Putting survivors first when combatting conflict-related sexual violence—Statement by Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon at the Security Council open debate on Women, Peace and Security: conflict-related sexual violence', 17 July 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/putting-survivors-first-when-combatting-conflict-related-sexual-violence; World Health Organization (WHO), UNFPA and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Clinical management of rape and intimate partner violence survivors: development of protocols for use in humanitarian settings* (Geneva, 2020), https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331535/9789240001411-eng.pdf.

7 Robert McRuer, 'Taking it to the bank: independence and inclusion on the world market', *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 1: 2, 2007, pp. 5–14 at p. 5.

International Affairs **97**: 4 (2021) 1067–1084; DOI: 10.1093/ia/iiab055

McRae and colleagues, for example, 'connectivity among habitats and populations is considered a critical factor determining a wide range of ecological phenomena, including gene flow, metapopulation dynamics, demographic rescue, seed dispersal, infectious disease spread, range expansion, exotic invasion, population persistence, and maintenance of biodiversity'.[8] This article repurposes the idea of connectivity within a social science context to explore and underline the fundamental webs of connectivity into which the everyday lives of victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence are intricately interwoven—and to demonstrate that survivor-centred discourse marginalizes these connectivities.[9] One of the reasons this is problematic is that it decontextualizes the legacies of conflict-related sexual violence. Support for this argument comes from a report that resulted from the Wilton Park conference on conflict-related sexual violence that took place in February 2020, organized in collaboration with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. While endorsing a survivor-centred approach, the report also acknowledges that

> the current focus on an individual survivor's physical and psychosocial needs and access to justice for that individual risks overlooking the collective nature of harms experienced and the full range of victims of sexual violence. Sexual violence not only affects the person it was perpetrated against, but others including families, communities and those who were forced to witness such crimes take place.[10]

It is important to stress from the outset that there is a lack of material on the concrete implementation of survivor-centred approaches to conflict-related sexual violence. Hilary Douglas from the British Red Cross, for example, has noted that 'survivor-centred approaches are yet to be fully translated into meaningful practice by states, especially in relation to health and justice systems'.[11] The primary object of this article's critique, therefore, is the concept of a survivor-centred approach, rather than its practical operationalization. To develop its arguments, it draws on 63 semi-structured interviews with victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), Colombia and Uganda.

What the article ultimately proposes is a social-ecological reframing of survivor-centred discourse. This means extending the focus beyond individual victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and giving more attention to wider 'ecosystems', in the sense of 'the social and physical environments that constitute people's habitats'.[12] As Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez have underlined in

[8] Brad H. McRae, Brett G. Dickson, Timothy H, Keitt and Viral B. Shah, 'Using circuit theory to model connectivity in ecology, evolution and conservation', *Ecology* 89: 10, 2008, pp. 2712–24 at p. 2712.

[9] The article uses the terminology 'victims/survivors' of conflict-related sexual violence in recognition of the fact that some of the interviewees who took part in the underpinning research identified with one term more than the other—and many identified with both.

[10] FCO and Wilton Park, *#TimeforJustice: putting survivors first. Report—sexual violence in conflict: delivering justice for survivors and holding perpetrators to account, Monday 25–Wednesday 27 February 2019, WP1651* (Steyning, Sept. 2019), https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP1651-Report-1-1.pdf, p. 2.

[11] International Committee of the Red Cross, *Sexual violence in conflict: putting the individual first* (Geneva, Nov. 2020), https://www.icrc.org/en/document/putting-individual-first.

[12] Shigehiro Oishi and Jesse Graham, 'Social ecology: lost and found in psychological science', *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 5: 4, 2010, pp. 356–77 at p. 356.

a recent article on environmental peacebuilding, 'considering women and men as connected to and living actively in their ecosystems helps to enrich understanding of the implications of armed conflict for their lives and for their communities'.[13]

The article's first section focuses on the concept of a 'survivor-centred approach' to conflict-related sexual violence. Contextualizing it with reference to broader calls within transitional justice scholarship for 'victim-centred' approaches, this section also locates the article's contribution within the wider framework of the WPS agenda. The second section introduces the basic idea of connectivity and maps out the conceptual core of the article's connectivity critique. The third section discusses the fieldwork on which the article draws and the methodology used. The fourth and fifth sections use the interview data to develop two particular connectivity critiques of survivor-centredness, focused respectively on resources and health. Underlining the need for a conceptual and practical repositioning of survivor-centredness within a social-ecological frame, the conclusion reflects on what connectivity adds in this respect.

A 'survivor-centred approach' to conflict-related sexual violence

The wider context

The concept of a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence necessarily exists within a broader context. Significant in this respect are calls within the field of transitional justice for more 'victim-centred' ways of dealing with the legacies of past human rights abuses. Such calls seek to address crucial disconnects between, on one hand, elite-driven processes of dealing with the past and, on the other, the needs and priorities of victims and communities directly affected by conflict and human rights abuses.[14] Robins uses the term 'victim-centred' to refer to 'a transitional justice process or mechanism that arises as a response to the explicit needs of victims, as defined by victims themselves'.[15] For him, the extent to which transitional justice addresses victims' needs is a core measure of its effectiveness.[16] Hamber and Lundy foreground victims' needs in the context of historical institutional abuse (HIA). These needs, they maintain, 'should be the starting point of any HIA process rather than beginning with seeking a balanced menu of options such as truth commissions, trials and compensation packages as transitional justice often implies'.[17]

[13] Keina Yoshida and Lina M. Céspedes-Báez, 'The nature of Women, Peace and Security: a Colombian perspective', *International Affairs* 97: 1, 2021, pp. 17–34 at p. 24.

[14] See e.g. Kieran McEvoy and Lorna McGregor, *Transitional justice from below: grassroots activism and the struggle for change* (Oxford: Hart, 2008); Gearoid Millar, 'Local evaluations of justice through truth-telling in Sierra Leone: postwar needs and transitional justice', *Human Rights Review* 12: 4, 2011, pp. 515–35.

[15] Simon Robins, 'Towards victim-centred transitional justice: understanding the needs of families of the disappeared in postconflict Nepal', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 5: 1, 2011, pp. 75–98 at p. 77. See also Simon Robins, 'Challenging the therapeutic ethic: a victim-centred evaluation of transitional justice process in Timor Leste', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6: 1, 2012, pp. 83–105.

[16] Robins, 'Towards victim-centred transitional justice', p. 77.

[17] Brandon Hamber and Patricia Lundy, 'Lessons from transitional justice? Toward a new framing of a victim-centered approach in the case of historical institutional abuse', *Victims and Offenders* 15: 6, 2020, pp. 744–70 at p. 761.

The idea that victims should play a central role in transitional justice processes is not, however, without problems. In a study focused on Timor-Leste, Robins asserts that 'a victim-centred evaluation offers a measure of the quality of transitional justice process based not on the assumptions of those who developed it but on the voices of those who are most in need of it'.[18] Yet, given the impossibility of 'giving a voice' to all victims, what criteria should be used for determining *who* is given a voice? What safeguards can be put in place to reverse the marginalization of what Sprenkels refers to as 'subaltern victims'[19] and to ensure that a diversity of voices are heard? What happens when victims are divided among themselves?[20] How do transitional justice processes navigate the political (and often historical) sensitivities surrounding the question: 'Who is the victim?'[21]

These issues, which underscore the practical difficulties of realizing victim-centred justice, are similarly pertinent to operationalizing a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence. This article's primary focus, however, is not on the practicalities of implementing a survivor-centred approach but, rather, as noted in the introduction, on some of the conceptual issues that such an approach raises. It is therefore important to contextualize the idea within the wider framework of the UN Security Council's WPS agenda. It is beyond the scope of this research to discuss the overall WPS agenda, which other scholars have already done.[22] Crucial to the article's argument, however, is the juxtaposition between, on one hand, the breadth and ambition of the WPS agenda, and, on the other, the criticisms of narrowness that some scholars have made, particularly in relation to the issue of conflict-related sexual violence. According to Kirby and Shepherd, for example,

> a restricted (or, to put it more generously, precise) focus on conflict-related sexualized violence … precludes recognition of the 'continuum of violence' that characterizes the experience of many individuals whose lives are marked not only by the 'extraordinary' violence of 'rape as a weapon of war', but also by the everyday forms of violence that occur everywhere and may be more prevalent in inequitable and unstable societal environments.[23]

Kirby further posits that 'the narrow focus on individual criminal responsibility for crimes undertaken for military purposes so far in evidence comes at

[18] Simon Robins, 'Challenging the therapeutic ethic', p. 105.

[19] Ralph Sprenkels, *'Restricted access': promises and pitfalls of victims' participation in transitional justice mechanisms—a comparative perspective* (Utrecht, The Netherlands: Impunity Watch, 2017), https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/f3f989_f5ba9e841fa44baa893604427fe5ea04.pdf, p. 6.

[20] Adriana Rudling, 'What's inside the box? Mapping agency and conflict within victims' organizations', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 13: 3, 2019, pp. 458–77.

[21] Tazreena Sajjad, 'Heavy hands, helping hands, holding hands: the politics of exclusion in victims' networks in Nepal', *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 10: 1, 2016, pp. 25–45 at p. 29.

[22] See e.g. J. Ann Tickner and Jacqui True, 'A century of international relations feminism: from World War I women's peace pragmatism to the Women, Peace and Security agenda', *International Studies Quarterly* 62: 2, 2018, pp. 221–33; Columba Achilleos-Sarll, '"Seeing" the Women, Peace and Security agenda: visual (re) productions of WPS in government national action plans', *International Affairs* 96: 6, 2020, pp. 1643–63.

[23] Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, 'The futures past of the Women, Peace and Security agenda', *International Affairs* 92: 2, 2016, pp. 373–92 at p. 381.

the expense of a more wide-ranging account of how rape works'.[24] This article submits that the concept of a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence exposes an additional dimension of narrowness within the WPS agenda, in the sense that the 'centring' of victims/survivors risks deflecting attention from their wider social ecologies, which are themselves part of a broader narrative about how rape—and other forms of conflict-related sexual violence—works.

Balasco makes a distinction between victim-centred and survivor-centred approaches.[25] In so doing, she makes a further distinction between reparative justice and reparative development. While describing the former as victim-centred, the latter, she argues, 'is survivor-centred, broadening the definition of victimhood to include not only the individuals and immediate family directly affected by violence but also the communities in which they are embedded'.[26] However, policy discussions of a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence overwhelmingly focus on those who have directly suffered such violence.

'Centring' survivors of conflict-related sexual violence

In April 2019, the UN Security Council explicitly recognized the need for a survivor-centred approach 'in preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations'.[27] As Resolution 2467 defines it, a core element of such an approach involves making sure that those who have suffered conflict-related sexual violence have access to the services that they need, including health and psycho-social care, as well as livelihood support.[28] It thus calls upon member states to ensure that survivors receive care without any discrimination; and to 'respect the rights and prioritize needs of survivors, including groups that are particularly vulnerable or may be specifically targeted, and notably in the context of their health, education, and participation'.[29]

Resolution 2467 further outlines what a survivor-centred approach looks like in the context of transitional justice. In particular, it '*encourages* concerned Member States to ensure the opportunity for the full and meaningful participation of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence at all stages of transitional justice processes, including in decision-making roles' and '*recognizes* that women's leadership and participation will increase the likelihood that transitional justice

[24] Paul Kirby, 'Ending sexual violence in conflict: the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its critics', *International Affairs* 91: 3, 2015, pp. 457–72 at p. 472.

[25] The terms 'victim-centred' and 'survivor-centred' approaches are often used interchangeably. See e.g. FCO, *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict: best practice on the documentation of sexual violence as a crime or violation of international law*, 2nd edn (London, March 2017), https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/598335/International_Protocol_2017_2nd_Edition.pdf.

[26] Lauren M. Balasco, 'Reparative development: re-conceptualising reparations in transitional justice processes', *Conflict, Security and Development* 17: 1, 2017, pp. 1–20 at p. 3.

[27] Resolution 2467. See also UN, *Conflict-related sexual violence: report of the United Nations Secretary-General* (New York, July 2019), https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/report/conflict-related-sexual-violence-report-of-the-united-nations-secretary-general/2019-SG-Report.pdf.

[28] Resolution 2467, para. 28.

[29] Resolution 2467, para. 16.

outcomes will constitute effective redress as defined by victims and will respond to important contextual factors'.[30] It does not, however, elaborate on how women's leadership and participation will constitute effective redress.

Reiterating many of the same points made in Resolution 2467, the WHO, UNFPA and UNHCR advocate the LIVES approach—which stands for 'listening, inquiring about needs and concerns, validating, enhancing safety and supporting'[31]—as constituting 'the first step in providing supportive, survivor-centred care'.[32] Similarly, the EU has declared that, 'in line with the survivor-centred approach defined by UN Security Council resolution 2467 and previously adopted resolutions, we will put the needs of victims and survivors at the front and centre of our actions'.[33] Moreover, according to Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, the British prime minister's special representative on preventing sexual violence in conflict, 'we must all recognise that the only response to sexual violence is a survivor-centred response. The more we empower survivors to lead, the more effectively we support their reintegration, their recovery and our ability to respond to these abhorrent crimes.'[34]

Lord Ahmad also referred to the Murad Code, named after the Iraqi Yazidi human rights activist and 2018 joint Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Nadia Murad. The UK government, through its Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI), has played a key role in the development of the draft Murad Code—launched on 19 June 2020 and officially known as a 'draft global code of conduct for documenting and investigating conflict-related sexual violence'.[35] The background paper to the draft code explains that one of the latter's key goals is 'to distil existing (rather than to create new) minimum or core standards which are critical for safe, effective and survivor-centric documentation of conflict-related sexual violence through the development and implementation of a globally supported code of conduct'. One of the Code's eight core principles is 'survivors as individuals', which means, *inter alia*, that 'we will tailor our approach to an individual survivor's rights, needs, wishes and risks, recognising their diverse abilities, challenges and vulnerabilities based on who they are in the place they are'.[36] Murad herself has emphasized that 'survivors know best what they need to heal and recover'.[37]

[30] Resolution 2467, para. 16(d) (emphasis in original).
[31] WHO et al., *Clinical management of rape*, p. 37.
[32] WHO et al., *Clinical management of rape*, p. 31.
[33] EU, 'EU Statement—United Nations Security Council: open VTC on sexual violence in conflict' (New York, July 2020), https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/83080/eu-statement-united-nations-security-council-open-vtc-sexual-violence-conflict_en.
[34] FCO, 'Putting survivors first'.
[35] The 'Murad Code' is available at https://www.muradcode.com/draft-murad-code. The final code is due to be launched later in 2021.
[36] Institute for International Criminal Investigations, Nadia's Initiative and FCO, *Background paper and draft global code of conduct for documenting and investigating conflict-related sexual violence ('the Murad Code'), June 2020* (London, 2020), https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eba1018487928493de323e7/t/5efa1554a8553428c9395936/1593447765159/English+DraftMuradCode%2BBackgroundPaper+June2020+Website.pdf, para. 4(a).
[37] UN News, 'Nobel laureate Nadia Murad denounces lack of will to end sexual violence as a war tactic', 28 Sept. 2020, https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/09/1074092.

In short, needs are seen as central both to the concept of 'victim-centred' justice discussed at the start of this section and to the idea of a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence. In the context of the WPS framework, addressing needs is part of a wider participation agenda. The preamble of Resolution 2467, for example, emphasizes that

> the safety and empowerment of women and girls is important for their meaningful participation in peace processes, preventing conflicts and rebuilding societies, and that therefore women's protection and participation are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing as reflected by all previous resolutions on women, peace and security.[38]

Within the 'norm bundle' that constitutes the WPS agenda,[39] then, there is implicit recognition that those who have suffered violence have an important role to play in contributing to their wider social ecologies. However, a narrow conceptualization of survivor-centredness minimizes the significance of these social ecologies, which themselves can affect both needs and, ultimately, the possibilities for participation. The present article's novel connectivity critique of a survivor-centred approach brings these social ecologies to the fore.

A connectivity critique of survivor-centredness

Within ecological science, different types of connectivities—such as between mangroves and coral reef systems, or between land and sea—are essential to the healthy functioning of complex ecosystems. Grass and colleagues, for example, argue that 'even the largest protected areas lose species over the long term if they are situated in landscapes with very poor connectivity'.[40] Focusing on rivers, May stresses that 'the first step toward healthy urban rivers … is to restore connectivity between human behaviour and the very idea of natural hydrological processes, around our homes, on our streets, in our parks'.[41] Using a connectivity lens to reflect critically on the concept of a survivor-centred approach, this article posits that such an approach is problematic precisely because it can 'disconnect' victims/survivors from the complex webs of connectivity with which their everyday lives—and health—are closely intertwined. These webs of connectivity illuminate and form part of broader social ecologies, or sets of 'nested structures'[42]—including families, communities, cultural traditions and institutions—that shape the lives and needs of victims/survivors and how they deal with their experiences.

[38] Resolution 2467.

[39] Jacqui True and Antje Wiener, 'Everyone wants (a) peace: the dynamics of rhetoric and practice on "Women, Peace and Security"', *International Affairs* 95: 3, 2019, pp. 553–74 at p. 553.

[40] Ingo Grass, Jacqueline Loos, Svenja Baensch, Péter Batáry, Felipe Librán-Embid, Anoush Ficiciyan, Felix Klaus, Maraja Riechers, Julia Rosa, Julia Tiede, Kristy Udy, Catrin Westphal, Annmarie Wurz and Teja Tscharntke, 'Land-sharing/-sparing connectivity landscapes for ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation', *People and Nature* 1: 2, 2019, pp. 262–72 at p. 267.

[41] Rachel May, '"Connectivity" in urban rivers: conflict and convergence between ecology and design', *Technology in Society* 28: 4, 2006, pp. 477–88 at p. 486.

[42] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The ecology of human development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 3.

Other scholars have emphasized—albeit not specifically in relation to the concept of a survivor-centred approach—the importance of wider contextual factors *vis-à-vis* conflict-related sexual violence and/or transitional justice. Boesten's work on conflict-related sexual violence in Peru, for example, has underscored, *inter alia*, a 'continuum of violence', 'broader social structures' and 'generalized misogyny'.[43] Scholars such as Gready and Robins have stressed the need for 'transformative justice' that 'entails a shift in focus from the legal to the social and political, and from the state and institutions to communities and everyday concerns'.[44] There are obvious synergies between such arguments and this article's use of connectivity. What connectivity adds, however, is a multidimensional lens, which, drawn from the field of ecology, captures the complex interactions between individuals and their wider social ecologies, without portraying the latter simply as part of the problem or the solution.

As one example, while it is important to note that connectivity is not always a positive factor,[45] the empirical data underpinning this research demonstrate that it can take the form of supporting and sustaining connectivities—or resources—that tell part of a larger story about how victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence deal with their experiences. A survivor-centred approach that is strongly focused on individual needs can overlook these connectivities, effectively decentring them.

From a connectivity perspective, the concept of a survivor-centred approach is also problematic for another reason. Conflict-related sexual violence does not affect only the direct victims/survivors; it also, through connectivities, leaves broader social-ecological legacies. As Balasco argues, 'we need to recognise that while conflict harmed individuals, these individuals were embedded in communities. The harm committed to individuals has communal consequences that are equally in need of reparation'.[46] Survivor-centred rhetoric detracts from these wider legacies and consequences. By extension, it also overlooks the difficulties of prioritizing the needs of victims/survivors in a context of wider social harms.[47]

For example, the UN sets out various 'guiding principles' for work on conflict-related sexual violence and states that 'the cornerstone and crosscutting principles that should guide CRSV work are "do no harm" and the "survivor-centred approach"'.[48] In stressing the imperative of 'do no harm' to victims/survivors of

[43] Jelke Boesten, 'Of exceptions and continuities: theory and methodology in research on conflict-related sexual violence', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 19: 4, 2017, pp. 506–19 at pp. 507, 510, and *Sexual violence during war and peace: gender, power and post-conflict justice in Peru* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 149.

[44] Paul Gready and Simon Robins, 'From transitional to transformative justice: a new agenda for practice', in Gready and Robins, eds, *From transitional to transformative justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 31–56 at p. 32.

[45] Marco A. Janssen, Orjan Bodin, John M. Anderies, Thomas Elmqvist, Henrik Ernston, Ryan R. J. McAllister, Per Olsson and Paul Ryan, 'Toward a network perspective of the study of resilience in social-ecological systems', *Ecology and Society* 11: 1, 2006.

[46] Balasco, 'Reparative development', p. 2.

[47] Such arguments resonate particularly strongly with some of the basic principles of restorative justice—a process aimed at repairing 'larger social harms as well as individual harms'. See Kay Pranis, 'Restorative values', in Gerry Johnstone and Daniel W. Van Ness, eds, *Handbook of restorative justice* (Milton Park: Willan, 2007), pp. 59–74 at p. 59–60.

[48] UN, *Handbook for United Nations field missions on preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence* (New

conflict-related sexual violence, however, it downplays the harms done to families and communities—not only as a result of sexual violence, but also through conflict and violence more broadly. These harms raise important questions, such as how families and communities should 'be encouraged to support victims/survivors and to put community-protection and integration mechanisms in place'.[49] Also, how does one 'create an enabling environment where survivors of sexual violence can receive compassionate, survivor-centred support' in a situation where crucial connectivities may themselves have been ruptured or damaged?[50]

Fletcher and Weinstein have developed what they call 'an ecological model to understand social breakdown and to identify the critical elements of social repair'.[51] Their aim was specifically to explore the contribution of criminal trials to social reconstruction,[52] which they define as consisting of justice, democracy, economic prosperity and transformation, and reconciliation.[53] The ecological element of the model derives primarily from the emphasis on multiple interventions across different levels—including legal interventions, psycho-social interventions and community interventions[54]—in recognition of the diverse legacies of war, conflict and violence.[55] Connectivity, which itself constitutes a particular pathway to social repair, builds on and deepens this model by providing a more grounded perspective.

A key point is that connectivity is not about prescribing particular interventions, but rather about informing interventions by drawing attention to, *inter alia*, wider social-ecological harms and altered connectivities. Fletcher and Weinstein maintain that 'the power of an ecological perspective lies in its ability to provide a framework to interpret events that arise'.[56] Connectivity, as an example of such a perspective, provides a novel framework for thinking about conflict-related sexual violence and the concept of a survivor-centred approach. This article accordingly underlines the need to reframe a survivor-centred approach, in order to better capture the connectivities and social ecologies that shape, influence and affect the lives of victims/survivors—and are themselves affected by conflict and violence—and the 'ecological dynamism of lived social experiences'.[57]

York, 2020), https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020.08-UN-CRSV-Handbook.pdf, p. 13.

[49] UN, *Handbook for United Nations field missions*, p. 18.

[50] Sophie Read-Hamilton and Mendy Marsh, 'The communities care programme: changing social norms to end violence against women and girls in conflict-affected communities', *Gender and Development* 24: 2, 2016, pp. 261–76 at p. 268.

[51] Laurel E. Fletcher and Harvey M. Weinstein, 'Violence and social repair: rethinking the contribution of justice to reconciliation', *Human Rights Quarterly* 24: 3, 2002, pp. 573–639 at p. 580.

[52] Fletcher and Weinstein, 'Violence and social repair', p. 579.

[53] Fletcher and Weinstein, 'Violence and social repair', p. 623.

[54] Fletcher and Weinstein, 'Violence and social repair', p. 625.

[55] See also Jodi Halpern and Harvey M. Weinstein, 'Rehumanizing the other: empathy and reconciliation', *Human Rights Quarterly* 26: 3, 2004, pp. 561–83 at p. 564.

[56] Fletcher and Weinstein, 'Violence and social repair', pp. 621–2.

[57] Elizabeth L. Murname, Tara G. Walker, Beck Tench, Stephen Voida and Jaime Snyder, 'Personal informatics in interpersonal contexts: towards the design of technology that supports the social ecologies of long-term mental health management', *Proceedings of the ACM on human–computer interaction*, vol. 2, 2018, pp. 1–27 at p. 3.

Methodology

The fieldwork on which this article draws was conducted in the context of a five-year research project focused on resilience and conflict-related sexual violence. The project's argument is not that women and men who have experienced conflict-related sexual violence *should* be resilient; nor is its purpose to advocate 'a neoliberal mode of governmentality'[58] that diminishes government and state obligations towards victims/survivors through 'a transfer of agency and responsibility'.[59] Using three diverse case-studies to explore 'what resilience looks like in different contexts',[60] it conceptualizes resilience as 'a dynamic and contextual process in dialogue with local worlds and environments'.[61] In so doing, it analyses the spread and functioning of multisystemic connectivities across the three case sites.

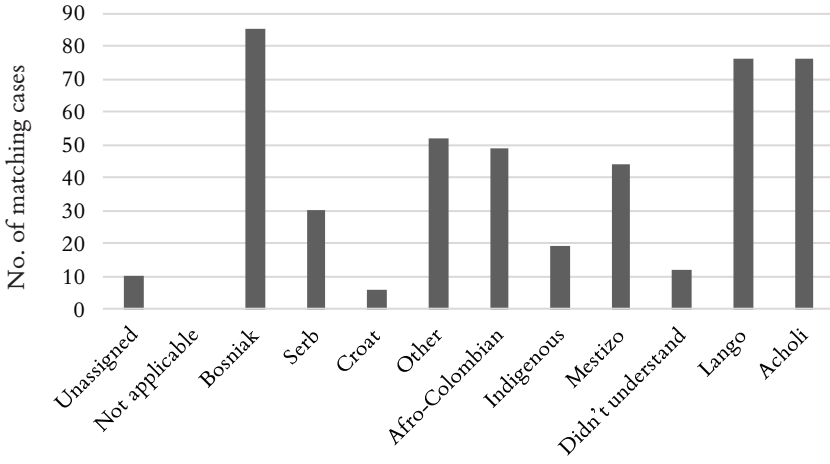
In the qualitative stage of the project, the author (who was based in BH) and two post-doctoral research fellows (based in Colombia and Uganda respectively)—collectively referred to as the researchers—each conducted 21 semi-structured interviews between January and July 2019. Ethics approval for the research was granted by the host institution, by the research funder and by relevant authorities in each country. The interviewees were selected from a quantitative dataset of 449 respondents (126 in BH, 171 in Colombia and 152 in Uganda). These 449 respondents—all of whom were victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, including 27 men—completed the study questionnaire between May and December 2018. One section of the questionnaire was based on the Adult Resilience Measure (ARM), a 28-item scale that measures resilience by focusing on the individual, relational and contextual resources that people have available to them.[62] Individual answers were scored from one to five.

Total ARM scores were then used to divide respondents into four quartiles. The researchers each picked five interviewees from each set of country quartiles (and ultimately each researcher, for different reasons, conducted one additional interview), basing the selections on two key factors. First, there was a spread of ARM scores within each of the quartiles. To capture this, the researchers chose participants from the bottom, middle and top of each quartile. Second, selections were guided by the need to ensure that the interview samples for each country reflected the demographic diversity within the quartiles. In all three countries, the experiences of particular groups of victims/survivors—including Serbs and Croats in BH, Indigenous communities in Colombia and the Lango people in northern Uganda—have been overlooked. As figure 1 below demonstrates, the overall sample contains some imbalances (largely reflecting the practical

[58] Jonathan Joseph, 'Resilience as embedded neoliberalism: a governmentality approach', *Resilience* 1: 1, 2013, pp. 38–52 at p. 40.
[59] Dan Bulley, 'Producing and governing community (through) resilience', *Politics* 33: 4, 2013, pp. 265–75 at p. 266.
[60] Patrice M. Buzzanell, 'Resilience: talking, resisting and imagining new normalcies into being', *Journal of Communication* 60: 1, 2010, pp. 1–14 at p. 3.
[61] Andrew R. Hatala, Chinyere Njeze, Darrient Morton, Tamara Pearl and Kelley Bird-Naytowhow, 'Land and nature as sources of health and resilience among indigenous youth in an urban Canadian context: a photovoice exploration', *BCM Public Health* 20: 1, 2020.
[62] Resilience Research Centre, *The Resilience Research Centre Adult Resilience Measure (RRC-ARM): user's manual—research* (Halifax: Nova Scotia, May 2016), https://cyrm.resilienceresearch.org/measures/.

challenges of finding and gaining access to particular groups). Nevertheless, both the researchers and the various NGOs that played a crucial role in facilitating the fieldwork made extensive efforts to ensure that the country samples reflected a diversity of victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

Figure 1: Respondents by ethnicity



Note: The 'Other' column combines respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina (n = 5) and Colombia (n = 47).

The 63 interviews were conducted in the local languages and were recorded using encrypted voice recorders. The interview guide included questions about the interviewees' war experiences, their lives today and their sources of support. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, translated and coded using NVivo software. The author developed the codebook, which underwent multiple iterations and amendments, over a period of twelve months. The concept of connectivity emerged inductively through the author's thematic analysis of the qualitative data.

Connectivity and resources

According to the human rights activist Nadine Tunasi, 'survivors need to be seen as individuals with specific needs'.[63] Survivor-centred rhetoric places a strong emphasis on victims/survivors' needs and on what they are currently lacking. This accent on individual needs, however, and the concomitant marginalization of wider social ecologies, means that little attention is given to resources within these social ecologies and how they might be harnessed or strengthened.

Within the interview data on which this article draws, resources were a significant theme, constituting supportive and sustaining connectivities across multiple levels. These connectivities included family, community, institutions, NGOs and

[63] International Committee of the Red Cross, *Sexual violence in conflict*.

place/physical environment. Within disciplines including ecology and geomorphology, the terms 'structural connectivity' and 'functional connectivity' are frequently used. The former 'describes the extent to which landscape units (at multiple spatial scales) are contiguous or physically linked to one another';[64] the latter is about how structural connectivity is used in practice.[65] Part of the author's analysis of the interview data has involved looking at structural connectivity in the sense of the support structures and networks within interviewees' lives, and at how these connectivities function.

For the Colombian interviewees, NGOs and women's organizations such as Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres, Meta con Mirada de Mujer and the Red de Mujeres Victimas y Profesionales were valuable resources, providing the women with opportunities to learn new skills, receive psycho-social support and share their stories in a safe environment. One of the interviewees was closely involved with two of these organizations and explained: 'I tell you, for women who've been through so many different ways of being victimized, it helps so, so, so much in life to be surrounded by other women who support you and give you a hand. They're sowing the seeds for a better future for our country.'[66]

In Uganda, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) were a key resource for some interviewees. When asked which factors had been most important in helping her to rebuild her life, one interviewee underlined the opportunities that a local VSLA had given her to interact with other women and to move forward in an economic sense. Explaining that women themselves had established the VSLA, she described how she had received not only a loan but also valuable advice on how to generate an income. In her words:

> They advised me to buy silver fish to sell. They further said they had a customer who deals in silver fish, and that they would ask her to allow me take the amount of silver fish I wanted on credit and then pay her back after selling it. So, I would get a sack of silver fish every week to sell. It gradually helped me to start an easy life among them.[67]

Children were also a prominent theme in the data. References to children in the context of discussions about a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence primarily focus on children born of such violence.[68] However, for interviewees from all three countries, children were an important resource. While the interview guide did not include any questions on this topic, interviewees frequently spoke about the fundamental importance of their children (and in some cases grandchildren) in their lives—including in response to the question: 'Who or what are the sources of support in your life?'

[64] John Wainwright, Laura Turnbull, Tristan G. Ibrahim, Irantzu Lexartza-Artza, Steven F. Thornton and Richard E. Brazier, 'Linking environmental régimes, space and time: interpretations of structural and functional connectivity', *Geomorphology* 126: 3–4, 2011, pp. 387–404 at p. 387.

[65] Cécile Tannier, Marc Bourgeois, Hélène Houot and Jean-Christophe Foltête, 'Impact of urban developments on the functional connectivity of forested habitats: a joint contribution of advanced urban models and landscape graphs', *Land Use Policy*, vol. 52, 2016, pp. 76–91 at p. 77.

[66] Researcher interview, Colombia, 10 Feb. 2019.

[67] Researcher interview, Uganda, 15 April 2019.

[68] UN, *Conflict-related sexual violence*, para. 14.

One of the Bosnian interviewees explained: 'Well, my priority now is my granddaughter. The two of us are inseparable … Well, so, this is what fills me up and what I like the most. I relax and forget everything. I go down into her little world.'[69] Another Bosnian interviewee did not have any children of her own, but repeatedly talked about her partner's family—and in particular his own daughter's child. Speaking about the little girl, the interviewee stressed: 'And now, she is my dream. She is my dream. We talk in the morning, at noon, in the evening … Somehow, what do I know, I live for her.'[70]

One of the Colombian interviewees had two grown-up sons and described one of them as a principal source of support in her life. She also accented the significance of her young daughter. As she recounted, 'I really like studying and I have to *try*—above all, with God's help—I have to try to move forwards because, as I said, I have a ten-year-old daughter. She's my anchor—that's what gives me a reason to carry on fighting.'[71] Another Colombian interviewee very literally articulated a deep sense of connectivity to her four children. She reflected: 'So, this is what keeps pulling you and your children together—the umbilical cord never breaks.'[72]

Interviewees frequently spoke about their children (regardless of age) as a source of support or strength, a reason to live or fight, and/or a priority or central focus in their lives. The simple fact of having children or grandchildren was very important to them. In some cases, it was also the particular things that their children/grandchildren did or said that made a difference. One Bosnian interviewee with three teenage girls told the author: 'They hug me, smile at me, say: "Mum, you are the best mum." And this is enough for me, when they tell me I am the best mum in the world.'[73] A Ugandan interviewee talked about the practical help that she received from her children. As she explained: 'I actually do things by myself, I struggle by myself. And the children also prop my back [support me]. For example, on Saturdays, I gather them all and go with them to the fields.'[74]

There is not sufficient space here to adumbrate the many supportive and sustaining connectivities about which interviewees spoke and which constituted important protective resources within their lives—meaning resources that can aid 'healthy adjustment to long-term stresses'.[75] Focusing on organizations and children as just two examples of these connectivities serves the broader purpose of demonstrating that survivor-centred rhetoric can decentre the very resources that are so valuable in victims/survivors' lives—resources that should themselves, where appropriate, be accorded attention and investment.

A major source of concern for many of the Ugandan interviewees, for example, was finding the money for their children's school fees, emphasizing how thin the

[69] Author interview, BH, 6 March 2019.
[70] Author interview, BH, 22 Feb. 2019.
[71] Researcher interview, Colombia, 13 March 2019.
[72] Researcher interview, Colombia, 6 March 2019.
[73] Author interview, BH, 31 Aug. 2019.
[74] Researcher interview, Uganda, 15 April 2019.
[75] Oddgeir Friborg, Odim Hjemdal, Jan H. Rosenvinge and Monica Martinussen, 'A new rating scale for adult resilience: what are the central protective resources behind healthy adjustment?', *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* 12: 2, 2003, pp. 65–76 at p. 65.

line between resources and stressors can be. The majority of these interviewees were subsistence farmers, and factors such as poor harvests or ill health exacerbated their already precarious existential situation and, relatedly, their worries about their children's education and future. When asked what she needed from transitional justice,[76] for example, a widowed interviewee with six children answered: 'The means to pay school fees is disturbing us, because there is nothing good in our hands.' Elaborating further, the interviewee—who lived close to the border with Karamoja, an area in north-east Uganda strongly associated with cattle rustling—explained: 'When you go to dig and then you buy, for example, an animal to rear, when there is an attack [cattle raid] you run away and leave it behind. Other people will be the ones to use it while you become poor.'[77]

This example illuminates one potential way to support the relational connectivities that act as resources in interviewees' lives—the payment of school fees. Moreover, the reference to wider insecurity—highly pertinent to the WPS agenda—draws attention to a second major issue with a survivor-centred approach, namely its narrow conceptualization of health, which thereby neglects the wider 'health' of individuals' social ecologies.

Connectivity and health

Discussions about the need for a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence often have a strong health-related component. Resolution 2467, for example, 'affirms' that those who have suffered conflict-related sexual violence should have access to, *inter alia*, health care and psycho-social care.[78] The WHO, UNFPA and UNHCR underscore health rights as a core element of 'survivor-centred care'. In particular, they emphasize 'the right to health-care services of good quality, that are available, accessible and acceptable', and 'the right to be offered health-care services without discrimination, i.e. treatment is not refused based on race, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, marital status, occupation, political beliefs or any other factor'.[79]

Interviewees provided rich accounts of the corporeal and psychological/emotional legacies of their experiences during war and conflict. It is important to point out that these women and men were victims/survivors not only of conflict-related sexual violence but of multiple acts of violence, including beatings and physical torture. Some of the interviewees, moreover, continued to face violence, including structural violence and intersectional disadvantages linked to overlapping aspects of their identities, including gender, age and ethnicity.[80] These

[76] Many of the interviewees were unfamiliar with the term 'transitional justice'. A standardized definition was used to explain it to them.
[77] Researcher interview, Uganda, 28 Feb. 2019.
[78] Resolution 2467, para. 28.
[79] WHO et al., *Clinical management of rape*, p. 4.
[80] According to Best et al., 'The key insight of intersectionality theory is that discrimination and disadvantage are not just additive; categories may intersect to produce unique forms of disadvantage': Rachel Kahn Best, Lauren B. Edelman, Linda Hamilton Krieger and Scott T. Eliason, 'Multiple disadvantages: an empirical test of intersectionality', *Law and Society Review* 45: 4, 2011, pp. 991–1025 at p. 993.

complex and multilayered experiences of violence—which problematize 'narrative compression' and a reductive focus on sexual violence[81]—give context to some of the particular health problems about which interviewees spoke.

One of the five male Bosnian interviewees was captured as a wounded soldier and held in captivity for nine and a half months. He revealed: 'I have more and more health problems, due to my time in the camp. My back hurts, my hands, my … From the beatings and those things that I experienced there.'[82] A Colombian interviewee who was kidnapped by the Popular Liberation Army (EPL)—a communist guerrilla organization—and subsequently shot in the leg explained: 'I can't work much. I've got … I have early onset arthritis, I mean, one of my knees doesn't work—I can't walk very well. That's all because of them [the EPL] shooting me in the leg.'[83] Ugandan interviewees frequently spoke about health issues, including body pains and general 'loss of strength', which impeded their ability to undertake manual labour. A male interviewee who was sexually abused by government soldiers in 1996 and later forcibly recruited into the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) stressed that 'as for the rebels [LRA], afterwards, because of carrying heavy loads, it weakened me, taking away my strength so that I cannot dig'.[84]

A bigger issue that emerges from this discussion relates to the very meaning of health. As the WHO defines it, 'health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'.[85] In other words, health is an expansive and, by extension, a transcorporeal concept. As Alaimo defines it, 'trans-corporeality is a new materialist and posthumanist sense of the human as substantially and perpetually interconnected with the flows of substances and the agencies of environments'.[86] One of the issues with a survivor-centred approach is that through its often narrow focus on provision of and access to health care, it can overlook important dimensions of 'transcorporeal connectivity' that help to foster a sense of well-being.[87]

Such connectivity came across strongly in some of the Bosnian and Colombian interviews. Two of the male Bosnian interviewees, for example, spoke about the importance of a local lake. One of them explained: 'I have, I was [before the war] a sportsman, water sports, so I have a boat and I like fishing and the rest. This relaxes me, err, really relaxes me. I forget everything and go fishing … Here I have some kind of therapy.'[88] In Colombia, one of the three Indigenous interviewees expressed a strong 'transcorporeal sense of connection' to her surroundings.[89] In her words:

[81] F. Carter Philips, Jr, 'Narrative compression and the myths of Prometheus in Hesiod', *Classical Journal* 68: 4, 1973, pp. 289–305 at p. 297; Alison Crosby and M. Brinton Lykes, *Beyond repair? Mayan women's protagonism in the aftermath of genocidal harm* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019), p. 8.
[82] Author interview, BH, 11 Feb. 2019.
[83] Researcher interview, Colombia, 30 March 2019.
[84] Researcher interview, Uganda, 26 March 2019.
[85] WHO, 'Constitution', https://www.who.int/about/who-we-are/constitution.
[86] Stacy Alaimo, 'States of suspension: trans-corporeality at sea', *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 19: 3, 2012, pp. 476–93 at p. 476.
[87] Michelle Bastian, 'Whale falls, suspended ground and extinctions never known', *Environmental Humanities* 12: 2, 2020, pp. 454–74 at p. 466.
[88] Author interview, BH, 10 April 2019.
[89] Alaimo, 'States of suspension', p. 482.

Look, it's things like sitting down to enjoy a glass of water, watching the carts go past—it's lovely. The sound of water, ahhhh! You sit on the banks of a river and listen to the sound of the water—the water speaks to you, it sings, it murmurs and you just want to keep going back to listen to those murmurs, all that. Music. It's a rebirth. A new dawn.[90]

Not all victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, including those living in active conflict zones where everyday life is focused simply on staying alive, will have opportunities to connect transcorporeally with the world around them. The broader point, however, is that 'human health exists at the interface of environment and society'.[91] This is not to detract from the individual health of victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, but rather to emphasize that these women and men cannot be 'healthy' in isolation from the webs of connectivity with which their lives are entangled.[92]

Sexual violence in conflict occurs in the context of related acts of violence and war/conflict developments that cumulatively leave lasting legacies, including with respect to social-ecological health. Many interviewees, for instance, spoke about the health of their communities, a few in very literal terms. Reflecting on the prevalence of mental health issues within his village, a Bosnian interviewee who spent several months in two different camps opined: 'Everyone has a code [meaning post-traumatic stress disorder] … Well, half of them are not normal. More than half are not normal. Well, and we are here mostly from the camps.'[93] A Ugandan interviewee who underwent nine years in captivity also talked about the impact of war events on the mental health of her community. Sighing deeply, she lamented:

There is no softness of the heart [happiness]. The reason I say there is no happiness is because currently some people are living anyhow [in a disorganized way] because they don't know whether their child is dead or is still alive. They have no idea and are just living anyhow.[94]

Some interviewees also spoke more broadly about the health of their communities in the sense of altered dynamics and relationships, depopulation, stigma, lack of economic opportunities and resource deficits. One of the Bosnian interviewees insisted that her town no longer 'breathed' in the same way that it did before the war. Noting that many people had left, she stressed that there was nothing to draw them back; unemployment was high and 'the whole industry of Grad [a pseudonym for her town] was destroyed'. She further complained that people in the town had changed and become inert. In her words, 'Grad, I don't know if you will understand me, is an apathetic place. Only a few fight for something, some kind of progress … I think that the war, in fact, the humanitarian assistance, made people lazy.'[95] Another interviewee, internally displaced in a rundown part of Republika

[90] Researcher interview, Colombia, 6 March 2019.
[91] Kelley A. Crews and Brian King, 'Human health and the nexus of ecologies and politics', in King and Crews, eds, *Ecologies and politics of health* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 1–12 at p. 1.
[92] Shelley D. Golden and Jo Anne L. Earp, 'Social ecological approaches to individuals and their contexts: twenty years of health education and behavior health promotion interventions', *Health Education and Behavior* 39: 3, 2012, pp. 364–72 at p. 364.
[93] Author interview, BH, 10 April 2019.
[94] Researcher interview, Uganda, 1 Feb. 2019.
[95] Author interview, BH, 30 Jan. 2019.

Srpska (one of the two entities in post-Dayton BH), expressed concerns about the lack of facilities and opportunities for young people. This interviewee, who had effectively become the main carer of her two young grandchildren, explained: 'Here there is really nothing for young people. Well, I would like something for them. You know, they really have nothing here. And children have nothing. Not even a playground.'[96]

Some of the Colombian interviewees spoke about the ill health of their communities in terms of ongoing security issues. One of them talked about threats from armed groups, which had forced people to leave the government's crop substitution programme (aimed at coca crop eradication) and to continue growing coca—the basis of cocaine—which exposed them to further dangers. In her words:

> We're in the middle of a war zone—surrounded by the guerrillas and the *paracos* [paramilitaries] and now, the Sinaloa cartel [a major drugs cartel from Mexico]. So, if we grow it [coca] here, one lot comes to buy our crop and then the other lot comes and intimidates and threatens us because we sold it to the first lot.

She continued: 'So, it's all the same and we keep growing coca, but further into the mountains.'[97] This is an example that illustrates wider issues pertaining to economic health and well-being: namely, that 'in large parts of rural undeveloped Colombia, coca cultivation offers not only the most reliable source of income to hundreds of thousands, but often the only viable source of income'.[98]

The above examples do not take away from the health needs of victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. What they illustrate is the narrowness of focusing on individual health to the detriment of social-ecological health; and, hence, the imperative of extending ethics of care beyond just victims/survivors. Some survivor-centred rhetoric effectively recognizes the importance of 'ecologies of support',[99] acknowledging the vital support that social ecologies can potentially offer. Resolution 2467, for example,

> *encourages* leaders at the national and local level, including community, religious and traditional leaders, as appropriate and where they exist, to play a more active role in advocating within communities against sexual violence in conflict to avoid marginalization and stigmatization of survivors and their families.[100]

Yet seeking to co-opt these ecologies of support without first recognizing how they themselves have been affected by conflict and violence risks putting the proverbial cart before the horse and missing some of 'the profound interconnections that exist everywhere'.[101]

[96] Author interview, BH, 19 March 2019.
[97] Researcher interview, Colombia, 4 Feb. 2019.
[98] Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Can Colombia eradicate coca by drones? The illusion of a technological fix* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, July 2018), https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/07/24/can-colombia-eradicate-coca-by-drones-the-illusion-of-a-technological-fix/.
[99] Vincent Duclos and Tomás Sánchez Criado, 'Care in trouble: ecologies of support from below and beyond', *Medical Anthropological Quarterly* 34: 2, 2020, pp. 153–73 at p. 155.
[100] Resolution 2467, para. 16(c) (emphasis in original).
[101] Neera M. Singh, 'Introduction: affective ecologies and conservation', *Conservation and Society* 16: 1, 2018, pp. 1–7 at p. 1.

Conclusion: reframing a 'survivor-centred approach'

This article has added to existing scholarship on the UN Security Council's WPS agenda by offering a critique of the concept—endorsed in Resolution 2467—of a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence, drawing on fieldwork conducted in BH, Colombia and Uganda to develop its core arguments. Some of the research participants had received assistance from local NGOs, and a small number of the Colombian interviewees were receiving reparations from the country's Victims' Unit. These examples of support can be broadly associated with survivor-centred approaches. Much of the evidence presented in the two empirical sections above, however, is not specifically about conflict-related sexual violence. This partly reflects the design of the interview guide, which deliberately sought to engage with research participants not exclusively as victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. It also raises larger questions about how individuals directly experience survivor-centred approaches. This is an important topic for further research, linked to the aforementioned lack of data on the actual realization and implementation of survivor-centredness.

This article has specifically used the concept of connectivity, transposed from the field of ecology, to problematize the idea of a survivor-centred approach and to develop two particular critiques of survivor-centredness, focused respectively on resources and health. The richness of the interview data on which this research draws, however, potentially raises the question of why we need connectivity to gain insights into individuals' social ecologies and what it adds to our investigations. The key point in this regard is that the article presents connectivity as a new conceptual approach for thinking about and dealing with conflict-related sexual violence. Here, connectivity is fundamentally about the sorts of questions that researchers and policy-makers ask. This does not mean that we cannot ask victims/survivors about their social ecologies, but it does mean extending the focus beyond the needs and priorities of victims/survivors themselves and asking bigger social-ecological questions about connectivities, what they do and what happens to them.

Pertinent to this connectivity framework is the fact that some discussions about a survivor-centred approach to conflict-related sexual violence invoke the concept of resilience, albeit without defining it.[102] Resilience, however, is not a person-centric concept but rather a process that results from interactions and interconnections between individuals and their wider social ecologies.[103] In this way, these references to resilience provide further conceptual support for repositioning the idea of a survivor-centred approach within a broader social-ecological framework that explicitly draws attention to multiple connectivities, which tell their own story about conflict-related sexual violence.

[102] UN, *Conflict-related sexual violence*, para. 3. See also Reliefweb, *UN emphasizes importance of a survivor-centred approach towards victims of ISIL abuses* (New York, June 2019), https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/un-emphasizes-importance-survivor-centred-approach-towards-victims-isil-abuses.

[103] Michael Ungar and Linda Liebenberg, 'Assessing resilience across cultures using mixed methods: construction of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 5: 2, 2011, pp. 126–49 at p. 127.