UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences
(FHMS)

Practitioner Doctorate in Psychotherapeutic and Counselling Psychology
(PsychD)

Research Dossier

(In)justice and the experience of civilian survivors of armed conflict:
Case studies from Palestine (Gaza), Iraq and Syria

By
Reem Shafiq

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Practitioner Doctorate in Psychotherapeutic and Counselling Psychology

July 2015
STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

No aspect of this portfolio may be reproduced in any form without written permission of the author, with the exception of the librarian of the University of Surrey who is permitted to reproduce this work by photocopy or otherwise and lend copies to those institutions or persons who require them for academic purposes.

© Reem Shafiq 2015

STATEMENT OF ANONYMITY

All names and identifiable information in this portfolio have been changed or omitted in order to maintain confidentiality and preserve the anonymity of clients, research participants, supervisors and work placements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude goes to my academic tutors, research and placement supervisors and lecturers at the University of Surrey and beyond, who have supported me along the way and whose knowledge and experience has inspired and enlightened me.

I am deeply thankful to my clients and my research participants who have touched me deeply, privileged me with their trust, taught me courage and in the process enlightened me to myself.

To my family tribe, who have supported me along each step of this journey, my heart is deeply grateful and full of love. This work is dedicated to each. Above all it is dedicated to my parents, whose unwavering love and faith has always given me wings to fly.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Research Dossier</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review (Year 1): A review of literature on the meanings</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and significance of the concept of justice to the experience of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civilian survivors of mass violence and gross human rights violations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the context of armed conflict.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project Part 1 (Year 2): A qualitative exploration of the</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meaning of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of armed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conflict: Case studies from Palestine (Gaza), Iraq and Syria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project Part 2 (Year 3): A qualitative exploration of how</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civilian survivors of armed conflict construct the meaning of justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and its implications for subjectivity, agency and change: Case studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from Palestine (Gaza), Iraq and Syria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

This Research Dossier comprises works submitted in partial fulfilment of the Practitioner Doctorate in Psychotherapeutic and Counselling Psychology at the University of Surrey. It consists of research work conducted over the course of the three-year training programme, which has contributed, alongside personal, academic and practitioner learning and development, and my life’s experience to date, to shaping my professional identity and stance as a Counselling Psychologist.

In this regard, I aspire towards a pluralistic approach to practice, that addresses the diverse and dynamic subjective needs of clients, informed by a relativist, broadly social constructionist orientation, underpinned by the core humanistic values of the profession (BPS, 2005). This approach does not assume the primacy of any one way of knowing or experiencing, but adopts an open, curious and reflexive stance, valuing the significance of the relational to the human condition, and the need to engage in a holistic way with subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, values and beliefs, embedded in social context, for a meaningful understanding of human distress, health and wellbeing.

The Research Dossier comprises a series of three interconnected pieces of research, a Literature Review and a Research Project in two parts, Research Project Part 1 and Part 2, which use the same primary data analysed from different methodological positions. These focus on the psychological meaning and significance of ‘(in)justice’ to the civilian experience of armed conflict, as qualitative approaches which challenge the dominant epidemiological discourse and individualistic approach to psychosocial support for survivors and their communities, and engage with the wider interdisciplinary and societal contributions that Counselling Psychology can make beyond the confines of the therapy room.

References

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH DOSSIER

The Research Dossier comprises a Literature Review and a Research Project in two parts, Research Project Part 1 and Research Project Part 2. These were designed as a series of three interconnected pieces of research, with the Literature Review and its Reflexivity section, functioning as the basis for the two research reports, which use the same set of primary data analysed from different methodological positions. In terms of focus, although the significance of justice to survivors of human rights atrocities has been codified in international law, in which it is assumed to have more than material significance, psychology literature in this area is limited. Given escalating global tensions, in which (in)justice has been cited as a factor at least in the public sphere, this research series focuses on the psychological meaning and construct of (in)justice and its significance to the experience of civilian survivors of war trauma. The research series was initially informed by my personal and professional experience with individuals and communities on the ground, as well as more recently within clinical practice working with survivors in the UK, for some of whom the lack of justice appears to be a significant maintaining factor.

In addition to highlighting the significance of injustice to human suffering in this context, deconstructed along with justice, to reveal the social and political influences from which meaning is drawn, the research series is aimed at stimulating debate and further enquiry within the profession as an approach which challenges the dominant epidemiological conceptualisation and individualistic approach to suffering in this context, whilst findings support a more holistic and inter-disciplinary psychosocial approach that meets the needs of survivors and their communities. The research series also reflects on the wider societal contributions that Counselling Psychology as a discipline can make in advancing social justice and in engaging, at least through research and in public debate, with the root causes of suffering, beyond the confines of the therapy room.
Literature Review:
A review of literature on the meanings and significance of the concept of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of mass violence and gross human rights violations in the context of armed conflict

Abstract
This paper presents a review of literature exploring, from a psychological perspective, the meaning of justice for survivors of armed conflict and its significance to their experience of war trauma. The review begins by exploring definitions of the concept of justice, and its relevance in the context of war and in psychology. The special context of war and dominant discourse on war trauma are then discussed. Followed by a review of psychology research on the relationship between justice and war trauma for survivors, using diverse case studies. The review concludes with a summary and recommendations for future research.
Introduction

Immediately following the ‘Boston Marathon’ bombings of 15 April, 2013, which killed three people and injured 264, US President Obama vowed, “Yes, we will find you. And yes, you will face justice. We will find you. We will hold you accountable” (as cited in Allen & Sherwell, 2013, para. 23).

In the UK, two decades following the ‘Hillsborough disaster’ of 15 April, 1989 Bishop Jones, Chair of the independent panel enquiry, publicly acknowledge, “For nearly a quarter of a century the families of the 96 and the survivors of Hillsborough have nursed an open wound waiting for answers to unresolved questions. It has been a frustrating and painful experience adding to their grief. In spite of all the investigations they have sensed that their search for truth and justice has been thwarted and that no one has been held accountable” (as cited in Gibson, Conn & Siddique, 2012, para.13).

Almost thirty years prior, Martin Luther King Junior proclaimed on civil repression of Black Americans, “Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to change racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice ring out for all of God's children” (King, 1963, para. 6).

Still earlier, following the atrocities of World War II, Justice Robert Jackson, Chief Counsel for the United States, framed the ‘Nuremberg trials’ as, “fulfilling humanity's aspirations to do justice” (Jackson, 1945, para. 9).

In March 2013, ten years following the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, which saw a million dead, five million displaced people, three million widows, four million orphans and a near failed state, with an externally imposed divisive system of government, endemic corruption, brutality and one of the worst human rights records, the Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) and 300 independent NGOs issued this statement urging, “the United Nations and the international community to take all necessary measures to hold all those responsible for, and participating in, the invasion
and occupation of Iraq accountable. These organizations consider that it is the only way to achieve justice for the Iraqi people” (GICJ, 2013, para. 17).

When it comes to the violation of human rights justice seems to matter, and it matters to people in different contexts, cultures and across time. Some psychologists have even claimed justice as a basic human need (Taylor, 2003). In the context of armed conflict then, in which people and communities experience the most extreme collective violence and gross human rights violations, how relevant is the meaning of justice, and injustice, to their experiences? And what implications does this have for the discipline of psychology, currently dominated by an epidemiological discourse which shapes its understanding and clinical approach?

The current literature review explores, from a psychological perspective, the meaning of justice for survivors of armed conflict and its significance to their experiences of war trauma, defined here not as pathology, but as extreme human experiences involving collective violence and gross human rights violations in the context of war. The review explores (a) the meaning of the concept of justice, its relation to armed conflict, and its place in psychology, (b) the special context of war and the dominant psychological discourse on exposure to war trauma involving mass violence and gross human rights violations, (c) the relationship between the meaning and significance of justice and war trauma, using diverse case studies, followed by (d) a summary of the literature and recommendations for future research.

**Defining Justice**

The concept of justice (and by assumption, injustice) has been found to be universally present across all human civilisations. All known cultures have some fundamental notions of justice, according to anthropologists, although, importantly, what constitutes justice appears to differ between societies (Sluka, 2006). This observation suggests that the meaning of justice may be socially constructed and dependent on historical, social and cultural influences.

That justice is significant to man is an ancient concept, emerging in writings of classical antiquity, in which it is identified as one of the cardinal virtues of man by
Greek and Roman philosophers, including Plato in *The Republic* (380 BC), Aristotle in *Rhetoric* (4 BC) and Cicero in *De Inventione* and *De Officiis* (44 BC), and emerges in early Christian doctrine in the *Book of the Wisdom of Solomon*.

In its contemporary meaning, justice is defined variously as a quality, principle or ideal and practice associated with ‘fairness’, ‘equity’, ‘right action’ and ‘impartiality’ (Merriam-Webster, 2013). Its significance is highlighted by Rawls, whose influential work, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), promotes a universal Western concept of justice as ‘fairness’, with integrated concepts of ‘freedom’ and ‘equity’, arguing that, "most reasonable principles of justice are those everyone would accept and agree to from a fair position" (as cited in *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1999, pp.774-775).

However, despite a sense of its significance, what constitutes justice is the subject of critical debate amongst sociologists, philosophers, theologians and political scientists. Indeed, the notion of a universal construct of justice, for example, in what currently constitutes human rights, is contested as reflecting a Western dominated understanding emerging from the prevailing balances of political interests (e.g. Donnelly, 1999; Morris, 2006; Parekh, 1999; Waters, 1996).

This argument is highlighted by Summerfield with respect to power and political interests in armed conflict: “The world's major arms exporters all sit in the United Nations Security Council. Analysis of the causes of violent conflict thus highlights the values of the Western-led world order, in which geopolitical and business considerations far outweigh issues of human rights and justice for millions of the least protected people on earth” (2000, para. 25).

A case example illustrating this is articulated by von Sponeck, former UN Assistant Secretary General, with respect to allegations against US and British decision-makers of crimes of aggression, war crimes and gross human rights violations against the Iraqi people, in the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, “Due process must be for everyone, Iraqi and non-Iraqi; facing justice is not just for those who lost” (2013, para. 28). Yet, according to the GICJ, “despite UNAMI [United Nations Assistant Mission for Iraq] reports and the pressure from NGOs, until now not one single report by the
OHCHR [UN Office of the High Commission for Human Rights] has been issued concerning the situation in Iraq” (2013, para. 18).

The construction of the concept of justice is further complicated within jurisprudence by theories of justice that distinguish between distributive, procedural, retributive and reparative or restorative justice, all of which may have relevance to the context of the survivor’s experience of war trauma. Distributive justice refers to justice in the allocation of resources and social goods, including power, love, reward, respect etc. (Foa & Foa, 1974). Procedural justice relates to justice in the decision-making process and procedures of law, such as the determination of rights (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Retributive and restorative justice, refer to justice in the investigation, prosecution, prevention and deterrence of wrongdoing and in upholding the rule of law. Restorative justice emphasises the assumed needs of both victim and society, attempting to make victims ‘whole’ in rendering justice while reintegrating perpetrators into society.

Both retributive and restorative justice assume particularly significant roles for victims in redressing gross violations of human rights, the former through legal mechanisms such as International Criminal Tribunals (ICTs) and the latter in the context of transitional justice processes, symbolized by Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs). Transitional justice has taken on particular significance since the 1980s, from its genesis with the ‘Nuremberg trials’, in attempting to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses for victims during the political transformations of societies from violence and repression to social trust, peace and stability (International Centre for Transitional Trust, n.d.).

These notions of justice reflect, at least within political and legal discourse, an acknowledgement of its significance in giving recognition to the suffering of victims of human rights abuses and their rehabilitation through participation in the reparative process (Shelton, 2005), despite lack of reference to psychology. The specific application of constructs of justice to the context of survivors of war trauma is detailed in the next section.
Justice in the context of war: international law and reparation

International law is the body of rules governing relations between States. It is relevant here as it embodies international human rights law and international humanitarian law (or the law of war/armed conflict), both of which apply to the experiences of survivors of mass violence and gross human rights violations in armed conflict. Humanitarian law applies to the conduct of armed conflict, which it seeks to regulate out of humanitarian considerations and the mitigation of human suffering. Human rights law applies in war and peacetime equally and legally guarantees groups and individuals fundamental human rights (International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], 2010).

Human rights were initially set out in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) in 1948, following the atrocities of World War II, which attempts to reaffirm, “faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person” (UDHR, 1948). Human rights are commonly understood as “inherent to the human being”, and are set out as universal, inalienable and indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. Their establishment can be seen as reinforcing the significance of justice to the human condition and to values set out as inherent to man, of human dignity, worth, freedom and equality (violated in war), as highlighted, “in recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family [as] the foundation for freedom, justice and peace in the world” (UDHR, 1948).

Currently, there are sixteen UN conventions setting out human rights obligations to which States are legally bound, covering genocide, racial discrimination, economic social and cultural rights, civic and political rights, war crimes and crimes against humanity, apartheid, discrimination against women, torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, apartheid in sports, rights of the child, rights of migrant workers and families, rights of persons with disabilities, enforced disappearance (UN Treaty Collection (UNTC), n.d.).

The obligation on States under the principle of reparation for victims, their families and dependents who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm from the violation of their rights, is set out in *The International Commission’s Draft Articles on*
the Responsibility of States for International Wrongful Acts (2001). This specifies three main types of redress or remedies for victims, restitution, compensation and satisfaction, taken singly or in combination. Restitution involves measures to restore the victim and their situation to a pre-violation state and entitlement. Compensation entails measures to provide monetary awards for economic loss or suffering resulting from the violation. Satisfaction requires measures to establish the truth and to afford victims and relatives official recognition by the State of its responsibilities in the wrongdoings (Patel, 2011a).

Also for this purpose, emerging from an international response to mass violence and gross human rights violations in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Court was established in 2002, as a permanent independent court with jurisdiction over four core international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. Currently, 153 States are parties or signatories to the statute, including the UK, though the US, Israel and Sudan have withdrawn, while 41 states have no legal obligations, including China and India (UNTC, n.d.).

Further, legislative developments requiring States to prevent, investigate, punish and remedy human rights violations and the victim’s right to reparation have been consolidated recently in the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Remedy and Reparations for victims of gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law (2005). Here, ‘remedy’ applies to the victim’s right to access legal procedures for protection and justice, whilst ‘reparation’ applies to the actions taken to repair and restore the rights of the victim (Patel, 2011a). This historically assumed psychological impact and value of justice to the experiences of violated victims has received little reference from psychology research, as highlighted in the following section, which details the treatment of the concept of justice in psychology.

Psychology of justice
Surprisingly, and given the historical significance and developments of justice as a concept in other fields, research on the subject of justice in psychology emerged only some 60 years ago. Aspects of justice have been studied variously within different branches of psychology, including industrial and organisational psychology (e.g.
justice in the workplace), social psychology (e.g. justice as motivation or basic need), forensic and criminal psychology (e.g. rehabilitation and punishment), development psychology (e.g. as a feature in moral development), community psychology (e.g. social justice and inequality). However, the concept of justice per se has received little focus in mainstream psychology (Patel, 2011a; Taylor, 2003).

In a reappraisal of the concept, Taylor (2006) presents justice as a fundamental factor in understanding individual and group behaviour. Taylor (2003) argues for a reappraisal of justice as a basic human psychological need within Maslow’s *Theory of Human Motivation* (1943). His reappraisal, significantly, follows a visit to Fiji in 2002, which coincided with a violent attempted coup, in which he observed that survivors’ experiences of shock, horror, disbelief and disillusionment, which they attributed to the shattering of community membership and expectations, fell outside the dominant clinical framework of trauma (discussed below).

Maslow indeed highlights the significance of justice as a precondition for the satisfaction of basic needs, along with ‘freedoms’, ‘fairness’, ‘honesty’, ‘orderliness’, “Danger to these is reacted to almost as if it were a direct danger to the basic needs themselves…with a threat or emergency response…These conditions are defended because without them the basic satisfactions are quite impossible, or at least, very severely endangered” (p.384).

However, Taylor argues that justice subsumes many of these preconditions. The current ‘Arab Spring’ civilian revolutions might be taken as a case example, in which demands for justice and human dignity subsume individual fears of social upheaval and threat to life. Taylor further highlights studies that reflect the psychological impact of injustice. Among them, Slone, Kaminer and Durrheim (2000) highlight the contribution of political violence and social injustice to psychological distress in studies involving 540 South African adolescents following Apartheid.

Although Taylor’s perspective is debated in a review by Evans and Yamaguchi (2009), who present justice not as a basic need but more as a human desire, interestingly, justice is associated with basic needs in a recent social cognitive
neuroscience study on ‘fairness’ by Tabibnia, Satpute and Leiberman (2008). This involves a laboratory experiment with university students utilising the ‘ultimatum game’, in which different amounts of money in different shares are distributed by participant A with participant B, who is asked to measure her levels of happiness and disgust. Results indicate that the sense of being treated fairly activates brain circuitry associated with reward, whilst being treated unfairly activates the region in the brain associated with negative emotions such as moral disgust or insult. The study concludes that fairness appears to satisfy basic human needs, and that when faced with a conflict, fairness appears to be the brain’s ‘default’ position. Although such findings reinforce the suggestion that the impact of a sense of justice (and its converse) is psychologically significant, given the specific cultural contexts of the simple exchange of money within this experimental setting, findings may be limited in relation to more complex human experiences.

Similarly, distributive justice forms the focus of early psychology research on justice from 1960s, dominated by the model of equity theory, which conceived of justice in terms of allocations and assumed a desire to maximize self-interest (Skitka & Crosby, 2003). A shift to procedural justice took place in the late 1970s, with studies highlighting the significance for people of how, as well as what, justice decisions were made (Deutsch, 1979; Leventhal, Karuza & Fry, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1974), and that a sense of fairness in the process influences judgments on adverse decisions (Tyler & Smith, 1998). Researchers also identified the significance of fair procedure on group members’ sense of social worth, value and respect, that is, to social identity needs, whilst later developments highlight the contingent nature of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989; Tyler & Lind, 1992).

More recently, this link between justice and identity has been developed further and may prove particularly salient to the context of armed conflict, which involves a purposeful annihilation of the other. Skitka (2003) proposes the Accessible Identity Model (AIM) of justice reasoning, which predicts that justice and fairness become more significant for people when identity concerns become salient, particularly in situations that threaten rather than support the self-concept. The model also proposes that judgments of fairness depend on which aspect of identity, such as, social,
material, personal or moral, dominates a person’s self-concept, as different justice values, norms and expectations are believed to be linked in the memory to different aspects of identity and more cognitively accessible within the context, priming different identity-relevant goals or values.

Clayton and Opotow (2003), however, are critical of this reductive universalist model. They argue that self-identity is complex and fluid, changing in meaning and significance in response to changing social contexts and involves not only personal but also social identities derived from group membership (Tajfel & Turner 1986). This gives a sense of belonging based on shared values, motivations or experiences, which in turn influence the sense of self and social judgment. Hence, both personal and social identities evoke assessments of self-value, status and power. This may be particularly salient in the war context in which purposive collective violence and mass violations suggest a complex personal and social impact. Indeed, Clayton and Opotow emphasise that the multiple layers of identity need to be taken into account to understand when, why and how strongly identity matters and conclude that identity intersects with justice in fundamental ways. Both Skitka and Clayton and Opotow stress the need for research on justice and identity to help understand the significance of justice in people’s responses to their life events.

Tyler and Blader (2000) further attempt to integrate procedural justice research into a revised model, the Group Engagement Model (GEM), which focuses on the role of justice as fair treatment in validating social identity. They highlight the notion of fairness as a primary dimension that people use to evaluate the processes, treatment and outcomes they receive in their group, which in turn impacts on their thoughts, feelings and behavior, and is reflected in their judgments on procedural justice. This may be particularly relevant to perceptions of transitional justice processes.

Developments in psychology research on retributive justice, particularly salient in this context, has also gained momentum over the last decade. Darely and Pittman (2003) integrate a review of retributive justice into a model which proposes that social reactions to harm, specifically moral outrage, related variously to emotions of contempt, anger or disgust (Rozin, Lowery, Imada & Haidt, 1999), is dependent on
people’s attributions as to why harm was inflicted (accident, negligence or intentional). This in turn shapes perceptions of what is needed for justice to be done. Low levels of moral outrage predict a lower perceived need for punishment than moderate levels, which predict demand for compensatory reactions, whilst high levels predict demands for compensation and retribution. Research suggests that intentional harm leads to higher levels of moral outrage and triggers the motive to assign punishment first and secondarily compensation. A case in point can be illustrated by the political use of the term ‘collateral damage’ in modern warfare to imply accidental death of civilians in an attempt to refute culpability.

Moral outrage in response to injustice is a particularly salient concept in this context and may have resonance to the collective and personal experiences of war trauma. Goodenough (1997) defines moral outrage as a response to infringements or transgressions against the very social and symbolic world in which humans live, and it is seen as playing an essential role in the maintenance of social groups as well as conflicts between them. Moral outrage rooted in anger, it is suggested, is associated with violations of personal autonomy, whilst disgust is triggered when people behave without, or attempt to strip others of, dignity (Rozin et al., 1999).

Beyond retribution, influenced by developments in other fields such as restorative justice in law, social science, management and philosophy, the last decade has also seen new focus on justice in relation to forgiveness and related concepts of repentance, mercy, reconciliation, which may also prove significant in the current context. A review of literature by Exline, Worthington, Hill and McCullough (2003), highlights the focus of studies on positive individual benefits to mental and physical health of forgiveness (e.g. Coyle & Enright, 1997; Freedman & Enright, 1996; Witvliet, Ludwig & van der Laan, 2001), and associations between adjustment and abilities to forgive (e.g. Berry, Worthington, Parrott, O’Connor & Wade, 2001; Tangney, Boone, Dearing & Reinsmith, 2002). Fewer studies highlight the negative personal costs of forgiveness, such as regret, in situations of lingering resentment, costs to self-interest, low religiosity or high narcissistic entitlement (e.g. Exline, Ciarocco & Baumeister, 2001). The review also suggests the importance of forgiveness in relation to collective harm, which may have particular salience in this
context and highlights the need for further research on the relationship between justice and forgiveness, including subjective meaning, motivations and influences.

As highlighted, the need for further psychology research on the meaning and significance of justice is a recurrent theme, whilst rarely does psychology research on justice directly relate to the special context of war, which is detailed in the following section.

**Context of War and War Trauma**

There is not a period in human history that has not been marked by war, although the 20th century had the greatest number of systematic murder of human beings by human beings of any other century (Dutton, Boyanowski & Bond, 2005). War can be defined as mass social violence that is politically motivated (Dutton et al, 2005). For the purpose of this review, war includes exposure to societal or intrastate conflict (between groups within a nation), interstate conflict (between nations), or internationalized conflicts (intrastate with foreign involvement) (*Uppsala Conflict Data Program*, n.d.). There are currently over 32 extreme (over 1000 deaths/year) to low intensity (under 20 deaths/year) ongoing conflicts worldwide today (Centre for Systemic Peace, 2013). Indeed, 2011 has seen a rising trend to four new wars a year and an increase to 16% of countries worldwide experiencing some form of major political violence (Centre for Systemic Peace, 2013). Of these, poorer countries account for a disproportionate share, as do Muslim majority countries, which have experienced a divergent increase in armed conflict in the last decade with the ‘Arab Spring’ and ‘War on Terror’ (Centre for Systemic Peace, 2013).

The human consequence of this in the last century was an estimated 231 million people dead (Leitenberg, 2003), and by the end of 2008, an estimated 40 million refugees and internally displaced people (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2009). Further, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that some 20% of the world’s population will be affected by serious mental health problems or difficulties in functioning as a result of exposure to war (WHO, 2011). Exposure to war involves the direct experience or witnessing of systematic violence, genocide (mass killing intended to destroy national, ethnical, racial or religious
group/s of people), massacre, execution, assassination, torture, rape, maiming, kidnapping, disappearance, internment, deportation, displacement and the destruction or deprivation of the means to sustain life (food, water, shelter, subsistence). In addition, the impact of such violence and human rights violations, involves the very break down of social structures, ties, roles, rituals and ways of life, indeed upheavals in human relationships and human activities, tantamount to the destruction of culture itself (Ehrenreich, 2003; Niaz, 2011).

**War trauma in dominant discourse**

Despite this, research on the psychological impact of exposure to armed conflict and therapeutic support for affected populations is dominated by an epidemiological concept of ‘trauma’ as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) adopted by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in 1980 (DSM-III) and the World Health Organisation in 1993 (ICD-10). Literature searches using the subject terms ‘trauma’ and ‘war’ yield 5,006 and 3,298 studies respectively on PTSD, by far the largest category (see Appendix 2. Search Strategy).

PTSD is a clinical syndrome, which focuses on individual epidemiology, diagnosed through symptoms and criterion profiles. According to the revised framework for PTSD (DSM-V, APA, 2013) a traumatic event (stressor) constitutes exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violation. Additionally, responses in four clusters of symptoms must be present, re-experiencing, avoidance, negative cognitions and mood, and arousal. Symptoms must be present for a minimum of 30 days, and involve clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

There is no doubt that having a diagnostic framework has facilitated valuable research in war contexts which has begun to document, and thereby acknowledge, the psychological impact of armed conflict on the civilian population, serving a valuable purpose in validating, raising awareness and providing a basis for intervention where needed. Using this framework, for example, the WHO has been able to draw attention to the deleterious mental health impact of armed conflict worldwide (2011).
However, this universalist epidemiologic framework has proven controversial. Whilst its contemporary roots as a psychiatric diagnosis are associated with the specific experiences of combat exposure (Scott, 1990), the framework for PTSD has been broadened to apply to an incompatible range of human experiences. This conflates emotional responses to potential stressors, such as car accidents, with complex and multiple trauma involving, in the context of war, the experiences of victims of extreme, repeated, prolonged or intergenerational political violence and human rights violations involving the systematic dehumanising and terrorising of entire groups of populations (Ehrenreich, 2003; Niaz, 2011; Okasha, 2011).

This decontextualising of experience of violated populations is seen as highly problematic and as reflecting a failure to take into account the subjective experience, type of trauma, specific situation, significance of cultural interpretation and resilience and defence mechanisms. This translates into a failure to describe all that is relevant and what is most relevant in the subjective experience, including the greater range of short-term responses or wider range of potential long-term conditions. These include anxiety, somatoform, psychotic adjustment, mood disorders, loss and grief reactions, substance abuse (Almqvist & Broberg, 1999; Campbell, 2007; Luster, Qin, Bates, Johnson, & Rana, 2008; Momartin, Silove, Manicavasagar, & Steel, 2004; Rousseau, Mekki-berrada, & Moreau, 2001). They also include disruptions in value and personality systems, including alterations in self-perception, relationships with others and systems of meaning, such as in cultural, political and religious beliefs, affecting shame, guilt, trust (Elsass, 1998; Herman, 1997; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Quiroga & Jaranson, 2005; Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, 1998). These experiences suggest the centrality of therapeutic goals that attempt to re-establish connection with others, re-empower the self and rebuild a sense of identity, belonging, purpose and meaning at the personal and community levels (Baron, Jensen & De Jong, 2001; Ehrenreich, 2003; El-Shazly, 2011; Herman, 1992; McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Veal, 2010).

Further, there is also concern that such a reductionist approach mistakenly assumes that the replication of the individual experience captures the collective and intergenerational traumatization of violations of human rights aimed at the systematic
annihilation or subjugation of groups of people in the context of armed conflict (Ehrenreich, 2003; El-Shazly, 2011; Niaz, 2011).

This relates also to the risk of not recognizing, as a result, what is significant in resilience beyond individual differences of genetic makeup, personality and coping mechanisms. Research has shown consistently the value of cultural practices, ideological and religious beliefs, philosophical and socio-moral considerations and social capital that have protected highly exposed communities (Ehrenreich, 2003; Harvey, 2007; Murthy & Lakshminarayana, 2006).

These limitations, which reflect a narrow conceptualisation of war trauma, have serious implications for appropriate, effective and coherent psychosocial interventions and treatment strategies for survivors and populations (El-Shazly, 2011; Niaz, 2011). Indeed, a recent comprehensive review of evidence-based psychological interventions from 1980 to 2010 recommends that more research is needed to determine what kind of interventions are best for survivors of torture and trauma (McFarlane & Kaplan, 2012).

In addition, the epidemiologic approach to war trauma is itself a focus of concern. Taken from a social constructionist perspective, this contemporary Western approach conflates what were regarded previously as normal human reactions to extreme situations, in many instances with pathology (Young, 1995). This has the impact of conveniently locating human distress to the individual, private and clinical arenas, and has particular poignancy in the context of mass violence and gross human rights violations, which are rooted in political, social, economic, cultural and religious problems, and where the pathologisation of human experience serves in effect to depoliticise human suffering (Patel, 2003, 2011b; Summerfield, 2001).

This throws into sharp perspective the role of contemporary mainstream Western psychology and its relationship with power and control for, as articulated by Foucault, “There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (1975, p.27).
A different perspective is presented by El-Shazly (2011), who describes human suffering in the specific context of human rights violations as involving intense negative feelings of bitterness and anger relating to injustice and loss of dignity, feelings of ‘being a lesser person’, and hostility towards society or those perceived to have colluded with the aggressor. At the social level, it is reflected in the growth of violence as a means of settling disputes, the development of extremism and xenophobia in search of new affiliations and group acceptance following detachment and social withdrawal, a disillusionment with ethics and values, community paranoia and blame, a preoccupation with retribution and a loss of engagement in positive human causes. All of these can be seen in Iraq today.

This suggests that, beyond the narrow epidemiologic framework of PTSD, rectifying the root causes of trauma for violated victims then becomes significant for achieving resolution. The significance of justice and reparation would suggest themselves to be core to the psychological process of resolution for victims of mass violence and gross human rights violations of war (El-Shazly, 2011; Patel, 2011b, 2007).

**Psychology of Justice and War Trauma**

Despite the historical significance of justice in other spheres, including developments in jurisprudence recognising the importance of justice as redress and reparation for victims and communities exposed to violence and human rights violations, and developments of aspects of justice in psychology, literature on the psychological meaning of justice to survivors of war trauma is relatively scant. A review of literature in this area (see Appendix 2. Search Strategy) reflects quantitative evidence-based studies using the PTSD framework, qualitative research which focuses on the subjective experiences particularly of categories of survivors such as torture victims, but by far the largest category are studies which have emerged in response to the proliferation of transitional justice processes, focusing on efficacy rather than on developing a psychological understanding of the meaning and significance of justice to the trauma experience and how this might shape clinical, political, legislative and social responses. The following section discusses these approaches, using case studies from diverse contexts.
Highlighting the lack of research and assumptions made in other spheres without reference to psychology research, Başoğlu, Livanou and Vranesić et al. (2005) examine how beliefs about justice and appraisal of redress for trauma relate to the mental health and cognitive effects of war trauma amongst survivors of the Bosnian civil war (1992-1995). Taking place between warring ethnic factions following the break up of the former Yugoslavia, this war lead to the deaths of up to 150,000 people, mostly Muslims (Dervisbegovic, 2004). The study involves 1,358 ethnically diverse participants with at least one ‘war based stressor’, recruited through cross-sectional survey sampling and two control groups who had no ‘direct’ experience of trauma. Utilising the legal definition for ‘impunity’ and the DSM diagnostic tool for PTSD, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used for data collection.

Study results using factor analysis, suggest higher rates of PTSD amongst survivors, and that a sense of injustice is prevalent, with survivors having stronger emotional responses to perceived impunity of those they held responsible, highlighting the significance of a sense of injustice to their experience, along with dissatisfaction with various forms of legislative redress. The reasons cited for this sense of injustice highlight its complexity beyond the legislative processes adopted and include losses suffered during the war, lack of recognition for past suffering, perceived impunity for wrongdoers, current hardships and perceived worsening of conditions, disillusionment with the war cause, outcomes and political leaders and discontent with political processes blamed for current problems. Survivors’ responses, in line with earlier studies, include anger, rage, fear, sense of injustice, desire for revenge, helplessness, loss of control and meaning in life, demoralization, pessimism and altered beliefs, including faith in people and in a just world, as well as an increase in faith suggestive of a coping mechanism. However, results suggest that only fear and loss of control associated with perceived threat from those held to be responsible are most strongly associated with PTSD and depression, rather than injustice as impunity.

Whilst the study highlights the significance of justice and injustice to the experience of survivors and that injustice is partially associated with PTSD, its findings are limited and misleading. The study’s reductive epidemiologic approach to survivor
experience (specifically as PTSD) decontextualizes and depoliticises the survivor experience, as highlighted above, missing the fundamental collective aspect of ‘ethnic cleansing’ and its impact on personal and social self-identity, noted earlier. It further conflates complex subjective experiences of trauma into representational categories compounded together of combat troops, torture victims, refugees and displaced peoples. It assumes a viable distinction for control and experimental groups between direct and indirect experience, despite a shared social identity and loss and grief. It delimits perceptions of justice to redress and judgments on transitional processes and outcomes, and is limited in offering more meaningful insights on justice and its relation to survivors’ experience in the fractured communities of the former Yugoslavia.

A contrary study, though with a similar positivist epistemology, is carried out by Sonis, Gibson, de Jong, Field, Hean and Komproe (2009), focusing on the experiences of Cambodians during the Khmer Rouge era (1975 to 1979), which involved genocide, political assassinations, torture, mass starvation and disease, following a Communist ideological programme of social engineering which resulted in up to 2.2 million deaths (Sharp, 2005). The study similarly follows legislative hearings set up to investigate human rights violations of the regime by the joint UN-Cambodian Tribunal in 2009, and attempts to assess the correlation of PTSD and mental health with perceived justice, desire for revenge, and knowledge and attitudes to the trial. Diagnostic assessment for PTSD along with interviews were conducted with 1,017 Cambodians, 813 of whom experienced life under the regime and 204 who were too young. Results highlight 11.2% prevalence of probable PTSD, significantly associated with mental disability. Of those surveyed, 82% were hopeful that the trials would promote justice, highlighting the significance of justice for them, although those who experienced the regime’s atrocities were concerned about bringing back painful memories. Higher levels of desire for revenge and low levels of perceived justice were associated with a greater likelihood of probable PTSD. Whilst highlighting the significance of justice to Cambodians’ experience of trauma as seen through the PTSD framework, the correlation has limited value in shedding light on a more developed understanding of the psychological meaning and significance of justice to Cambodian survivors.
Within a similar transitional justice context and positivist epidemiologic perspective, Pham, Weinstein and Longman (2004) investigate the impact of war trauma on shaping attitudes and abilities to engage with justice and reconciliation in Rwanda, following mass ethnic genocide over 100 days in 1994 which led to the deaths of up to 20% of the population, 4 million displaced people and destruction of much of the country’s infrastructure. A total of 2091 adults exposed to trauma in the form of displacement, loss of a family member or destruction of property, were recruited using random survey. Outcome measures for PTSD and attitudes towards legislative processes were measured, and reconciliation involving belief in community, nonviolence, social justice and interdependence. Results suggest that 24.8% met symptom criteria for PTSD. Whilst those with multiple trauma events were more likely to have positive attitudes towards the ICT rather than national or local trials, and an openness to reconciliation through belief in nonviolence, community and interdependence. Those who met PTSD symptom criteria were also less likely to support national and local initiatives nor have positive attitudes towards belief in community and interdependence with other ethnic groups. The study concludes that attitudes towards justice and reconciliation are associated with trauma exposure, PTSD symptoms, and other factors including education, ethnicity, safety, poverty, which gives some indication of the complexity of survivors’ experiences as embedded in contextual political, cultural and socioeconomic dimensions. The study, however, as with the above studies, focuses on the dynamics of judicial responses, decontextualises and conflates trauma experiences, fails to reflect community and intergenerational aspects and is limited in furthering a deeper psychological understanding of the meaning and relationship of justice to survivors’ experiences.

A different approach by Rey and Owens (1998) explores the experiences of South Africans who participated in the TRC post-apartheid, which attempted, through the participatory mechanism of public testimony, to provide victims of human rights abuses with the opportunity to tell their stories and through this process come to terms with the pain and trauma of the past. At the same time, this political mechanism aimed, through ‘truth’, ‘healing’ and ‘reconciliation’, to restore social moral order, develop a culture of human rights and respect for the rule of law and prevent a
repetition of the past.

This assumed therapeutic role of public testimony is described in the study as akin to that of therapy (despite its taking place in a public and judicial setting) and is assumed to be cathartic by channelling verbal and emotional expression, whilst the distinctive elements of public witnessing and setting down testimony are assumed to provide recognition of the victim’s suffering. Further, drawing on Middleton and Edwards’ (1990) work on collective memory, the study highlights the socio-political element of the process, as addressing the collective-social trauma in the reconstruction of private-individual trauma and public historical knowledge of the past through the process of memory, which in turn becomes socially and collectively reconstructed and forms the basis of what future generations will remember. In this way, the process is located for the authors, within a social constructionist perspective, in which individual testimonies have their roots in social relations and ongoing exchange, mediated through language, and in the process reconstruct the past, influencing individual experience, whilst emerging as common understandings of the past, and collectively constituting the future.

Adopting a social constructionist epistemology, the study uses thematic analysis of survivors’ testimonies of witnessing or directly experiencing shootings, massacres and torture, along with unconstructed interviews with TRC members and human rights workers, to uncovering survivors’ meanings of healing and the processes involved. Findings suggest that the articulation of justice through the TRC mechanism had a significant therapeutic value for survivors who participated in the process, with particular significance given to the storytelling aspect. Reference to collective suffering was highlighted by TRC members rather than survivors. The need for privacy amid the public nature of the process emerged as a cross cutting theme, particularly for female survivors, suggesting tensions between the private, social and political dimensions, as a recurring theme in transitional justice research. Reparation as symbolic of recognition of suffering was highlighted as significant to healing, although the form it should take was subjective. Findings also reflected an unintended focus on the physical rather than psychological aspects of survivors’ experiences, and the limitations of language in the expression of emotion, which suggests a limit to the
cathartic experience of such processes. The idea of psychological support was also seen to be problematic, because of its focus on pathology rather than a holistic approach to healing in line with cultural preferences, a point which resonates with critical discourse on the Western epidemiologic approach to war trauma experiences. The study also concludes with a cautionary note on the limitations of the TRC approach to meet the diverse needs and expectations of justice for all survivors. Whilst some relevance can be drawn from these findings, including the epistemological value of a social constructionist perspective in facilitating a more in-depth exploration of the complexity of subjective experience, the study’s limitations lie in its legislative focus and use of public testimony for analysis, which tightly frames and influences the subjective experience.

Similarly, beyond the PTSD model, in a review of studies on the experiences of survivors of torture, Silove (1999) proposes a model which suggests that torture and related abuses may challenge five core intervening psychosocial adaptive systems which support the human functions of safety, attachment, justice, identity-role, and existential-meaning. Silove further argues for a clearer delineation of these, including justice, as a means of providing further insight, beyond the epidemiologic framework, into the subjective experience of survivors and therapeutic approaches to trauma treatment.

A review by Patel (2011a) also provides valuable insight into the diversity of subjective perspectives on justice of torture survivors, although focusing on legislative experiences. Patel additionally highlights the shortcomings of the two broad approaches of working with torture survivors, involving trauma-focused work aimed at alleviating symptoms and improving mental health functioning for individuals, and a human rights approach. The latter incorporates trauma-focused work to alleviate suffering and restore health or the management of health and emotional impact of torture, but shares aims akin to reparation in international human rights law, involving addressing the wider effects of torture in its political, social and cultural context, acknowledging and condemning human rights violations by validating personal dignity and challenging injustice and impunity, and involvement in the political prevention of torture and promotion of the human rights of torture survivors.
Both approaches are criticised for depoliticizing or re-moralising respectively the survivor’s experience, and for not making explicit the role of health and rehabilitation services in facilitating justice and reparation, out of neglect of survivor perspectives of the meaning and significance of justice to their experiences. This Patel refers to as a ‘blind spot’ in both international law and health care provision for survivors of gross human rights violations, which serves to impede reparation and challenges to impunity. Importantly, Patel calls for an explicit recognition of the role of health and rehabilitation services in facilitating justice and rehabilitation of survivors of human rights atrocities and a more interdisciplinary approach to redress the current gaps and shortcomings.

As highlighted, whilst conventional psychotherapeutic interventions to support war trauma experience is viewed by survivors and critics alike as narrow, irrelevant or reflecting a particular agenda, current psychology research on justice and trauma in the context of war is relatively scant and tied to particular political or legislative processes of transitional justice and international human rights law, or takes a narrow positivist epidemiological perspective, without regard to the survivor’s subjective and collective experience of mass violence and gross human rights abuses, rooted in the contextual dimensions of armed conflict.

What philosophers, dominant legislative discourse or psychologists define as justice remains, therefore, largely unexamined for its subjective meanings and worth to survivors of mass violence and gross human rights violations in the context of armed conflict. These gaps have implications for psychology and its clinical application, for healthcare provision and international law, and for the political processes of transition to peace and stability in post-conflict societies. These gaps suggest further research, from a psychological perspective, on the subjective meanings and significance of justice to civilian survivors of mass violence and gross human rights violations in the context of armed conflict, taking into account the relational and contextual aspect of human experience and the dimensions of power and culture in which these experiences are rooted.
Conclusion

Justice is clearly significant, at least in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. It has both universal and contingent aspects and has proven a complex and nebulous concept, and not without the influences of power and culture on present day constructs of justice.

Justice has historically been assumed to be significant in relation to the suffering of harm, and has more recently been conceptualized as the right to reparation and redress for victims who have suffered harm from the violation of their human rights, including in the context of armed violence, as an obligation in international law, and in which justice is assumed to have significance and therapeutic value, both at the personal level and for communities in the political transition to peace and stability.

Whilst aspects of justice have more recently become the focus of psychology research, its significance to the human condition has not been the focus of mainstream psychology discourse. Recent models of justice, particularly those relating to need or motivation, moral outrage, personal and social identity, and adaptive systems, have been highlighted as potentially significant to the exploration of the meanings of justice and its significance in the war trauma experience of survivors.

However, an understanding of the psychological experiences of civilians following mass violence and gross human rights atrocities in the context of armed conflict has been dominated by a reductive Western epidemiological approach. This has proven controversial, although as a diagnostic tool it has brought to the forefront the suffering of millions of civilians exposed to war, beyond death tolls, and helped to assess immediate psychosocial needs. However, it has also served to simplify, decontextualize and depoliticise experiences deeply rooted in the social, cultural and the political, with implications for rehabilitation and resolution for individuals and communities, and for the role of psychology itself in society.

Similarly, forays into research on justice and war trauma have been narrowly tied to political transitional processes and dominated by a positivist reductive epistemology.
based on epidemiologic presentation. The subjective meanings and significance of justice and its converse to the survivor’s experience of war trauma has received little focus, highlighting recurring questions on the role of psychology in this context and its relationship with power, and inviting calls for a more inter-disciplinary approach.

Given these limitations, a new approach to understanding war trauma is called for, which takes into account the significance of the relational in the human condition and the influences of power and culture to the impact and meanings that individuals and communities give to their experiences, beginning with perhaps one of the most significant and oft clamoured demands in times of violation of human rights – justice - and the implications this has for the role and responsibility of psychology and the individual therapist. As highlighted by Summerfield:

“History has shown that social reform is the best medicine; for victims of war and atrocity this means public recognition and justice. Health and illness have social and political roots: post-traumatic reactions are not just a private problem, with the onus on the individual to recover, but an indictment of the sociopolitical forces that produced them. Some patients will need to know how health professionals stand politically before they can trust them. It seems appropriate to go beyond the “binding of wounds” and the tradition for mental health work to be morally and politically neutral and to promote the wider rights of those seeking help or treatment” (2000, para. 24).
References


cameron-apologises


Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence from domestic abuse to political terror.* New York: Basic Books.


Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Research. (2012). *UCDP Conflict Encyclopaedia.* Retrieved from:


Appendix 1. Reflexivity

This section presents a personal and epistemological reflection on the use of self in the current research, by attempting to highlight those influences and interests which have led to the choice of topic and which drive the researcher’s commitment to it, the framework within which the current study is carried out and which may have shaped the process of selection and interpretation of literature, and in turn, the impact of carrying out the current research.

As a British Arab, I have had both private experience and have been exposed in a former professional capacity as an international manager working in the development field, to the experiences of people living under ruthless political repression, occupation, invasion, armed conflict and revolution. The Arab and Muslim world with which I identify, has had more than its share of violence and human rights atrocities, imposed both from within and without its borders. I have worked with colleagues and have friends and family members, who have been exposed to these extreme human experiences, more recently during the ‘Arab Spring’ in Syria, Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Tunisia; on an on-going basis in occupied Palestinian; and in Iraq, both during the sanctions of 1990 to 2003, and the recent US-led conflicts of 1990 and 2003, and post-conflict chaos, violence and repression.

My own family’s migration from Iraq to the UK in 1970 was due to political repression during Saddam Hussein’s ascendancy to power within the Ba’ath Party. During the Iran-Iraq war of 1980 to 1988, members of my extended family experienced hardships and were killed or reported missing. During the thirteen year period of near-total internationally-imposed sanctions on Iraq, following the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, during which estimates of up to half a million children and vulnerable adults died from malnutrition, disease and lack of medicine, my own extended family and their neighbourhoods, like millions of Iraqis, were reduced to poverty and surviving on hand-outs from families and friends abroad. As a result of the latest US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, like most families, my extended family experienced the daily realities of war and the chaos that has followed, including fear and vulnerability, violence in their homes and neighbourhoods,
attempted kidnapping, sectarian killing, neighbourhood distrust and the breakdown of social relations, displacement and refugee status.

My own experience of these happenings was having to bear witness to the human suffering of colleagues, families and friends and of those countless unknowns, from a distance, through personal narratives and or the graphic representations of mass media and internet sources, which are now capable of bringing instantaneous accounts, often unedited, into the here and now, and which contrast sharply with my own reality and context in the UK, and mainstream Western consciousness and perspectives. This witness experience brings with it its own peculiar condition, often of fear, anger, guilt, a sense of hopelessness and helplessness, but also in my case a motivation to understand further and a drive to take action in some capacity.

The witness experience has given me insight into the subjective experience of the individual, as well as the community experience of conflict and related trauma. In addition, as a result, I chose to pursue academic enquiry into the fields of conflict and development, which has also given me a grounding in the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of violent conflict between peoples and the conditions required for post-conflict transition and development. I have also carried out postgraduate research using Interpretative Phenomenological Interpretation (IPA) into the geographically distant subjective witness experience of war trauma as part of the requirements for the MSc in Psychology, which highlighted the significance of the concept of justice in the witness experience.

The current research series originated from and is an extension of these influences, and represents a professional enquiry, motivated by personal involvement, into the subjective experience of survivors of war trauma, particularly as this relates to the issue of justice, undertaken from an ontological perspective which is grounded in and recognises the relational and social context of war trauma and its impact on the individual level but also at the collective level, and the significance of these for healing and the transition to peace and stability.
Conscious of the personal interest and resonance the topic has for me, in approaching the current literature review, I carried out a wide-ranging literature search using a range of psychology databases and specialist searches, and selected all related studies from across the range of research methodologies on the topics of justice and war trauma and used additional terms which emerged during the search process (see Appendix 2.). During the analysis phase, I made efforts to give weight to both supporting and counter supporting research perspectives and findings, and to highlight areas where clarity and further research would be valuable.

I have found the experience of conducting this literature review both challenging and rewarding. Challenging because of the emotions which the topic and case studies generated, particularly the subjective accounts of human suffering, out of a sense of human empathy but also as resonating experiences. Rewarding in terms of the cathartic and empowering nature of the experience and which, through gaining understanding and sharing in the experiences of others, has shed light on my own experience in the process.
Appendix 2. Search Strategy

Key:
Name/s of database and search date
Search term/s, (category) = results, possible relevance

Cochrane Library (5 April 2013)
1. justice and trauma (in all text) = 25, none selected
2. justice (in all text) = 106, none selected
3. reparative justice (in all text) = 1, none selected
4. restorative justice (in all text) = 2 none selected
5. psychology of justice (in title, abstract, keywords) = 23, none selected
6. justice and trauma (in title, abstract, keywords) = 2, none selected
7. PTSD (in title, abstract, keywords) = 18, 3 selected
8. torture (in title, abstract, keywords) = 1, none selected
9. refugee (in title, abstract, keywords) = 0
10. asylum (in title, abstract, keywords) = 1, none selected

Psychology Cross Search (PsychInfo, PsychArticles, PsychBooks, Medline, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection via EBSCO) (12 April, 2013)
1. justice and trauma = 42, 6 selected
2. justice and trauma (subject war) = 563, 5 selected
3. transitional justice = 105 results, 20 selected
4. trauma = 5,006 PTSD
5. war = 3,298 PTSD
6. justice and trauma (in title) = 27 (in subject terms) = 117 (in abstract) = 555 (in all text) =136
7. trauma (subject war) = 687, 203 selected
8. war trauma (in abstract) = 1187, (subject ‘psychosocial factors’) = 10
9. war trauma (in abstract) (classification ‘social processes and social issues’) = 92
10. justice (subject ‘social justice, justice, human rights) = 516
11. transitional justice (in abstract) = 109
**Criminal Justice Abstract** (19 April, 2013)
1. justice and war trauma (in abstract and title) = 3
2. justice and war trauma (in all text) = 5
3. war trauma (in all text) = 48
4. war trauma* (in all text) = 78

**PILOTS: Published International Literature On Traumatic Stress** (26 April, 2013)
1. justice and trauma* (abstract) = 186, 15 selected
2. therapeutic jurisprudence and war (anywhere) = 11, 8 selected
3. therapeutic jurisprudence (anywhere) = 73
4. justice and war trauma (in abstract) = 32 selected
Research Project Part 1:
A qualitative exploration of the meaning of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of armed conflict: Case studies from Palestine (Gaza), Iraq and Syria

Abstract
The significance of justice to the suffering of victims of war and human rights abuses is well established in international law. However, what constitutes justice is subject to critical debate, and has received little attention from within mainstream psychology, including the meaning and significance of justice for civilian survivors’ experiences of war trauma, currently dominated by an epidemiological conceptualisation, which is largely tied to transitional justice systems.

The current study provides a qualitative exploration of the meaning and significance of justice from a psychological perspective for civilian survivors’ experiences of war trauma, with implications for psychosocial support for individuals and for their communities in the transition to peace and stability. A qualitative approach using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was adopted. Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with civilians survivors from three significant on-going conflicts, Iraq, Syria and Israel/Palestine (Gaza).

Three key themes emerged from the analysis, Dimensions of Conflict Experience, Dimensions of Justice in Conflict, Meaning-Making and Resolution. Research highlighted the centrality of (in)justice to the experience of war trauma, embedded in social context, and that to reduce war trauma experience to private pathology with the onus on the individual for recovery, may significantly limit our understanding of the subjective experience, risking not recognizing all or what is most significant, including to resilience and recovery, with serious implications for effective and appropriate psychosocial interventions for individuals and communities. Limitations of the study are discussed alongside recommendations for future research.
Introduction

“My father was killed, may God deliver justice! They have no humanity. They think we are worth nothing. They are killers, and one day I will avenge my father,” Abdul Rahman Al-Batsh, 12 years old, on learning that his father was among the 18 members of his family killed by an Israeli air strike on his home in Gaza (Vincent, 2014).

“Our message to anyone who harms our people is simple: America does not forget, our reach is long, we are patient, justice will be done,” US President Obama announces airstrikes over Iraq and Syria, following the beheading of American journalist, James Foley by ‘Islamic State’ militia (Roberts, Chulov & Borger, 2014).

Once again, responses to these shocking events highlight, at least in the public sphere, that when it comes to the suffering of harm, be it from political oppression, violence or human rights atrocities, justice seems to matter, and it matters to people in different contexts and cultures. Some psychologists have even claimed justice to be a basic human need (Taylor, 2003). Indeed, the significance that justice is believed to have in our global society is reflected in the development of international universal human rights guaranteed under International Law, although what constitutes justice is subject to critical debate.

Given that there is not a period in human history that has not been marked by war, and that some 16% of countries worldwide are currently experiencing some form of major political violence (Centre for Systemic Peace, 2013), in the context of armed conflict, in which people and communities experience the most extreme collective violence and gross human rights violations, how relevant is the meaning of ‘justice’ to their experience? And what implications does this have for the discipline of psychology, currently dominated by a Western epidemiological discourse which shapes our understanding and clinical approach?

The current study focuses, from a psychological perspective, on the meaning of justice for civilian survivors of armed conflict, which can be understood as mass social violence that is politically motivated (Dutton et al, 2005).
A literature review has been carried out on which the following summary is based (Shafiq, 2013). This is followed by research aims and objectives of the current study and the rationale for the epistemological approach adopted.

The notion of justice is long established and according to anthropologists has been found in some form in all civilisations, although what constitutes justice appears to differ between societies (Sluka, 2006), suggesting that justice has both universal and contingent aspects which are socially constructed. In its Western contemporary meaning, justice is associated with ‘fairness’, ‘freedom’ and ‘equity’ (Rawls, 1971).

Although justice has historically been assumed to be significant in relation to the suffering of harm, more recently it has been conceptualized under international law as the right to Reparation and Redress for victims, where justice is assumed to have significance and therapeutic value for the individual and for communities in the political transition to peace and stability. Though this is without reference to psychology research (Patel, 2011a; Shelton, 2005).

Whilst aspects of justice have more recently become the focus of various branches of psychology, its significance to the human condition has not been the focus of mainstream discourse. Recent models of justice, particularly those relating to human need (e.g. Slone, Kaminer & Durrheim, 2000; Tabibnia, Satpute & Leiberman, 2008; Taylor, 2003), motivation (e.g. Evans & Yamaguchi, 2009), moral outrage (e.g. Darely & Pittman, 2003), adaptive systems (Silove, 1999), and personal and social identity (e.g. Clayton & Ogotow, 2003; Skitka, 2003; Tyler & Blader, 2000), may prove potentially significant to the exploration of the meaning of justice to the experience of civilians in the context of war.

By the end of the last century, approximately 231 million people are believed to have died in wars (Leitenberg, 2003). In addition, it is estimated that some 20% of the world’s population will be affected by serious mental health problems as a result (WHO, 2011). Muslim majority countries have experienced a divergent increase in armed conflict over the last decade, with Iraq, Syria and Palestine/Gaza, which form the case studies for the current research, amongst the world’s highest intensity
conflicts (Escola de Cultura de Pau, 2012).

Research on the psychological impact of exposure to armed conflict and therapeutic support for affected populations is dominated by an epidemiological concept of trauma as individual pathology, classified as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (DSM-V, APA, 2014). As a diagnostic tool, this has undoubtedly brought to the forefront the deleterious mental health effects of war on millions of civilians and facilitated assessment of immediate psychosocial needs and interventions. However, it continues to prove controversial as serving to pathologise, simplify, reduce, decontextualize and depoliticise human suffering that is rooted in political and social problems (Patel, 2003; Patel, 2011b; Summerfield, 2001; Young, 1995).

Similarly, as the literature review highlights, limited forays into research on justice and war trauma are dominated by a positivist reductionist epistemology based on epidemiological presentation (PTSD), and narrowly tied to the efficacy of political transitional processes (e.g. Pham, Weinstein & Longman, 2004; Rey & Owens, 1998), (e.g. Başoglu, Livanou & Vranesić et al., 2005; Sonis, Gibson, de Jong, Field, Hean & Komproe, 2009). The subjective meaning of justice to the experience of civilians survivors of armed conflict and its significance to their war trauma experiences, has in effect been neglected, highlighting recurring questions on the role and responsibility of Western psychology in this context, and the role of health and rehabilitation services in facilitating justice and reparation, and inviting calls for a more inter-disciplinary approach (Patel, 2011a).

The paucity of psychology research on justice and war and the dominance of the PTSD model have led to limitations in our understanding of the civilian experience and of the meaning and relevance of justice in this context. This has implications for the efficacy of clinical approaches, psychosocial humanitarian and human rights support for populations affected by war, as well as the effectiveness of judicial processes for victims and their families and processes involved in the successful transition to peace and stability.
**Research Aims and Objectives**

The study aims to explore the meaning and significance of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of armed conflict by gaining a more in-depth understanding of its complexity and subjective meaning. As such, the study asks the following research question:

How do civilian survivors understand the meaning of justice in the context of their experience of armed conflict?

To help answer the research question, a qualitative epistemological approach has been adopted. Qualitative methods are said to provide richness and depth of data, involving descriptions based on essential characteristics rather than quantity or measured value. They are, therefore, particularly suited to exploring in-depth, from an idiographic perspective, the complexity of social, emotional and experiential phenomena and how individuals make sense of their experiences (Ashworth, 2009; Howitt & Cramer, 2011).

This is shaped by an interpretivist ontological paradigm, involving a social constructionist perspective that holds that reality is relative, subjective and context-bound, constructed by individuals and created through social interaction (Sexton, 1997) and that knowledge involves the subjective interpretation of meaning (Tupling, 2013).

The method of data collection involved interviews. A semi-structured interview format was adopted, allowing for an in-depth focus on the topic, using open-ended questions and a facilitative, curious stance that allows for participants’ free reflection and sense-making of experience in their own way. The method of data analysis adopted was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This is because IPA lends itself to the psychological exploration of subjective experience and sense making, combining idiographic, interpretative and psychological components.

IPA has its theoretical foundations in symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and hermeneutics, and assumes a link between meaning, behaviours, and underlying
cognitions. Thus, subjective meaning, derived from the textual account of the participant, can be critically deconstructed, interpreted and understood through the researcher’s own meaning-making prism, whilst based on the participant’s perceptions and textual account, rather than from a pre-existing theoretical position. Moreover, because of its idiographic focus, its concern with individual experience and with depth and richness of data, IPA allows for a small sample size and for connections and patterns to be made across a homogenous group, so that commonalities and differences within the group might offer meaningful insights into the complexities of the experience (Chapman & Smith, 2002; Smith & Osborne, 2003; Willig, 2001).

Using guidelines from Smith and Osborne (2003) and Willig (2001; 2008), IPA was used to inform sampling, data collection and analysis processes, as detailed in the following section.

Method

Participants
Following an IPA sampling strategy, a purposive sample was used to recruit participants. Purposive sampling is based on specificity rather than random or representative criteria (Howitt & Cramer, 2011; Smith & Osborne, 2003). The sample was homogeneous, involving the recruitment of a more closely defined group of participants for whom the research question is significant (Smith, 2003), that is, all individuals invited to participate in the study were civilians with experience of armed conflict.

The sample size was kept small. Qualitative research uses small sample sizes in order to facilitate a detailed and in-depth case-by-case idiographic analysis within the group (Smith & Osborne, 2003). Accordingly, eight participants were recruited using the following sampling criteria:

Inclusion criteria
- Adult civilians (18 years plus) with first-hand exposure to armed conflict.
- Civilians, including refugees or asylums seekers.
- English speaking.
Exclusion criteria

- Children (under 18 years).
- Veterans and international aid professionals.

Information on the participants recruited for the study is provided in Table 1. All participants were adult civilians (5 female, 3 male participants, ranging in age from 20s to 60s years), with direct first hand experience of armed conflict, specifically the on-going Palestinian (Gaza)/Israeli, Iraqi and Syrian conflicts. This comprised multiple and enduring conflict experiences for the Iraqi participants: Tala, Yasmine and Kareem; a single enduring conflict experience for the Palestinian (Gazan) participant: Omar; and between 12 and 18 months direct exposure to a single on-going conflict experience for the Syrian participants: Sara, Leen, Saif and Mariam. The length of time since direct exposure to conflict for participants ranged from 10 years (Omar), 7 and 6 years (Yasmine and Kareem respectively), 3 years to 18 months (Syrian participants), and on-going (Tala).

Arabic was the first language (‘native’ or ‘mother tongue’) of all participants, with local dialectic and cultural differences. All participants spoke English, six participants speaking it fluently, one participant (Saif) spoke advanced level English, and one participant (Mariam) spoke English at an intermediate level (as assessed by the researcher – a qualified teacher of English as a foreign language). All participants (other than Mariam) spoke English on a daily basis, either in the course of living in adulthood (and diaspora) in English speaking cultural contexts or as part of daily interaction in work and socially with English speaking people in Arabic cultural contexts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity/Religion/ Language</th>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Incidents experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Syrian Muslim from mixed Alawi &amp; Sunni family. Arabic 1st language. Fluent in English.</td>
<td>Syrian civil war</td>
<td>Civilian experience of conflict (first year). Best friend killed. Left 3 yrs ago, currently overseas, family remains in Syria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariam</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Syrian. Sunni Muslim. Arabic 1st language. Lower intermediate level English.</td>
<td>Syrian civil war</td>
<td>Civilian human rights activist experience of conflict (first 18 mths). Sister and brother in law kidnapped. As human rights activist, witness to numerous atrocities against civilians, e.g. forced detention, torture, rape, killing, mass killing, home demolitions. Forced displacement 18 mths ago as illegal refugee overseas with risk of detention, family remain in Syria. Own life, family and friends at risk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Ethical Considerations**

The study obtained approval from the FAHS University of Surrey ethics committee (Appendix 2.) as the study deals with sensitive issues, which may be potentially distressing for participant and researcher. These are further detailed below and are in line with BPS (2014) and HCPC (2012) ethics guidelines which inform the study.

**Procedure**

Prior to taking part, participants were sent an invitation letter (Appendix 3.) and were briefed on the study and their rights to confidentiality and anonymity and were given the chance to ask questions. They were also advised that interviews would be tape-recorded and transcribed and that names and identifying features would be omitted or changed. Participants were asked to sign a written consent form before proceeding (Appendix 4.).

Interviews were carried out in a quiet, safe location or over the Internet. At the start of interviews, participants were also advised that should they become distressed during the interview, they should feel free if they wished to pause or stop at any time. Participants were also advised to contact their local GP or trauma support services should they require further support, and a list of these was made available prior to the interview where possible.

**Data Collection**

For the purposes of data collection eight semi-structured interviews were carried out using a seven-question interview schedule (Table 2. Interview Schedule). This was designed to serve as a guide only, aiming at providing a framework to enable a relatively systematic and in-depth focus on the research topic across the sample, i.e. the meaning and significance of (in)justice to civilian war trauma experience. It was also designed to engage with not only contextual (armed conflict) experience, but also the conceptual and experiential meaning of such a complex topic as ‘(in)justice’ in this context, as well as opening up the space for reflections on individual and collective experiences where this was relevant for participants. Whilst, at the same time, given the focus on the participant’s phenomenology, interviews aimed at facilitating the participant’s own free reflection and meaning-making process, in order
to capture the scope, diversity and richness of subjective experience within the sample.

In order to achieve this and to enhance credibility, the process of data collection involved reflection on the influences of the researcher’s own pre-conceptions, assumptions, values and position on the research design (see Appendix 1. Reflexivity). These were present here in the setting of the parameters of the interview schedule, influenced in turn by the scope of the research question. They were reflected further in the choice of research terms or categories of meaning used in the title, pre-interview information and interview questions, particularly significant given the use of English as a second language to conduct the research (e.g. ‘armed conflict’, ‘(in)justice’, ‘future’). These, introduced in juxtaposition, had the potential to construct an association between categories against which participants’ experiences would become framed, and which themselves suggested ways of talking about the topic and which may have in turn ‘shaped’ participants’ experiences of it (Willig, 2008, p.67) and through which their experiences would become ‘reconstituted’ (Burr, p. 156). Further, these influences were reflected in the role of the researcher as (potentially the more powerful) actor in the interview process, itself a social interaction in which meaning is co-constructed.

These influences were addressed where possible, within the scope of phenomenological research (given its acknowledgement and use of the researcher’s role in the research process) in various ways. Perhaps most significantly, in approaching the data collection process, a conscious attempt was made to ‘bracket foreknowledge’ (Kvale, 1996, p. 39), as far as this may be deemed possible, including the researcher’s own pre-conceptions and critical judgements, in an effort to fully engage with the subjective experience of the other through an open, curious and exploratory stance (much akin to the therapeutic stance of empathic listening), conducting the interview as a dialogue that was participant-led.

Interviews were structured to allow for a gradual engagement in this challenging topic (alongside the building of trust and rapport), moving from broad and general, to
actual, personal and in-depth exploration, and then gradually to disengage back to the present (for most) and the aspirational future.

The terms or categories used were reflected on and an attempt at 'neutrality' aimed for, e.g. in selecting the term ‘armed conflict’ rather than ‘civil war’, in the use of ‘injustice’ rather than 'violation', in the use of ‘future’ rather than ‘resolution’. Participants were invited to reflect on these categories during the course of the interviews and to use their own, involving at times weaving in and out of Arabic and English, checking-back and summarising in the process of communicating meaning, and these were then the subject of deeper exploration.

Broad, open-ended, exploratory questions (and broad prompters) were used, deliberately limited in number to cover three themes or areas of enquiry. These involved exploration of what ‘armed conflict’ was for participants and their personal and collective experiences of it, exploration of the complex and subjective meaning (conceptual and experiential) of ‘(in)justice’ and its relevance if at all to their experience, and exploration of perceptions and aspirations for the future and what place ‘justice’ might have if any. Here, most notably, exploration of ‘(in)justice’ followed participants’ own introduction of the constructs as part of their lived experience of armed conflict, rather than being superimposed by the research, and were only then more deeply explored using participants’ own categories. A final question invited any other relevant aspects participants might wish to add, providing further opportunity for free reflection, generating further participant-led rich data.

Finally, interviews were allowed to run their course, lasting between 60 to 180 minutes in length. The resultant process produced data which was wide in scope, rich, diverse and in-depth, as well as surprising.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Schedule</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **What do you understand by ‘armed conflict’?**
   - What does it mean for you?
   - Which armed conflict is important to you and why?

2. **Can you tell me about your experiences of armed conflict?**

3. **How do you feel about what happened?**
   - How does this/did these experiences impact on you?
     (thoughts, emotions, beliefs, values, behaviour)

4. **How do you feel about others’ experiences in this conflict? And in other conflicts?**

5. **If I use the word ‘(in)justice’ what does it mean to you?**
   - How relevant is injustice/justice to your experience?
   - How has your experience of injustice/justice affected you?
   - Has that changed over time? How/why?

6. **How do you see the future?**
   - What would you like to see happen?
   - How does justice feature, if at all?

7. **Is there anything else you would like to add about ‘justice’ in the context of armed conflict in your experience?**
Analysis

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and transcripts were subject to a detailed four-stage systematic analysis and interpretation using IPA guidelines from Smith & Osborne (2003) and Willig (2001; 2008) as described here.

In the first stage of analysis, interview recordings were transcribed verbatim in the random order in which they had been carried out, trying to capture as closely as possible the original interview by denoting any major linguistic patterns (Appendix 5. Table 3. Example of Transcript). Margins were made to the right of the text. The transcript was read to allow for immersion in the text and for new insights to emerge on successive readings, and notes were made in the margin on interesting aspects of the text.

The second stage involved analysis of the initial annotations, which were transformed into emerging themes that capture the essential quality of the text, at a slightly higher level of abstraction. Throughout this process, themes were checked against the original text to maintain a clear connection between theme, interpretation and text, in an effort to enhance credibility (Yardley, 2000).

The third stage involved analysis of the themes to see if theoretical connections could be made between them, whilst checking back to ensure that the interpretative process remained true to the original text (Yardley, 2000). This allowed for the emergence of clusters of themes and higher-level connections between them in the form of potential master themes which aimed at capturing the essential aspects and meaning-making process of the participant’s experience.

This process was repeated with each case study to allow for the emergence of a rich and in-depth understanding at the idiographic level. The fourth stage involved analysis of the eight clusters of themes and master themes that were drawn from the first three stages. This allowed for further reflection and interpretation of individual case study experience and for connections and differences to emerge relating to the shared experience of the homogenous group, whilst checking back to the original texts to ensure the process remained grounded in the data (Yardley, 2000). Further analysis
was carried out during the process of writing up and master themes and subthemes finalized. This process allowed for the complexity of the subjective experience of the individual and the richness and breadth of experience of the group to be drawn out.

**Credibility**

Credibility was achieved using guidelines from Yardley (2000) and Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999), in order to ensure transparency, coherence, validity and reflexivity. This involved critical self-reflection on how as researcher and part of the social world being investigated, my own biases and predispositions might influence and shape the study identifying these openly and taking measures to enhance credibility (see Appendix 1. Reflexivity).

This included reflecting on the cross-cultural nature of the research and use of English as a second (or subsequent) language for participants, as well as reflecting on the researcher’s influence in the production of data and taking steps to address these where possible in the design of the interview schedule and during the interview process (see Data Collection and Limitations sections). Being aware of the relational dynamics and context of the interview, noting afterwards my reflections as researcher and reflecting on them before approaching the text. It involved maintaining a sensitive, open, curious and exploratory stance throughout the research process. It involved ensuring analysis and interpretative processes were rigorous and true to source and reflected the depth and breadth of data, as well as remaining grounded in the data by checking back to source at each stage of the analysis and maintaining a clear connection between theme, interpretation and text. Finally, credibility also involved demonstrating the significance of the study results in advancing theoretical knowledge and practical application as detailed in the discussion section.

**Results**

Despite the diversity of individual participants and conflict experiences, data analysis drew commonalities. Three master themes were developed: *Dimensions of Conflict Experience, Dimensions of Justice in Conflict, Meaning-Making and Resolution* (Table 3. Compositional Structure of IPA Themes). The following section details these master themes accordingly.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>DIMENSIONS OF JUSTICE IN CONFLICT</th>
<th>MEANING-MAKING &amp; RESOLUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs About Conflict</strong></td>
<td><strong>Core Lived Experience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sense of Self &amp; Society</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-war context</td>
<td>Intense experience</td>
<td>Hope &amp; purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of conflict:</td>
<td>Psychological difficulty</td>
<td>Social networks &amp; support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the conflict</td>
<td>Felt states</td>
<td>Involvement/activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections with the conflict</td>
<td>Direct, witness &amp; displacement experience</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Moral duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inner conflict &amp; change</td>
<td>Religious faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relational &amp; collective aspects of experience</td>
<td>Versus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coping &amp; Resilience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Meanings of Injustice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Meanings of Justice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Injustice frames beliefs about the conflict &amp; defines behaviours in conflict</td>
<td>Centrality of justice to conflict experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Injustice as felt human experience:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horror</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Displacement conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meanings of Injustice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Meanings of Justice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reconciliation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Centrality of justice to conflict experience</td>
<td>Forgetting past injuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What constitutes as justice:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Securing/restoring human rights &amp; freedoms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remedy &amp; reparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountability as punishment, revenge, prosecution under law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reconciliation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Relationship of Justice &amp; Power</strong></td>
<td><strong>Meaning-Making</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abuse of justice/justice becomes injustice</td>
<td>Ability to contextualize/make sense of suffering significant to resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power defines justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowering role of justice and good governance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Resolution</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to contextualize/make sense of suffering significant to resolution</td>
<td>Resolution as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to 'justify' suffering significant to resolution</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meaning-making challenging during ongoing conflict</td>
<td>Religious faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview/testimony process significant to healing</td>
<td>Global political change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Resolution</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resolution as private &amp; public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resolution as:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stuckness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT EXPERIENCE
Conflict experience involves four inter-related themes, Beliefs About Conflict, Core Lived Experience, Sense of Self and Society, and Coping and Resilience.

Beliefs About Conflict
Two themes make up participants’ beliefs about conflict, Pre-war context and Perceptions of conflict.

Pre-war context
This represents the historical context against which individual experiences of conflict are contextualized and which shape their connections to and perceptions of conflict.

For Omar, born into the current conflict in a refugee camp in occupied Gaza, the pre-war context is symbolic, a collective generational memory handed down from grandparents and parents of a ‘homeland’, annexed by Israeli forces in 1948. This memory frames his narrative and shapes his identity beyond his current state of ongoing conflict, displacement and military occupation:

The main things when I opened my eyes just I find myself I living in a a tiny place, which is refugee camp, so asking my father ‘why are we here?’… ‘Why happen this to us?’ ‘Where is? Is this our house?’ No, it’s a refugee. We have a card as a refugee eh people’. (Omar, L59-64)

For the other participants the pre-war context captures lived experience under political oppression, as life under the Assad regime in Syria for Sara, Leen, Saif and Mariam, and life under Saddam Hussein’s Ba’ath regime in Iraq before the 2003 US-led invasion and multiple conflict experiences for Kareem, Tala and Yasmine. Despite this, there is a marked distinction between their historical memories and current conflict experiences, of a past safety, stability and security now lost:

We have what we called a country that has rules, or you can walk eh, you have some safety…people accept each other better, I never thought of anyone in my
country anything that anything more or less than Iraqi and equal, equal, really
equal and and we were having good relationships. (Yasmine, L13-20)

For all, as with Omar, the past takes on symbolic meaning. For Yasmine, it is religious
tolerance and acceptance. For Sara, it is a world of family and childhood memories of
‘home’ and a place of belonging.

Perceptions of conflict
This relates to understandings of conflict and participants’ connections with it.

Understandings of ‘armed conflict’ reflect context and core conflict experience. In the
case of Iraq, for Kareem, ‘it means different things in different kind of turmoils’ (L9),
for Tala (Iraq) it is ‘terrorism’ (L9), and for Yasmine, it is ‘chaos’ (L9). In the case of
Palestine, for Omar, it is ‘soldiers’ (L3) and ‘occupation’ (L3). In the case of Syria,
for Sara, it is a ‘tornado’ (L1237), for Mariam, it is ‘revolution’ (L18), for Leen, the
most detached, it is ‘people’ ‘attacking other people’, whilst for Saif, it is ‘a dead end’
(L3), mirroring his own disempowerment.

Despite different conflict roots, all participants perceive theirs as reflecting immense
differences in power and the vulnerability of the civilian. For Omar, it is ‘not
balanced’ (L41), ‘one army’ ‘supported by big and very huge and some very strong
countries in the world’ (L26), against ‘the innocent and civilian people’ (L26). The
conflict for him is the loss of his ‘homeland’ (L76).

In terms of the Syrian civil war, participants share common perceptions, as initially
rooted in the regime’s oppression (Mariam, L51), discrimination, marginalisation
(Sara, Saif), for ‘power’ (Mariam, L18) and wealth (Saif, L653; Sara, L314). It
initiated as a progressive civil movement with widespread support, a ‘movement for
freedom’ (Saif, L132), but then escalates into ‘civil war’ (Leen) with violent
repression of demonstrations and secularization of the conflict by the regime. It then
becomes infiltrated by ‘radicals and Islamic groups’ (Sara, L280), perceived as
outsiders, derailing the legitimate aspirations of Syrians:
At the beginning, it’s just like somebody yell for freedom and talking about this desire inside everyone of the Syrian...But suddenly when we see groups like DAISH [ISIS] or Shabhat Bosra it is strange in our opinion…we don’t think that they are part of us or they belong to us… to see that this conflict now doesn’t maybe related to our desire. (Saif, L13-25)

Similarly, in the case of Iraq, all three participants share perceptions of the current Iraq conflict, identifying, as for the Syrian participants, with the ‘ordinary people of Iraq’. Although not a polarized struggle like Syria, it is an ‘undeclared civil war’ (Tala), a ‘sectarian conflict’ (Tala, L43). Sectarianism is perceived as alien to Iraqi society, as ‘foreign to us’ (Yasmine, L21), ‘implanted deliberately’ (Kareem, L586), caused by ten years of government reprisals, discrimination, deprivation, exclusion and marginalization of whole populations, but as rooted in the 2003 US-led invasion which set about dividing the nation-state along sectarian and religious lines:

If you remember the De-Ba’athification, this is the concept that was introduced in Bremmer times, eh, this is this is one of the main reasons, that eh that the Iraqi army was was dissolved and eh and eh and eh a major group of Iraqi society was marginalized. (Tala, L57-71)

Its impact on Iraqi society is like a ‘volcano eruption’ (Kareem, L575), eroding trust and fragmenting society, creating ‘terrorism’ (Tala, L6), making ‘normal life’ impossible. Iraq descends into endemic corruption, deprivation, repression, radicalization, particularly of marginalized young people ‘mindwashed’ (Yasmine, L260) by outside groups spreading in the region. The loss of their homeland, despite different conflicts, becomes a shared theme across the sample:

It wasn’t just that even it’s all the chaos we have been put into. We were a a country and then we lost everything that is called a country. (Yasmine, L614-616)
Core Lived Experience

Participants’ lived experience of conflict can be interpreted as intensity, psychological difficulty, felt states of fear, terror, horror, anger, grief and loss, direct, witness and displacement experiences, with differences relating to core experiences and meanings attributed.

Despite different contexts, each group perceives their lived experience of conflict as devastatingly disruptive, overwhelming, ‘major trauma’ (Omar, L77), ‘volcanic eruption’ and ‘epidemic’ (Kareem, L582), ‘everything just upside down’ (Yasmine, L906):

The tornado is taking me and other people and taking the land, and the memories and the home and the country, the people and the trees and the, food, all of that [silence]. (Sara, L1232-1239)

Within this extreme environment, specific incidents shape the subjective experience (see Table 1.). For Omar, his lived experience is a collective one, of ‘a heavy burden of trauma’ (L87), constant threat (L179), inner pain (L163), sadness (L162), and a ‘burning anger’ (L101). He describes ‘humiliation’ (L94) and ‘dehumanisation’ (L138), loss of self-worth, depression and suicide of others (L274). He describes constant and multiple traumas, his loss of childhood (L290), a second ‘trauma’ (L114) shot in the back as a child throwing stones, military incursions, house demolitions and summary killings.

In relation to Syria, for Sara caught between her parents dual sectarian identities, on opposing sides in the wider conflict, her fear for their safety and her values in support of civil reform, she experiences intense inner conflict that renders her angry and helpless. She experiences the killing of her best friend by government forces, captured on video and is left with unexpressed grief and unresolved loss:

His camera was recording everything so I saw everything, I saw every thing,…My first reaction was, emotionally I throw up. It was weird. I spent
Yeah. It was really horrible. I don’t now, I can’t I don’t have any words to describe it. But yeah, he died. And, he died. (Sara, L656-662)

For Saif, fear for his family and friends, feelings of uncertainty and instability, led to an exodus, and a sense of suspension. He is intensely angry, stressed and powerless as the conflict escalates into mass bloodshed and destruction on all sides. This he experiences as an intense inner pain, grief and loss, tied to his own sense of self and belonging, conflicted by his need to protect his family and to return home:

I’m so angry also about eh as I told you ehh feeling sometimes that these people, and that’s what maybe make me angry [laughs], what is happening in Syria destroys you from the inside. (Saif, L298-300)

For Tala, her experience of Iraq is terror, she feels constantly anxious, unstable and uncertain, ‘I feel the an anxiety I experience everyday, I don’t feel stable sometimes and I know the reasons, the reasons are the fear that I live everyday’ (L442). Her life becomes one of existence only, a common theme, ‘I go to work and I came I come back, this this this kind of life I spent the last 10 years like this’ (L111-113). She experiences sectarian ‘discrimination’ (274) exclusion, and religious intolerance, leaving her feeling alienated, ‘I became I became the abnormal’ (L344) in her own society.

**Sense of Self and Society**

*Sense of self* relates to identity, inner conflict and change, and *Society* to relational and collective aspects of experience.

Omar (Palestine (Gaza)) and Mariam (Syria) share a strong sense of collective identity, through which they connect with the conflict in a way that is directed and purposeful. A strong sense of collective unity, identity and purpose emerges for both, against a monolithic other, ‘soldier’ and ‘murderer’. Civil war (dictatorship) and occupation have shared meanings here.
This is distinct from Sara and Saif (Syria), whose social identity is broader. Both describe a sense of self that is tied through ‘memories’ (Sara) and ‘dreams’ (Saif) to the culture, nature and heritage that is Syria for them, and which gives them their sense of ‘self’, ‘belonging’, ‘home’, ‘safety’. Both experience euphoria and empowerment and a collective unity initially, and experience societal fragmentation as an inner fragmentation and change.

Both Kareem and Tala (Iraq), like Omar and Mariam, have a strong sense of social identity and purpose, working for the benefit of the broad national collective. All three Iraqi participants share a strong collective national identity as Iraqis. Although long-established friendships remain, at the societal level, all three experience the fragmentation, polarization and radicalisation of society and the erosion of trust between people, as sudden, shocking, conflicting with their values and impacting on their sense of self and belonging. Like Sara and Saif, they each experience as a result a change in their sense of self.

**Coping and Resilience**

This emerges as a common theme in participants’ experiences both in relation to themselves and the collective, and relates to abilities to cope and sources of resilience in the face of extreme challenges. For Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), his source of resilience is his sense of purpose for the collective good, he fosters hope and purpose, and has support of family and ‘good people’, and regards his involvement in the study as part of his ‘healing’:

> I just want to say one sentence that’s, ehh it’s part of my healing to tell you and to bring this in your research. (Omar, L990)

In relation to the Iraq cluster, Tala highlights her work and achievements as a source of resilience and self-worth, and her plan to leave Iraq in stages. Whilst Kareem cites his work, sense of duty, family support networks and his capacity as sources of his resilience. Similarly, for Yasmine, the support of family and network of friends, not eroded, is cited as a protective factor, and she names her Christian faith as a source of strength, though she continues to suffer hardships in displacement and unresolved
feelings ten years on. Whilst for the Syrian cluster, Sara and Saif emerge as considerably affected by their conflict experience, and cite the ongoing nature of the conflict and experiences of loss, grief and for Sara, concerns over the safety of her family, accentuated in displacement.

**DIMENSIONS OF JUSTICE IN CONFLICT**
Justice emerges as a significant theme, with *Dimensions of Justice in Conflict* relating to *Meanings of Injustice, Meanings of Justice, Reconciliation and Relationship of Justice with Power.*

**Meanings of Injustice**
Injustice emerges as a central theme within the context of participants’ experiences of armed conflict, relating to *beliefs about the conflict* and *behaviours* within it, and as *felt human experience.* Commonalities emerge, with some differences reflecting conflict contexts and subjective experiences of individuals.

**Injustice as beliefs and behaviours**
Injustice for all participants defines their conflict experience or forms the root cause of conflict. For Yasmine (Iraq), injustice defines the totality of her experience of war, ‘war is so, war is unjust, any war is unjust’ (Yasmine, L621). For Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), the military occupation itself is an ongoing injustice that is the root cause of suffering, ‘injustice is very important, because it’s the reason of their suffering’, (Omar, L792). Injustice as cycles also emerges as characterising the two civil war contexts of Iraq and Syria.

Five aspects of injustice separately and/or together give injustice its distinct meaning: injustice as wrongs (related to morality), as unfairness (related to equality), as harm/injury imposed or forced upon (related to free will), as deliberate (related to intention), and as senseless (related to motivation judged against social values/norms).

The meaning of injustice as wrong/s, as contrary to ethical or moral standards of right and wrong emerges within each conflict, in the disregard for human life and human
worth, the cruelty of atrocities committed, and in the extent of suffering and the degree of bloodshed in all three contexts.

For Kareem (Iraq), the moral dimension of injustice defines the sectarian conflict in Iraq and the conduct of Western foreign policy ‘the immorality of the West’ (Kareem, L1034), in relation to Iraq, and in the region in relation to support for dictatorships and exploitation of resources, causing never ending ‘turmoil’ and global tension, which he believes is rooted in the historical injustice done against the Palestinian people:

The root of, the problems of the whole world now…is I think due to the em injustice created by em eh the Western powers. (Kareem, L1042)

Injustice as senseless here is closely tied to the moral dimension of injustice, in which participants are left unable to make sense of their experiences. This also emerges as shared, for example in relation to the prolonging of civilian suffering of Palestinians and Syrians, where outside intervention is perceived to have the power to end suffering:

No justice when no one in the world do anything to eh to save these people. (Mariam, L412)

Injustice as unfairness is also significant in all three conflict contexts, relating to suffering from inequality in treatment and worth, and in the state of unequal power that allows for the perpetrator to cause harm and renders the victim vulnerable and without agency. It emerges as the experience of Syrians at the hands of regime forces, ‘it’s unfair to be treated in a specific way, to be to have your family be murdered and your houses to be burned and the parks to be turned into graveyards’ (Sara, 1150). It also relates to private injury and loss for all participants, ‘when you have a dream and somebody breaks your dreams this is unfair you fee, this is unfair’ (Saif, L295).

Injustice as imposed emerges as particularly significant, relating to suffering by force, against one’s will or control, and is perceived as a collective and private experience in
all three contexts. It impacts on the very state of being human and being individual/autonomous. It also describes the private experience of having to suffer in this way, for Tala (Iraq), as forced to live in terror and to become ‘abnormal’, for Yasmine (Iraq) as forced to suffer, which distressing feature distinguishes conflict from natural disaster for her:

The tsunami is different than a war, like tsunami, it’s nature against you, it’s not the will of person, the will of this country, this person, and they, it is not that, they don’t care about your future or about their destiny. (Yasmine, L969-973)

Injustice as deliberate and intended harm emerges within all the above meanings, but also as a distinct aspect of injustice relating to covert political policy or private intent. For Kareem it relates to the covert intent of Western powers in the region, ‘unless we are convinced eh what is the sense in that em eh you know people will eh never find em eh their way’ (Kareem, L1071).

**Injustice as felt experience**

Injustice in its various aspects above emerges as triggering very powerful emotions, ‘I think justice triggers lots of emotions, very powerful’ (Sara, L1105) associated with extreme injustices of conflict. Five clusters of emotions emerge in participants’ experiences of injustice: pain/suffering, grief/loss, horror/shock, anger/hate, fear/vulnerability, along with a felt sense of violation, and psychological burden.

**Meanings of Justice**

This theme relates to the *centrality of justice to the experience of conflict* and what constitutes justice. Private and societal justice emerge as distinct.

**Centrality of justice to the experience of armed conflict**

Justice emerges as significant to the experiences of conflict in all three conflicts. For Omar (Palestine (Gaza), justice is at the core of the experience of war and occupation for Palestinians, and is crucial to maintaining or restoring identity as a human being:
We feel sometimes we lose some of our identity as a human because we don’t have ju ju justice. Only we suffering, and we, from the injustice. We don’t have this justice. So for us, it means like, if there’s justice, that will give us give back us as a human. So it’s very deep this word in Palestine. It’s all, all of our suffering is about justice. (Omar, L722-727)

All suffering in his context is perceived to relate to injustice, justice ends suffering, as such it is an essential human need, without which healing is not complete:

[Justice] it is essential need, essential need, because if we don’t have this suffering can’t be healed. So somewhere else, somewhere in your body, in your feeling it’s still there, so somethings still burn in you, even if you are still, if you are resilient and doing well, but you still like you lost somethings in your life, that means still there is some suffering somewhere, in your body, in your feeling, in your mind, in your memory. (Omar, L912-918)

For Mariam (Syria) also justice is at the core of her conflict experience. For her, it is the pursuit of justice that defines and drives the ‘revolution’ for the Syrian people. Justice is perceived to give meaning to suffering, has value in and of itself, irrespective of whether it provides resolution for loss at the private level, as a tool to empower the citizen and readdress the balance of power, ‘[rights] make you strong’ (L71), and is key in the ‘natural’ political transition of societies from authoritarian dictatorships, revolution, to civil democracies:

Our justice going to be on when when we saw all these people which was dead and was detention and kidnapped and killed is not for nothing, when we when can this regime is gone and when we can eh choose our president and eh in our in our special choice. (Mariam, L443-448)

However, for Leen (Syria), her relationship with justice is influenced by her experience of it in Syria and the region, ‘if you look at all the countries, I mean if you look, you’ll never have eh a country full of justice to start with’ (L714).
In relation to Iraq, Kareem makes a distinction between private and societal justice. As for Leen (Syria), private justice is unattainable in the local political context, and he is resigned to remain displaced. At the societal level, however, global justice, in terms of the relationships between nations, particularly with respect to Western foreign policy in the region, becomes essential for peace and stability in Iraq, the region and the world:

The global justice is essential to extend peace to the area, unless the Western power which have got the means tries to make right whatever wrong has been done, like for instance resources are exploited to the benefit of people, justice to the Palestinians, justice to the people by not supporting regimes who are working against those people. (Kareem, L1058-1065)

For Saif and Sara (Syria), also the application of justice is less well defined, and in their states of loss and grieving, it is too difficult to think about:

I’m worrying the idea that I don’t know how to deal with the justice part, with the solution. (Sara, L1260)

In her current state, comparing Syria with Iraq, justice becomes a prospect that is ‘hopeless’ for Sara (L1090), and the extent of suffering renders justice as punishment without value, as it cannot restore what has been take away, ‘it’s been taken away from you and there is no way that can be given back’ (Sara, L1110).

With respect to Iraq, for Tala, her experiences reflect the significance of justice for wellbeing, in restoring the rule of law and basic needs of security and stability that relate to ‘dignity’ and the state of being ‘human’, ‘[justice] will provide me with dignity and and I’ll be safe there and I’ll be a human being’ (L823), but which, like Kareem, she is unable to access in the current political context of Iraq.
Similarly, for Yasmine (Iraq), whose experiences also relate to terror and chaos, justice, as having the power to restore the sense of normality, allows for life to be lived and opens up the possibility of a future again:

To have to have you know like, the justice is to have ordinary life this is the justice, to have, to let them be, let them be, live get your dreams come true, to have opportunities and be productive people, this is this is justice. (Yasmine, L976-980)

Although, like the others, in terms of private justice for herself, influenced by her Christian faith and extent of loss she tries to find acceptance and look to the future rather than relive past suffering which justice as punishment symbolizes for her:

What I went through I went through, now it’s over. God in His mercy opened some new ways for me eh and I, it is, I am, it is not easy… I don’t let myself to go into eh sadness, like because it can, it is just, it can engulf you. (Yasmine, L721-723)

**What constitutes as justice**

This emerges as diverse, reflecting individual beliefs about the conflict, subjective experience within it and current states of mind. It relates variously to the securing or restoration of *human rights* and *freedoms, remedy and reparation*, and *accountability* for perpetrators of crimes.

**Human rights and freedoms**

The securing of ‘human rights’ and ‘freedoms’ constitute justice in both the Palestinian and Syrian contexts. They form the key components of justice for Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), along with also remedy and reparation for Mariam (Syria). They are supported as part of the reform movement for Sara, Saif, and Leen (Syria) who continues to hold out for them, but for Sara and Saif, their value compared to their own sense of pain and loss and the extent of suffering and destruction has become eroded. Whilst for Saif they are innate human desires, for Sara they become
questioned as ‘taught’ (L1334) notions. They emerge mostly as generic terms, varying in their specificity for individuals, reflecting their subjective experience of conflict.

**Accountability**

This relates to justice as perpetrator accountability, and emerges as punishment, revenge, and prosecution under law. Accountability as a whole is given relatively little focus in the Palestinian context for Omar and no mention of punishment or revenge is made. Similarly revenge and punishment are not present for Mariam (Syria), but as prosecution through the international court of human rights as a way of securing justice for Syrians.

Local judicial processes, however, are commonly seen as having no credibility in either Iraq or Syria conflict contexts because of the relationship of justice with power.

Justice as punishment for the perpetrator is defined as ‘an eye for an eye’ by both Sara (Syria), and Yasmine (Iraq) who rejects it because of its association with the death sentence, which she feels makes it as wrong as the initial act:

> I don’t think it’s justice…it is not, revenge, it’s not, revenge, the way you become just like, if he was bad you are acting as bad as him right now, what you did not agree about how did you do that right now? It doesn’t make sense to me. (Yasmine, L868)

Revenge is a significant aspect of justice for almost all participants, perceived as rooted in anger, and as explaining the violent response of victims of persecution. It is also experienced directly by participants following intense emotions of anger in response to perceptions of injury experienced or witnessed:

> I was very angry…I will go there and bomb, put a bomb…so there was, the revenge, very strong, it, and I think maybe revenge brings justice and it doesn’t have to be rational. (Sara, L1181-1185)
For this reason, Sara (Syria) and Tala (Iraq) both reject the marking of injury through commemoration from one generation to another as only serving to foster a desire for revenge leading to cycles of injustices without the possibility of new beginnings:

They won’t have their country stand on its feet again unless they forget about the past. (Tala, L597)

Reconciliation
For four participants, the application of justice as resolution takes other forms both public and private as a way forward. For Sara (Syria) and Tala (Iraq), resolution takes the form of a coming together. For Tala this is through a forgetting of the past, and coming together through dialogue, respect and tolerance in the political sphere as a process of reconciliation. For Kareem (Iraq) also, it requires a change in political culture, but in the way in which nations relate to each other. In contrast, for Yasmine (Iraq), it is a private spiritual journey of (Christian) conversion, in which the individual finds faith, acknowledges wrongs and seeks recompense by doing good. For Sara (Syria), however, it requires a change in social culture in the way society perceives the individual, and involves community sharing of grief across the divides as the process for forgiveness and healing:

There is a different way in trying to process violence. So I would say forgiveness, try to unite together and go through the the pain in a group, in a collective way…and maybe this is how they can be connected on individual level, this is my project dream. (Sara, L1296)

Relationship of Justice with Power
The relationship of justice with power is a common theme, eroding the credibility of justice, itself leading to injustice, but also as having the potential to restore justice. The erosion of the credibility of justice for participants emerges in relation to a range of abuses of justice by ruling regimes in all three conflict contexts:
There is no respect of law in Syria. The regime made sure to make the law very weak in very weak stages, so you can bribe, anybody could murder. (Sara, L1169)

It also emerges in all three conflict contexts at the global level with respect to international Western power, where ‘justice’ is perceived to be used to maintain inequalities, support injustices or be applied inconsistently, eroding the notion of justice:

> You feel that there is no justice on earth, this is this is our feeling … why why other countries are stable and and and ours is not, why we are living such a life and and others are not so your your feelings towards justice ehh will be changed of course. (Tala, L468-518)

Consistently, participants’ conflict experiences highlight that ‘power defines justice’ (Sara, L1339), with emerging themes related to loss of hope in justice, marginalization, alienation and isolation of people, further turmoil and increased suffering of victims.

In contrast, the role of good governance in supporting judicial processes that restore credibility in the judiciary and in government, as well as stability in society, emerges in the two civil war contexts as absences. This also drives the conclusion that the development of good governance requires transition to democracy and an end to dictatorship.

**MEANING-MAKING AND RESOLUTION**

**Meaning-Making**

This is as a common theme, with the conscious need to make sense of conflict experiences emerging as significant for participants’ sense of resilience. This theme emerges most frequently for Kareem (Iraq), whose multiple trauma experiences and ability to contextualize them within his value system is dependent on his ability to justify them in a way that makes them acceptable to him.
In a different sense, meaning-making is described as consciously challenging for Sara and Saif (Syria), who are experiencing overwhelming emotions of anger, loss and grief. Similarly, for Omar (Palestine (Gaza)) in relation to anger, and for whom ‘healing’ cannot be complete while suffering (framed as lack of justice) continues. For Sara (Syria), meaning-making is highlighted as consciously avoided as a means of distancing and protecting herself from overwhelming feelings.

In addition, the narrative/testimony process of the research interview becomes itself experienced as an active process of bringing into conscious awareness psychological meaning and understanding, and in this way reflects the collaborative process involved in interpretation and meaning-making, as well as emerges as having therapeutic value, in particular for Omar (Palestine (Gaza), and for Sara and Saif (Syria). In the same way, for Mariam (Syria), the judicial process invests suffering with value and meaning, as ‘sacrifice’, and is cited as a motive behind the pursuit of justice for survivors of armed conflict.

**Resolution**

This theme brings together subjective aspirations that might bring a sense of resolution for participants, at this point in their conflict experience, and emerges in the form of individual and collective needs. Justice emerges clearly as the key means of resolution for Omar (Palestine (Gaza)) and Mariam (Syria), as highlighted above, despite significant differences in conflict contexts. There is a nuanced distinction for Mariam, whose immediate private needs relate to survival whilst focused on the collective need for justice as resolution.

For Yasmine (Iraq), private resolution resides in her Christian faith, which appears to preserve as paramount for her, her current sense of safety, stability and mental wellbeing, despite unresolved loss, anger, and feelings of alienation in displacement, a focus on which she feels might otherwise lead to despair. Her resolution for Iraq emerges from the same source and is also faith based, relating to individual ‘conversion’, involving a cessation of harm, acknowledgement of culpability, and compensation in the form of doing ‘good deeds’.
Whilst in contrast for Kareem (Iraq), public resolution lies at the level of international relations between states, and takes the form of global political justice rooted in moral concepts of transparency, fairness and equality, as the key focus for him, perceiving Arab regional and national collective suffering to have their roots here.

Along similar lines, the theme of reconciliation as the key to collective resolution is shared by Tala (Iraq) and Sara (Syria), who share similar perceptions of their civil war contexts. Though for Sara this is not at the political level as it is for Tala, but involves the empowerment of individuals at the community level across divides, finding resolution in forgiveness through shared grief, with grief, fragmentation and individual oppression her core experiences. Through forgiveness, Sara also aspires to obtain private resolution, whist currently still struggling with loss, grief and anger.

Whilst Saif (Syria), similarly struggling with loss, grief and anger, rejects forgiveness in his empathy with the civilian victims of atrocities. Whilst understanding but fearing the prolonging of bloodshed that revenge against atrocities would bring, Saif notionally aspires for justice in the form of judicial accountability, but has no faith in justice as resolution given the extent of culpability on all sides. He remains unable to envisage resolution, neither at the private nor public levels, without the cessation of conflict.

Discussion
The results of the analysis suggests that for this group of participants and within these conflict contexts of military occupation and civil wars, justice is significant to the civilian experience of war, but that to understand its meaning for people in this context, requires a understanding of the subjective experience and context in which it is embedded.

Civilian experience of war emerges as not simply about the personal threat to life per se. Fear of death, anxiety, insecurity, instability indeed are features that run throughout participants’ accounts. However, the risk to life, death and loss emerge here as nuanced, contextual, and imbued with subjective meaning.
Further, beyond the private realm, the civilian war experience of participants has radical social dimensions. These have impact beyond the physical and material, on the relational, as erosion of trust, upheavals in relationships, the destruction of culture and ways of life. These assume subjective meaning, in loss of homeland, identity and belonging, changes in sense of self and self-worth, loss of memories and dreams, life becomes suspended, and the external reflected in internal fragmentation as for both Saif and Sara.

In addition, these events have agency, as highlighted by Sara, they are about humans killing humans. More specifically this is defined in terms of the powerful/abuser and the victim. This suggests the distinction in war experience for the civilian. Further, war itself has meanings, rooted in political, social, economic, and historical issues, through which participants connect and contextualize their experience.

These dimensions of civilian war experience are articulated by the World Psychiatric Association’s (WPA) in its statement on mental health, terrorism and violence (Okasha, 2006) and supports the body of research which highlights the deleterious effects of war beyond epidemiology on civilian populations affected by war (e.g. Ehrenreich, 2003; Niaz, 2011). It also reinforces critical research regarding the efficacy of mainstream PTSD focused approaches. Particularly in this context, the approach in effect depoliticises human suffering, which is rooted in the sociopolitical forces that produce them (Patel, 2003, 2011b; Summerfield, 2001).

It is in this context in which justice becomes central to participants experiences, in the form of injustice. Injustice as a concept appears to have shared meaning, defined by oppression of various forms, and is experienced as reductive for Tala (Iraq), stifling of human expression for Saif (Syria), as a denial of what it is to be human for Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), as a denial of ‘being’ for Leen (Syria). It is given five dimensions of meaning, as wrongs/morality, as unfairness/equity, as imposed/free will, as deliberate/intention and as senseless/outside social values. It is also a visceral experience, described as triggering very powerful emotions, including pain, anger, grief, horror, fear, a sense of violation and of overwhelming psychological burden.
Injustice also has both negative and positive aspects, related to revenge and leading to cycles of injustices characterising the Iraq and Syria conflicts, but also the ability to galvanise the collective in pursuit of justice as in the Syrian and Palestinian contexts.

This seems to support studies showing the impact of political violence and social injustice (e.g. Slone, Kaminer, Durrheim, 2000). Injustice as a motivating factor behind the Syrian revolution, risking social upheaval and threat to life, would appear to support Taylor’s (2006) position that the need for justice subsumes many of Maslow’s preconditions for the satisfaction of basic needs. Though this is not a shared position, as following the escalation of violence neither Sara nor Saif (Syria context) felt that the bloodshed and destruction was ‘worth’ it. Further, the impact of injustice on identity would appear to support Clayton and Opotow’s (2003) psychology model of justice in which the two are said to intersect in fundamental ways. Whilst the Accessibility Identity Model proposed by Skitka (2003) also highlights that justice and fairness become more important when people experience a threat to the self-concept, which is the case in these contexts. In addition, Darely and Pittman’s (2003) model of retributive justice suggests that moral outrage, as contempt, anger, or disgust, is triggered in response to harm, but the level of outrage will depend on attribution of why harm was done, seen here significantly. However, they propose its intensity following assessment of intentional harm triggers motives to assign punishment, which is the case only for Leen (Syria). This suggests, however, further research on the relationship between identity and justice within this context.

Justice also takes centre stage in all three conflicts contexts but its relevance to resolution is not uniformly shared, and is attributed subjective meaning and value depending on core experiences in conflict, current states of mind, perceptions of conflict and pre-war context, historical experiences of justice and its relationship with power locally, regionally and internationally. For Omar, however, as a Palestinian living under enduring military occupation, justice is ‘a very deep word’. Justice for him is the key to ending suffering and restoring ‘identity as a human being’. Indeed, he defines it as ‘an essential need’ without which, he believes that psychological healing cannot fully take place, as anger from injustice remains. This notion of justice supports Taylor’s basic need model (2006) and merits further research, particularly
In relation to justice within this context, and has implications for the efficacy of conventional trauma focused work in isolation.

Similarly for all four participants in relation to the Syrian conflict, the struggle for justice, as human rights and freedom from authoritarian oppression, was the core motive behind the revolution, before it became derailed by foreign interests. Whilst justice for Omar ends suffering in the Palestinian context, for Mariam in the Syria context of authoritarian rule, it is a tool to ‘make you strong’, to restore the balance of power to the citizen and to both protect and empower the citizen. At the same time for Mariam, justice through judicial processes (international) also has a reparative function in its ability to give value through meaning to suffering for families left behind. Whilst for the Iraqi participants, which core experience is terror and chaos, justice has the capacity to restore security, stability and harmony to society and in this way bring back ‘normal’ life.

Justice is also perceived by Mariam (Syria) as having an innate value in and of itself, beyond the present and beyond the individual realm, in the societal role it plays, through judicial and legislative processes rather than through violence, in the deposing of the current regime and the bringing about political transition to democracy and good governance.

Significantly, in the use of human rights terminology amongst the five participants in relation to Palestine and Syria, a shared meaning is assumed. This appears to reflect an international language and shared cultural values implicit in justice as a concept akin to those underpinning International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and which reinforces notions that justice in its current contemporary form shares universal as well as contingent aspects.

For Mariam (Syria), justice also involves the commemoration of atrocities for future generations, whilst Sara (Syria) and Tala (Iraq) see this as rekindling past wounds and encouraging further cycles of unending revenge and injustices. Only Mariam and Leen (Syria), however, refer to justice as judicial processes involving perpetrator accountability through international courts, suggestive of transitional justice.
processes. In addition, research findings using thematic analysis of case studies on South Africans who participated in tribunals suggested the narration of stories in this process had a significant therapeutic value (Rey & Owens, 1998). This was evidenced in the process of narration in the current study, which suggests an avenue for further research in the clinical field.

Whist Kareem on the other hand, advocates moral justice, the righting of wrongs done by Western colonial powers, which continue, as the root causes of the wider Middle East region’s problems. Similarly, the relationship of power with justice, and the abuse of justice by power at the local, regional and international levels, leads to the erosion of the credibility of justice for all participants across the sample. In relation to Iraq, where judicial processes used by the US and subsequent sectarian governments to implement policies leading to marginalization, discrimination and exclusion, are perceived to have led to the current sectarian violence. Further, for the Iraq cluster, lack of viable national institutions cuts off any possibility of seeking resolution through judicial processes. Unsurprisingly, given region-wide experience of government corruption and lack of judicial independence, judicial processes for participants across the sample (other than for Mariam and Leen (Syria)) receive little attention in terms of seeking accountability for crimes committed. Sara (Syria) suggests not only a need for political change, highlighted by Kareem and Tala (Iraq) and Mariam, Saif and Leen (Syria), but the need for a cultural change over generations in order to secure progressive and stable civil society.

Justice as punishment does not feature strongly, in comparison to securing human rights and freedoms. The inability of justice as punishment to restore life or to heal loss lead Sara, in a state of grief, to reject it, but advocating instead community sharing of grief across divides as a way of promoting healing. Yasmine associates it with execution, reflecting the context of the region, and advocates a private spiritual ‘conversion’ involving acknowledging wrongs and doing good. Whilst Tala advocates reconciliation through forgetting, respect, tolerance and dialogue. Indeed, these forms of restorative justice have over the last decade received research attention as reflecting positive benefit for individuals, including the importance of forgiveness following
collective harm, and suggest further avenues for research within the context of war (Exline, Worthington, Hill & McCullough, 2003).

These findings suggest that for civilians experiencing the injustices of oppression, civil war and atrocity, justice is deeply meaningful, with universal and contingent aspects, as a collective tool for freedom and equality, alongside reconciliation efforts that seek to foster reconnection, rebuilding of cultural identity and shared belonging.

**Strengths and Limitations of the Study**
Given the limitations of an epidemiological approach to our understanding of people’s experience of armed conflict, the strength of this study lies in the richness and depth of data which a qualitative, idiographic approach has made possible. Meaningful insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexity of the subjective experience of war and the meaning of justice within this context. From a practitioner perspective, the joint process of meaning making, through the sharing and collaborative interpretation of difficult experience to create new insights and new meanings also has validity, and is part of the healing process for participants.

Given the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic nature of the current research, the language medium in which the research was conducted poses special epistemological, methodological and ethical challenges and limitations. These relate not only to considerations of language as a medium for representing and communicating subjective experience and meaning, but also to the role of language in constructing and shaping meaning, as well as the psychology of language use for speakers of second or multiple languages (Tribe & Thompson, 2008).

Whilst the study was conducted in English as the researcher’s dominant (frequency of use) and more proficient (linguistic skills) language (Harris, Gleason, & Aycicegi, 2006), Arabic constituted the first language (mother-tongue or native) of both participants and researcher, defined here as the language learned from birth and acquired naturally within the family (Bloomfield, 2005), and as the language of the wider ethnic group to which both participants and researcher belong, with local dialectical and cultural differences. English, however, for the researcher constituted a
third language acculturated into through immersion in childhood within an English cultural context (UK), replacing Arabic (and proficient French) as the dominant and primary language, which (though weaker) remains the intimate language of family, ‘home’, ethnic origins and cultural and spiritual identity. Whilst for participants, English constituted a second (or possibly subsequent) language, in which they were proficient and spoke daily (with the exception of Mariam), either as the dominant language in English cultural contexts from adulthood or in diaspora (with associated resonances), or as frequently used in the course of work and/or social life whilst living in Arabic cultural contexts. However, it is unknown when and how English was acquired, whether participants spoke other languages, and their psychological experiences of speaking in English compared to their first language, information that might be built into future studies.

Given this shared linguistic and cultural bases, that facilitated empathic and conceptual understanding between researcher and participants (Dewaele & Costa, 2013), and access to English speaking participants, primary ethical, epistemological and methodological considerations led to the choice of English as the strongest shared language in which to conduct the research, with occasional shifts into Arabic in the course of articulating and checking-back conceptual meaning. These considerations related to: The primary purpose of the research, i.e. exploring the participant’s subjective experience and meaning-making process, as expressed in his/her own voice; developing trust and confidence in the integrity of the research and the researcher’s role and identity; Facilitating free and open engagement in a highly politically sensitive, emotionally charged and potentially exposing topic, in the course of a single interaction (conducted in the majority via Skype rather than in person, making this more challenging), as distinct from therapy in which trust (including of interpreters) can be developed over a number of sessions; As paramount the safeguarding and confidentiality of participants (friends and family) given the ongoing nature of the political violence and threat to life.

These primary considerations made conducting interviews in Arabic highly problematic, due to the impact of the interpreter’s role and identity (Wei, 2000) on the participant, the communicative process, and the data itself (Squires, 2009). Since,
using a trusted interpreter the participant brings (friend, family, community member) raises issues of professionalism and judgment, whilst an unknown interpreter (particularly from the same country) raises concerns around trust (Juckett, 2005; Tribe & Lane, 2009). Further, research and clinical experience suggests that interpretation, whilst empowering for participants in some contexts, can also feel highly disempowering, infantalising, or reminiscent of being politically silenced (Tribe & Keefe, 2009). Whilst the process of data collection itself takes on a third subjective interpretative dimension, since translation is not a ‘neutral’ act but a social process (Temple, 2006) in which the interpreter plays an active part in constructing, rather than simply transmitting, meaning (Temple, Edwards, & Alexander, 2006). Hence the translation itself becomes a construction of the interpreter’s own psychological relationship with language, and abilities to communicate comparable meaning or conceptual equivalence, dependent not only on proficient linguistic skills but necessitating intimate (as of an insider’s) socio-cultural knowledge and understanding (Birbili, 2000). Clinical experience with (Arabic) interpreters to-date (from my own insider’s position) suggests that neither is easily accessible in practice, complicated by Arabic in its various dialects being spoken in over 25 culturally and politically diverse contexts.

In addressing these issues, however, further challenges and limitations emerged relating to the use of English as a second (or subsequent) language. Given the difficulties of articulating complex psychological and emotional experience and meaning through language, itself a limitation of IPA research (Willig, 2008), to give expression to highly challenging emotional experiences for participants whose first language is not English impacts on this process. The same issues for interpreters related to participants’ own psycho-linguistic abilities, alongside emotional awareness and abilities to articulate the subtleties and nuances of their experiences through language and in English, although this allowed for participants’ unmediated articulation of their experiences and meaning-making, in their own way, through their own choice of words.

In this respect, however, as highlighted by Tribe and Keefe (2009), “language is not directly interchangeable” (p. 409), since terms, expressions, categories, traditional
ways of talking in one language carry with them contextualized social, cultural, political, emotional meanings, assumptions, connotations and values which are not necessarily present or easily transferable from one language to another (Birbili, 2000; Bloom, 1998; Burck, 2004; Caldwell-Harris, 2014; Temple, 2006; Tribe & Lane, 2009). This suggests that how participants talked about their conflict experiences, including categories such as ‘(in)justice’ may have been constrained, delimited or made different in English, becoming reconstructed in the process. Whilst recent cognitive research reinforces the constructionist view that language, along with its semantics, grammatical structures and traditions, not only expresses meaning, as well as reflecting cultural characteristics, but also helps to shape and construct the way in which individuals and societies experience, think and perceive social reality, and that this process may differ significantly between languages (Boroditsky, 2010; Lindquist, Gendron, & Satpute, 2015). This further suggests that the cultural categories, values and assumed sharing of meaning available in the language in which participants experienced and made-sense of their experiences may also have differed in English, impacting on what was being expressed and made sense of.

In addition, different types of research, carried out with bilingual and multilingual speakers, including psycholinguistic and psychophysiological research, interviews and self-reports of bilingual writers, therapists and participants, and clinical observations in therapy with bilingual clients, suggests that first and second (and subsequent) languages have an emotional intensity and intimacy that may differ from one another. Reviews have reported that bilingual speakers frequently experience heightened emotional proximity and intensity in their first language than in their second (e.g. Pavlenko, 2005, 2012). Childhood experiences can feel emotionally heightened in the first language of speakers who acquired proficiency in a second through later immersion (Schrauf, 2000). Bilingual speakers have been observed in therapy to commonly switch to their first language when talking about feelings, intensely emotional issues or to access emotions, and back again to pause or gain distance, feel safer, or as protection (Altarriba & Santiago-Rivera, 1994; Costa, 2014; Dewaele & Costa, 2013; Schrauf, 2000).

Conversely, bilingual participants in psycholinguistic studies have been found to
ascribe higher emotional scores in self-report questionnaires and emotionality scales in their second language (DeLanghe, Puntoni, Fernande, & Osselaer, 2011), and feel able to express more powerfully emotional (taboo) content in their second language than in their first (Gawinkowska, Paradowski, & Bilewicz, 2013). This suggests the tempering, distancing or liberating effect that second language can have as a medium that facilitates expression of emotionally powerful content, particularly where first language is associated with higher emotional resonance and measured expression, and where social and cultural norms act to constrain expression that appear not to be experienced when using a second language (Antinucci-Mark, 1990; Costa, 2014). This additionally is reflected in therapeutic contexts in which clients can feel more able to talk about traumatic experiences and find relief by being able to ‘let go of pain’ easier when speaking in a second language that has no associations with their experiences, or to express feelings previously suppressed in the first, although some find it more ‘freeing’ to talk about and process experiences in the language in which they occurred (Costa, 2010, 2014).

Whilst little or no difference in emotionality between first and second languages has also been found in laboratory studies amongst bilingual participants living in an English speaking context, with early immersion in English as a second language and equal or higher levels of proficiency, as well as with bilingual speakers with later emersion in English and greater proficiency in their first language (Harris, Gleason, & Aycicegi, 2006). Further inconsistencies have been reported in other laboratory studies (e.g. Eilola, Havelka, & Sharmaa, 2007; Ferre, Garcia, Fraga, Sanchez-Casas, & Molero, 2010).

However, where differences in language use are present, research suggests these may be dependent on interrelated factors such as early language acquisition, high proficiency, dominance (length and frequency of use) (e.g. Degner, Doycheva, & Wentura, 2011), and natural learning through interpersonal experience and immersion as opposed to formal learning (e.g. Dewaele, 2010). These factors may relate to the “emotional contexts” of language learning and language use (Caldwell-Harris & Ayçiçegi-Dinn, 2014, p. 6), with early acquisition thought to be linked to cognitive, social and emotional development in infancy (Bloom, 1998), whilst differences might
also be accounted for by differences in cultural influences, subjective experiences and intensity of emotional associations experienced in one language than in another (Ervan-Tripp, n.d.).

Further, in addition to differences in emotionality, research with bilingual/multilingual speakers suggests that shifts in language use may also involve shifts in associated values and feelings, physical expression and behaviour, sense of self and identity, even of memories and their associations codified in a specific language and culture, also dependent on associated emotional experiences, and on the speaker’s relationship with the politics and culture of the acquired language (Burck, 2004; Costa, 2010, 2014; Ervin-Tripp, n.d.; Ramírez-Esparza, Gosling, Benet-Martínez, Potter, & Pennebaker, 2006; Ramírez-Esparza, Gosling, & Pennebaker, 2008). Whilst over a prolonged period of time, research also suggests that in bilingual speakers who utilize both languages and whose associated domains of experience remain strong (private ethnic and wider societal culture where these differ), the two language systems may merge over time, with both domains being expressed fully in the two languages (Ervin-Tripp, n.d.; Harris, 2009).

These observations suggest that the psychological implications of language use in research and in the context of therapy are highly complex, idiographic and contextual. Potential differences between first and second (or subsequent) language use relating to these, as well as in the representational value and influence of language in shaping meaning, have implications for the current research, in terms of what is accessible of subjective experience in another language, the degree to which it can be accessed, and how it is talked about and made sense of through the research medium of English. Although the specific nature of these implications, (including whether use of a second language actually facilitated this process for some participants), in comparison to first language use and a third subjective (interpreter’s) reconstructed account mediated in English (subject to the same issues), would be difficult to ascertain without further exploration with participants and interpreters.

Whilst in terms of challenges to clarity of expression, conceptual understanding, and the subtleties and nuances of meaning expressed in English as a second (or
subsequent) language, these were facilitated by the high degree of shared intimate cultural and linguistic knowledge and understanding between researcher and participants, the proficiency of participants in English, participants’ invited use of their own terms and categories, facilitated by occasional shifts into Arabic, and taking time to check-back, repeat and summarise conceptual meaning in order to explore deeper, resulting in diverse, in-depth, psychologically rich and emotionally intense material. The resultant data, however, along with the research findings, must therefore be said to have been the construction of interpretative processes conducted through the medium of English as a second (or subsequent) language, and related challenges and limitations of conducting cross-cultural, cross-linguistic research within the current special context of highly politically sensitive and emotionally challenging experience.

In reflecting on these challenges and limitations further, future research involving speakers of more than one language might consider initial consultation with participants, offering the option of which language/dialect and communicative process (direct or mediated via an interpreter) they prefer (following good practice in therapeutic services), and building in self-report mechanisms. Further, since broadening the scope of cross-cultural research necessitates working with participants whose first language is not English, building in measures that enhance credibility, facilitate trust and preserve confidentiality, whilst balancing epistemological and methodological considerations, might include, in addition to consultation on these aspects with participants and interpreters, mechanisms that enable back-checking conceptual meaning with participants, and building-in opportunities for reflection on the impact, dynamics and interpretative process, for participants, interpreters, as well as the researcher.

Beyond language, the ongoing and very present nature of the three conflicts is also a factor in the processing of experience, which made meaning-making a more challenging process for the participants interviewed, all of whom are caught up in different ways and to different degrees in the ongoing violence and atrocities. This issue is present in psychosocial work with affected populations in the field, and
requires a sensitive and tentative stance, as endeavoured here, to allow participants to feel safe and in control.

In terms of the sample, whilst this provided for rich data and interpretation across the group, given the complexity of the phenomena being explored, a smaller number of case studies would have been practically more manageable. Further, the homogeneity of the sample relied on generic conflict experience, for which demographics was not a criteria, as the idiographic experience is the focus. However, it is important to note that the requirement for English as the interview medium may have played a part in influencing the demographics of the sample.

**Implications for Clinical Practice and Recommendations**

Given that psychological wellbeing has social and political roots, as this study suggests in the context of war and atrocity, to reduce the war trauma experience to private pathology, with the onus on the individual for recovery, is to significantly limit understanding of the experience, and risk not recognizing what is significant in resilience and recovery beyond individual differences, with serious implications for effective and appropriate psychosocial interventions for individuals and communities.

As case studies here suggest, civilian war trauma is about injustice, an abuse of the human condition that is intrinsically relational and rooted in political and cultural forces which produced it and which ending of suffering lies in the empowerment of populations to address and rectify these issues.

More directly, an interdisciplinary approach is needed through research with civilians in the field as well as in the UK to further identify their needs and priorities within this area, including in terms of supporting their access to justice, and effective transitional justice and reconciliation processes.

In the clinical field, further research is needed to identify and evaluate therapeutic approaches and models of good practice, including community based approaches on the ground, group based narrative focused therapy approaches, that will help individuals and communities to feel empowered, to reconnect and to foster a shared
sense of identity and belonging within the community, in ways that help society to move forward.

Following on from the current study, a follow-up research study with the same participants may yield insights into the relationship between loss, grief, anger, and the meaning of (in)justice. Further research on identity and (in)justice in conflict contexts where identity is threatened will offer further insights. Similarly, a more focused single country approach would help develop a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the meaning and relevance of justice to the experience of civilians within the same context, with practical applications tied to community reconciliation projects.
References


Shafiq, R. (2013). *A review of literature on the meanings and significance of the concept of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of mass violence and gross human rights violations in the context of armed conflict*. Unpublished manuscript. School of Psychology, University of Surrey, Guildford, Psych/D.

University Press.


Appendix 1. Reflexivity

As detailed in the Reflexivity section of the Literature Review (Shafiq, 2013) to the current research series, as a British Arab, I have had both private experience and professional exposure (in a former capacity) to the experiences of people living under ruthless and violent political repression, military occupation, armed invasion, conflict and revolution. Given this background and consciously reflecting on the personal interest and resonance the topic of (in)justice in this context has for me, and the epistemological issues these may raise, I approached the current study in the following ways, in order to enhance credibility in the research process.

For the collection and production of data, and taking into account the significance of English as the medium for conducting the interviews, I adopted a semi-structured interview schedule as a guide only in order to ensure an in-depth focus on the research topic and consistency of approach across the sample. During the interviews I adopted an open, curious and exploratory stance, using open-ended questions and empathic listening skills to enter the participant’s world and to facilitate free and open engagement in the topic, checking terminology and conceptual meaning, including through repetition, summarising and checking-back (in English and occasional Arabic), to generate rich, wide scoping, diverse and surprising data.

After each interview, I made notes on the interview dynamics and my own feelings and thoughts, in order to reflect on the process and how this might impact on my interpretation of the data before approaching the texts.

I took time to immerse myself in each case study, transcribing each myself, as closely as possible, in order to capture linguistic patterns and emotional nuances where possible, reading and re-reading the text several times, making notes after each reading, and then analysing each text as a distinct case study before moving on to the next.

During the process of analysis and interpretation, I was careful to check back to source at each stage to ensure I remained close to the data, as well as reflecting back
on the interview dynamics and my interview notes. I analysed each case study in turn according to the random chronological order in which the interviews were conducted.

In reflecting on commonalities and differences emerging across and between case study clusters and the sample as a whole, I was consciously careful to reflect the diverse idiographic voices of participants within the sample and to maintain the integrity of each participant’s experiences as I interpreted these.

In conducting this study, again I have found the experience both challenging and rewarding. Challenging because of the emotions which the experiences of participants generated, both out of a sense of deep empathy for their suffering and the shocking suffering of those they had witnessed, and in some instances as resonating with my own witness experiences. Rewarding because of the empowering nature of the experience of conducting the research, which has allowed me, like Omar, to move from the position of helpless witness to the more empowered one of sublimation, of taking some action through raising awareness of the suffering of many not often articulated.

In addition, through sharing in the experiences of participants, the process has also shed light on my own relationship with justice, which has changed as a consequence of this journey. I have come to understand more clearly the significance that injustice has, including for myself, and particularly in relation to its impact on sense of collective identity and individual self worth. And in turn its meaning and significance in the maintenance of sense of injury, hurt, violation, loss, grief, humiliation, shame, following psychological trauma, at the individual level, as witnessed amongst my own clients in the clinical field, and at the societal level, as witnessed in on-going cycles of violence.

Whilst I have come also to understand the subjective meaning and value that justice has to the resolution of injustice, and its limited potential in relation to issues of peace and social cohesion for these particular participants and particularly in the context of civil war between groups, I have gained also new insights into the potential value of reconciliation in helping individuals and societies move forward. This marks a shift in
my own attitudes towards justice and the opening up of new interests and further possibilities for research and in the clinical arena of the potential value of *reconciliation* to healing.
Appendix 2. Ethical Approval

Chair’s Action

Proposal Ref: 964-PSY-14

Name of Student/Trainee: Xxxxxxxxxx

Title of Project: A qualitative exploration of the meaning and significance of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of armed conflict

Supervisor: Xxxxxxxxxx

Date of submission: 20th December 2013

Date of confirmation email: 5th February 2014

The above Research Project has been submitted to the FAHS Ethics Committee and has received a favourable ethical opinion from the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with conditions. The conditions stipulated after ethical review have now been addressed and the relevant amended documents submitted as evidence prior to commencement of your study.

The final list of documents reviewed by the Committee is as follows:
Protocol Cover sheet
Summary of the project
Detailed protocol for the project
Participant Information sheet
Consent Form

This documentation should be retained by the student/trainee in case this project is audited by the Faculty Ethics Committee.

Signed: _________________

Professor Bertram Opitz
Chair

Dated:

Please note: If there are any significant changes to your proposal which require further scrutiny, please contact the Faculty Ethics Committee before proceeding with your Project.
Participant Invitation letter
Principal Investigator
[Name, Email, MB]

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY
School of Psychology
Guildford
Surrey GU2 7XH

Date

Dear

PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this research study. The study is being conducted as part of my professional Doctorate/Psych in Therapeutic & Counselling Psychology at the University of Surrey.

Research Study: A qualitative exploration of the meaning of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of armed conflict.

Research Study Description
The research aims to explore the experience of civilian survivors of armed conflict, which might include violent political repression, uprising, civil war or international conflict, and specifically the meaning that justice (including injustice) has to this experience.

The study will involve five to six one-to-one interviews with participants lasting no more than 60 minutes, with an introduction and debriefing together lasting no more than 15 minutes.

As a participant you will be asked to describe your experiences of armed conflict and understanding of justice in this context, in response to interview questions, which will be used as a guide. The interview will be audio-recorded for the purposes of research transcription and analysis.

Since the study explores potentially sensitive personal experience of armed conflict which may be distressing, there is an element of risk to yourself in taking part in the study. However, if you do become upset or distressed during the interview, you are free to pause or to take a break, or if you wish, you are free to withdraw completely without any explanation or disadvantage to yourself. A list of specialist trauma
services in the UK is attached if you would like information or wish to access further support.

**Confidentiality of the Data**

Names and contact details of participants will be stored in a password protected computer to which only the researcher has access to. This information will not be shared with anyone else. Once the recorded interviews have been transcribed electronically the original voice recordings will be erased.

All names and identifying references will be omitted from transcripts and from the research paper. The researcher’s supervisor and examiners will be able to read extracts only from the anonymous transcriptions of interviews.

Data will be kept for up ten years from the date of interview in the event of publication. Data will be stored electronically in a password protected computer which only the researcher has access to, and which will not be shared with anyone else. It will then be erased.

**Location**

The interview will take place in a convenient, private, comfortable and safe location, which will be mutually agreed between the participant and researcher in advance of the interview.

**Remuneration**

No payment is offered in remuneration for taking part in this study.

**Disclaimer**

You are not obliged to take part in this study and should not feel coerced. You are free to withdraw at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. Should you withdraw, you will have the option for your data to be withdrawn and deleted from the study if you so wish, otherwise your anonymised data may be used in the write-up of the study and any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Please feel free to ask me any questions. If you are happy to continue you will be asked to sign a consent form prior to your participation. Please retain this invitation letter for reference.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study has been conducted, please contact the researcher’s supervisor, [Name, post title, contact details].

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

[Name]
Principal Investigator
Appendix 4. Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY
School of Psychology
Guildford
Surrey GU2 7XH

Date

Consent to participate in the following research study:

‘A qualitative exploration of the meaning of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of armed conflict.’

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study and particular data from this research will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study, which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should I withdraw, unless I request otherwise, the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data in the write-up of the study and in any further analysis that may be conducted by the researcher.

Participant’s Name:……………………………………………………………

Participant’s Signature…………………………………………………………

Date:………………………………………………………………………………

Researcher’s Name:……………………………………………………………

Researcher’s Signature…………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………………………………
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line No</th>
<th>Transcript 01 Sara (Syrian conflict) Page 1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>R. What do you understand by armed conflict? In other words, how would you define it? What’s the meaning for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>P. Well. Armed conflict. I can think of it, the first idea it looks to me, very em, the word, the terminology, itself, eh it seems very, em, you know something you read in academic books, something you, and this is my view for it, it’s very very difficult for me to come to terms with, eh with it, because I’ve lived in the armed conflict. But it, on the very basic level, that’s, I’m not sure what you want, because we can talk on different levels in the my perception about it, but it’s the c, when there’s two groups having conflict and that could be with with the same em neighbourhood, the same country, or it could be something outside. So the conf, so yeah, this is how I define em…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>R. So two groups having a conflict?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>P. Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>R. But the terminology itself, ‘armed conflict’ seems quite abstract and distant from your experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>P. Definitely, definitely. It’s it’s the language that the people who have the power use it. And the people who, who I would not assume and be very prejudice about that but eh or generalizing that but I think it is the people who who coming from their comfortable seats trying to analyse the situation, they are categorizing it in a in a in a way, which maybe for the sake of research is important, I am, I’m not sure, I am not the best to judge, but at the same it feels alienated from, you know I would never say, to my therapist I have experienced armed conflict, its seems very em, yeah, technical rather than, it doesn’t have any eh emotional eh…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R. There’s no human connection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>P. charge. Yes. Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>R. I’m wandering how you would, what terminology you would use that’s closer to your experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>P. First of all I’m, I’m stuck between the lang the language, because if you would ask me I would directly go to Arabic, but at the same time I remember that when it took me too long to, to make sense that Syria is going through civil war, until this, when I see it in the news or I hear it from ignorant BBC journalists talking about it, I feel like how can they? how how can can Syria be? you know I, I don’t, I don’t make sense. Yes I hear about Lebanon when we were children, I hear about Spain civil war in the history but I cannot make sense of the civil war in Syr in the Syrian context. So, I am not sure what is, how can I verbalise my experience with the conflict. And it seems like I’m not sure, maybe there there is something more, beyond the war, something that I’m unable to express. I think this is what’s going on. And even now, because even though I have been away for three years from the conflict but till now I don’t feel that I have been able to, to be, how to put it? It’s like putting something inside and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Project Part 2:
A qualitative exploration of how civilian survivors of armed conflict construct the meaning of ‘justice’ and its implications for subjectivity, agency and change: Palestine (Gaza), Syria and Iraq.

Abstract
Within the context of increasing global civil strife, terror attacks, armed conflicts and unprecedented levels of refugees, the current study aims to explore from a psychological perspective, beyond the epidemiological approach to trauma, what constitutes justice and its significance to human distress, and the health and wellbeing of civilian survivors of armed conflict.

Re-analysing case studies from the Israeli/Palestinian (Gaza), Iraqi and Syrian conflicts, three of the world’s highest intensity conflicts, with significance beyond their boundaries, a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis was conducted on eight transcripts using semi-structured interviews. This produced three broad themes: *Injustice discourses: framing the actual in conflict experience, Justice discourses: framing the aspirational in conflict experience, Resistance discourses: justice and power, resilience and resolution.* These reflected the power of language, through justice discourses and the underlying social, political and cultural influences from which these are drawn, to influence subjective experience, reflecting the significance of constructions of injustice, the distinctions between injustice and justice constructs, and the significance of the erosion of justice to subjectivity, and opportunities for agency and change. Counter-discourses reflected the continuing resistance and resilience of ordinary people in the face of massive and enduring violence and loss.

Implications for the clinical field in critique of the current conceptualization of psychological trauma and contributions that counselling psychology can make to addressing the root causes of suffering, as well as contributing towards post-conflict reconciliation and community cohesion efforts are discussed and recommendations made for a more integrated approach alongside further research.
Introduction

“We feel sometimes we lose our identity as a human because we don’t have justice. Only we suffering from the injustice. We don’t have this justice. So for us, it means like, if there’s justice, that will give back us as a human…It’s all, all our suffering is about justice” (Omar, Palestinian/Israeli conflict, L727).

“We would be naive to think that these injustices are not feeding into a rise in militancy and unrest right across the region, as well as much closer to home” (Holly Lynch MP, Parliamentary Debate on ‘UN Independent Commission of Inquiry (Gaza)’, 8 July, 2015).

‘(In) justice’ is cited as significant to human suffering. For people like Omar struggling under brutal politically motivated systematic oppression, mass violence and human rights atrocities, justice represents more than material reparation. For countries torn apart by civil war it has been assumed to be crucial in the political transition to peace and stability.

In the context of today’s divided world, in which we witness increasing global levels of civil strife, terror attacks, wars and unprecedented levels of refugees, as the Middle East escalates into deepening violence, whilst Europe enjoys its highest level of peacefulness (IFEP, 2015), the current study suggests that is essential to understand from a psychological perspective, beyond an epidemiological approach to trauma, what constitutes ‘justice’ for civilian survivors and its significance to their distress. How is justice constructed and what does this reflect of power relations and political, social and cultural context from which language emerges? What are the implications for subjective experience, action in the form of agency and change in the form of resolution, and how significant is this to the civilian experience of suffering, health and wellbeing? And what are the implications for the discipline of psychology, currently dominated by an epidemiological epistemology that shapes our understanding and clinical approach to psychological trauma?

These questions are the focus of the current study on how civilian survivors construct the meaning of justice within the context of their experience of war trauma, defined here not as pathology, but as normal human response to extreme human experiences.
in the context of war. It follows on from Research Project Part 1 (Shafiq, 2014) which highlighted the significance of the meaning of ‘(in)justice’ in this context using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

This study is influenced by a relativist ontology, which assumes a broad social constructionist epistemological orientation in relation to the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge, constructed and sustained through social processes and interactions (Burr, 2003). In line with Counselling Psychology principles (BPS, 2005), the approach does not assume the primacy of any one way of knowing or experiencing, and adopts an open, curious and reflexive stance, acknowledging the researcher’s own participation in the construction of knowledge. It is informed by core humanistic values underpinning the profession, in its emphasis on the significance of the relational to the human experience (Milton, 2010) and of the need for engagement with subjectivity and intersubjectivity, values and beliefs, embedded in social, cultural and historical context, for understanding in a meaningful way what constitutes human distress, health and wellbeing (BPS, 2005). The initial Literature Review (Shafiq, 2013) conducted on justice and war trauma provides the basis for the following rationale.

**Defining justice**

Whilst the concept of justice has been found to be universally present across all human civilisations, what constitutes justice appears to differ between societies (Sluka, 2006), suggesting that what constitutes justice is socially constructed and dependent on historical and cultural influences. An influential universal Western concept of justice promoted by Rawls (1971) is associated with ‘fairness’, ‘freedom’ an ‘equity’. However what constitutes justice is subject to critical debate in the various schools of thought, so that the notion of a universal construct of justice, for example in ‘human rights’ discourse, is contested as reflecting a Western dominated understanding emerging from prevailing balances of political interests (Donnelly, 1999; Morris, 2006).

**Justice and human rights**

Although historically justice is assumed to be significant in relation to the suffering of
harm, more recently it has been conceptualized in International Law as the right to Reparation and Redress for victims of human rights violations, including in war, where justice is assumed to have significance and *therapeutic* value for individuals and societies in transition to peace and stability (Patel, 2011a; Shelton, 2005). However, this has received little reference from psychology research.

**Psychology of justice**

Despite its significance, justice has not been a focus of mainstream psychology. In a more recent debate, Taylor (2009) argues for a reappraisal of justice as a basic psychological human need within Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943). Although this has been debated in the literature, a more recent social cognitive neuroscience study equating justice with ‘fairness’ reinforces this view (Tabibnia, Satpute & Leiberman, 2008). At the same time, distinct branches have developed models of justice, including distributive, procedural, retributive and more recently restorative justice, e.g. relating to human need (Tabibnia, Satpute & Leiberman, 2008), motivation (Evans & Yamaguchi, 2009), moral outrage (Darely & Pittman, 2003), adaptive systems (Silove, 1999), personal and social identity (Skitka, 2003), relationship between forgiveness and positive mental health (Exline, Worthington, Hill & McCullough, 2003). However, these do not engage with the construction of justice itself but instead assume a universality, without regard to social, cultural or political influence, contextual specificity and subjectivity.

**Context of war and war trauma**

War can be defined as politically motivated mass social violence (Dutton, Boyanowsky, Harris Bond, 2005). A recent report by the Institute for Economics and Peace (2015), reveals a world which has become increasingly divided, showing Europe to have reached historically high levels of peace, and the Middle East and North Africa for the first time has become the most violent and least stable, whilst the number and intensity of armed conflicts has risen by 267%, and the numbers of refugees has reached its highest since 1945.

Muslim majority countries have experienced a divergent increase in armed conflict over the last decade, including the 2003 US-led ‘War on Terror’ in Iraq and ongoing
sectarian violence, the ‘Arab Spring’ civil uprisings in Tunisia, Yemen, Egypt, Libya and recently in Syria in 2011, and the 66-year ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Iraq, Syria and Palestine/Gaza are amongst the world’s highest intensity conflicts, with significance for peace and security globally (Escola de Cultura de Pau, 2013) and provide the contexts of the current study.

In addition to massive death tolls and the displacement of whole communities, war also involves the very break down of social structures, ties, rituals and ways of life, and upheavals in human relationships and human activities that signify the destruction of culture itself (Ehrenreich, 2003; Niaz, 2011). As a result of the experience of conflict, 20% of the world’s population will be affected by serious mental health problems (WHO, 2011).

**Psychology and war trauma**

Despite the social significance of war, research on the psychological impact of war and therapeutic support for affected populations is dominated by a Western epidemiological concept of trauma as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), despite the continuing controversial nature of this approach and diagnosis. As a diagnosis, PTSD applies to an incompatible range of human experiences, decontextualizing and conflating experiences for example of a car accident with torture, rape and genocide (Niaz, 2011). At the same time, it serves to pathologise and reduce human suffering to a set of narrow symptoms confined within the Individual realm, whilst assuming the replication of individual experience captures the collective and inter-generational experience (El-Shazly, 2011), disregarding all or what is most relevant to subjective and collective experience, as well as not taking into account what is significant in resilience beyond individual differences (Ehrenreich, 2003).

As a result, these limitations, which reflect a narrow conceptualisation of the experience of war, have serious implications for appropriate, effective and coherent psychosocial interventions and for individual survivors and populations. A comprehensive review of evidence based psychological interventions recommends more research is needed to determine what kind of interventions are best for survivors of torture and trauma within the context of political oppression and conflict.
At the same time, this approach has been criticized for depoliticizing human suffering that is intrinsically rooted in political and social problems (Patel, 2003; Summerfield, 2001; Young, 1995). This throws into sharp perspective the role of mainstream Western psychology and its relationship with power and control as articulated by Foucault (1975). At the same time, a different perspective is presented from the Muslim world (Niaz, 2011). El-Shazly (2011) describes human suffering in the context of recent conflicts and torture scandals in the Middle East in relation to the violation and erosion of the concept of human rights, as involving bitterness, anger, loss of dignity, dehumanization and hostility towards society, reflected at the societal level in the growth of violence, the development of ‘extremism’ and desire for retribution. These perspectives suggest the significance of (in)justice and reparation as a core psychological process of resolution for survivors of violence and violations of war.

**Research on justice and war trauma**

However, the limited psychology research available on the significance of justice to survivors of war trauma is dominated by a positivist epidemiological epistemology using the PTSD framework (e.g. Sonis et al., 2009), and or narrowly tied to the efficacy of political transitional processes (e.g. Pham, Weinstein & Longman, 2004). In effect, the significance of justice to the subjective experience of civilian war trauma has been neglected, with implications for developing appropriate psychosocial interventions for survivors (El Shazly, 2011; Niaz, 2011), and facilitating justice for individuals and communities in the transition to peace and stability, inviting calls for a more inter-disciplinary approach (Patel, 2011a). It also raises questions on the role of Western psychology and its relationship with power and control (Foucault, 1975), particularly given Western geopolitical hegemony.

The paucity of psychology research on justice and war and the dominance of the PTSD model has led to limitations in our understanding of the civilian experience of armed conflict, and of the relevance of the construct of justice to this experience. This
has implications for the efficacy of clinical approaches, psychosocial humanitarian and human rights support for populations affected by war, as well as the effectiveness of judicial processes for victims and their families and political and social processes involved in the successful transition to peace and stability.

Accordingly, an initial qualitative study, Research Project Part 1 (Shafiq, 2014) was carried out exploring the meaning of justice for civilian survivors, involving IPA of semi-structured interviews with eight civilians experiencing the Israeli/Palestinian (Gaza), Iraq and Syria conflicts. This highlights the complex subjective experience of war trauma and the centrality of justice to it, tied to power relations and embedded in political, social and cultural context. Injustice is experienced as violation of what it is to be human, beyond threat to life, and justice at once the cause of violence and an equalizing and empowering force, with potential for healing and positive social change.

This study highlights the continuing pressing need for new approaches to understanding civilian war trauma, which engage with the relational in the human condition and influences of power and culture on the impact and meanings that people give to their experiences, beginning with the construct of ‘(in)justice’ so often cited in times of violation.

**Research Aims and Objectives**

Accordingly, following on from the initial study (Research Project Part 1, 2014) but moving beyond the descriptive use of language and immediate interpersonal context, to engage with its constitutive role and the significance of society, power relations and culture in the construction of meaning, the current study aims to explore the significance of the constructions of (in)justice within the civilian war trauma experience and its influence on subjectivity, agency and change, by asking the following research question:

How do civilian survivors construct the meaning of (in)justice within the context of their experience of war trauma?
Relevance to Psychotherapeutic and Counselling Psychology
In this way, for practitioners the study aims to contribute to a more holistic contextualised understanding of the civilian war trauma experience, as a critique of the current approach, and the relevance of the construct of justice to psychological distress, health and wellbeing, as well as raising awareness of the role of macro linguistic and social structures in framing social and psychological life (Burr 2003).

It also aims to contribute to psychology research on justice and transitional justice processes in line with interdisciplinary collaboration. In both clinical and societal arenas, and within psychology, ultimately, the study aims to challenge truth claims made by discourses that sustain, inadvertently or otherwise, oppressive power relations and discriminatory practices, and to raise the voice of marginalized discourses and the marginalized (Burr, 2003). Accordingly, the study has significance for Counseling Psychologists and other health and rehabilitation services (including legal and human rights) engaged in supporting, in a meaningful way, affected individuals and populations, and contributes to the Counselling Psychologist’s obligations towards the client (BPS, 2005), and the Profession’s contributions to the discipline and to significant issues within society (Milton, 2010).

Method
In order to address the research question, a qualitative epistemological research approach was adopted. Qualitative methods are said to provide richness and depth of data, involving descriptions based on essential characteristics rather than quantity or measured value. They are, therefore, particularly suited to exploring in-depth, from an idiographic perspective, the complexity of social, emotional and experiential phenomena and how individuals make sense of their experiences (Ashworth, 2009; Howitt & Cramer, 2011).

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) was chosen as the method of data analysis particularly suited to the current study. As a version of discourse analysis, but with a focus beyond the interpersonal, FDA has routes in the work of Foucault and post-structuralists. Broadly social constructionist in orientation, it encompasses a range of relativist positions, including the more ‘realist’ (e.g. Willig, 1999) that also seek to
understand ‘underlying’ mechanisms making particular discourse formations possible (Burr, 2003; Willig, 2008). FDA is concerned with language as social action (Austin, 1975; Grice, 1975; Searle, 1965) and its role in the constitution of social and psychological life, and the wider social processes of legitimation and power which influence it. FDA proposes that language, rather than describing social reality, assumed in IPA, constructs social reality, through ‘discourses’ within the culture tied to power relations and institutional practices, which make available certain ways of seeing the world and being in the world, that have implications for subjectivity, agency and change, at the heart of the current study (Burr, 2003; Potter & Wetherell, 2013; Willig, 2008).

Participants
Following FDA research design, a sample of eight primary texts was used to generate data. These texts comprise the same transcripts of the semi-structured interviews from the initial study (Research Project Part 1, 2014), whose eight participants were recruited following an IPA (Smith & Osborne, 2003).

This is because the data from this sample is particularly rich, in-depth and contextualized, meriting a re-analysis using a different methodological approach in order to generate new insights. The sample size was kept relatively small in line with qualitative research, in order to facilitate detailed in-depth analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 2013). All participants who were interviewed were civilians with first-hand experience of armed conflict (Israeli-Palestinian (Gaza), Iraqi, and Syrian conflicts). For descriptive information on the participants see Table 1.
Table 1
Descriptive Information on Participants from Whom Interviews as Data Sources Were Drawn.
NB: Names and identifying features have been changed to protect the confidentiality of participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity/Religion/Language</th>
<th>Conflict/s</th>
<th>Conflict Experiences &amp; time since traumas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Palestinian refugee in Gaza, Muslim. Arabic 1st language. Fluent in English.</td>
<td>Palestinian-Israeli (Gaza) conflict 1947+</td>
<td>Civilian experience of military occupation and conflict. Fourth generation displaced living in refugee camp in Gaza. Shot as teenager throwing stones at soldiers. Imprisoned as adult for using friends ID to get to West Bank to do his exams after being refused by Israelis. Left 10 yrs ago for post-grad studies. Now working in West with family, wider family in Gaza. Different careers, now psychologist, involved in psychosocial support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariam</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Syrian (religion unknown). Arabic 1st language. Lower intermediate level English.</td>
<td>Syrian conflict March 2011+</td>
<td>Civilian experience of conflict (first 18 mths), plus as human rights lawyer. Sister and brother-in-law kidnapped by militia group. Witness (as lawyer) to numerous personal accounts of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethical Considerations

BPS (2014) and HCPC (2012) ethics guidelines informed the study, including responsibilities and rights, trust, respect, confidentiality and care for self and participants, integrity and credibility. These are discussed in the initial study, and are detailed below where relevant. As part of these considerations, university ethical approval for this study (Appendix 4. Protocol) was sought from the FAHS University of Surrey Ethics Committee, which advised that an amendment to the initial approval would be sufficient to meet the requirements for publication (Appendix 4. Ethical Approval).

Data Collection

The depth and rich contextualized nature of the data generated in the initial study, Research Project Part 1 (Shafiq, 2014), and the different methodological approach adopted, allowed for the same transcripts to be used for the purpose of data analysis (see Strengths and Limitations for further discussion on this). These were in the form of transcribed texts drawn from semi-structured interviews (Appendix 4. Example of Transcript), as recommended by Willig (2008) for the purposes of FDA research on the construction of meaning in relation to particular topics. This format allowed for an in-depth focus on the topic, through an open, exploratory stance, whilst facilitating
free reflection and rich contextualised data (Ashworth, 2009; Smith, 2003; Willig, 2001).

These were generated using a seven-question interview schedule (Appendix 4. Interview Schedule) as a guide for exploring idiographic conflict experience, the constructs of ‘(in)justice’ and their relevance to participants’ experiences of conflict and to resolution, and other aspects participants wished to explore. The interviews lasted 60-180 minutes. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, noting major linguistic features so as to more closely capture the interview as closely as possible (Howitt & Cramer, 2008; Willig, 2008). Identifying features were altered to preserve confidentiality, and data was stored electronically in a password-protected folder, for up to ten years before being erased in line with ethics guidelines, participants’ written consent, data protection guidelines and the university research guidelines (see Methods section, Research Project Part 1. for further details).

**Research Informing the Analysis**

Prior to the analysis of the text samples, background research was carried out on the three conflicts that provide the context for the constructs under investigation. This was deemed significant for an accurate and in-depth understanding of the cultural, social and political contexts of the experiences that provide the backdrop for the current study, since experience is embedded in specific language, culture, politics and history and cannot be assumed from a Western perspective. In researching this, being aware that all historical narratives are themselves a particular political account mediated through language, this was taken into account, including reflections on terminology (Appendix 3. Tables 4., 5., & 6.).

Similarly, information on participants (biographical, historical, material experiences in the conflict) captured in the recruitment process and in the course of the interviews provides invaluable insight to inform the analysis (Appendix 3. Table 7). Although the presentation of participant data runs counter to guidelines for presenting research recommended by Willig (2001), this idiographic information, inevitably forming a part of the intersubjective research experience, provides valuable insights particularly into the emotional investment of participants in subject positions, the discourses
drawn on or rejected, and their subjective experience within them, particularly where analysis would remain speculative, and reflect a limitation of the research design (Willig, 2008).

**Analysis**

A seven-stage systematic analysis of interview transcripts was carried out, using FDA guidelines from Willig (2008), with the addition of a further stage looking at the relationship of constructs of justice to power (Parker, 1992).

- **Discursive Object** – involves highlighting all references to ‘justice’ as the discursive object, to identify the different ways justice is constructed.
- **Discourses** - aims to locate these within wider political and social discourses.
- **Action Orientation** - focuses on the discursive contexts, the interview, in which constructions are deployed to understand their functions within the text, by asking what is achieved by constructing justice in this particular way, at this particular point.
- **Positionings** - identifies the constructed ‘subject positions’ from which the speaker can speak and act, offered by the various constructions of ‘justice’, and the wider discourses within which they are located.
- **Practice** - focuses on the relationship between discourse and practice, involving mapping out the possibilities for action contained within the discursive constructions identified in the text, and the ways in which these, and the ‘subject positions’ contained within them, allow or limit opportunities for action.
- **Subjectivity** - explores the relationship between discourse, which makes available ways of seeing the world, and subjectivity, ways of being in the world, involving the construction of social and psychological realities, and tracing the consequences for the participant’s subjective experience of taking up the various ‘subject positions’, including what can be felt, thought and experienced from within them.
- **Relationship with institutions, power, and dominant ideology** – explores the relationship of justice discourses to power as authority, its institutions, and ideology, within the social and cultural context of the conflict.
This process was repeated for each text source, allowing for an in-depth understanding of idiographic complexity (see Appendix 3. Table 8. Example of FDA Seven Stage Process), and the results written up per case study summarized in table format (Appendix 2. Table 3. FDA Results by Participant). The final stage of the analysis involved synthesizing the results for each case study, cluster and sample, capturing commonalities and differences that reflect the richness and breadth of the sample (Table 2. FDA Results by Themes).

**Credibility**

Credibility was addressed using guidelines from Yardley (2000) to ensure transparency, coherence, validity and reflexivity. This involved a critical self-reflection on how the researcher, as part of the social world being investigated, influences the study and the measures taken to enhance credibility (see Appendix 1. Reflexivity). These involved reflecting back on the relational dynamics and social context of the interview process, and on the re-use of primary data (see Limitations). They also involved maintaining a sensitive, open and curious stance during the process of data analysis, ensuring analysis and interpretative processes were rigorous and true to source by remaining grounded in the data, checking back to source at each stage, maintaining a clear connection between data, analysis and interpretation, and reflecting the depth and breadth of the sample. Further, it involved demonstrating the significance of the study results in advancing theoretical knowledge and application (see Further Discussion section).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discursive constructs</th>
<th>Discourses</th>
<th>Action Orientation</th>
<th>Positionings</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Subjectivity</th>
<th>Relationship of discourses with power, institutions, and dominant ideology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is ‘justice’ constructed? What type of object (‘justice’) is being constructed?</td>
<td>What discourses are drawn on? What is their relationship to one another?</td>
<td>What do constructions of justice achieve? What is gained by deploying them here? What are their functions? What is speaker doing here?</td>
<td>What subject positions are made available by these constructions of justice?</td>
<td>What possibilities for action are mapped out by these constructions? What can be said and done within these subject positions?</td>
<td>What can be thought, felt, experienced from the available subject positions?</td>
<td>Injustice constructs and the discourses and counter-discourse they draw on generate intense struggle that motivates positions of resistance against the status quo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Injustice Discourses: Framing the Actual in Conflict Experience</strong></td>
<td>Equality discourse (unfair treatment and worth)</td>
<td>Employed in the interview/text at various points to frame conflict experience: how conflict is perceived and experienced, from perspective of current context (condition and psychological state). Draws in researcher as an active witness to experience of injustice.</td>
<td>Generates extreme positions:</td>
<td>Generate struggle between desire to take action against injustice being witnessed or experienced to defend self, defend collective others (by giving back/revenge, by resisting, by withdrawing if able to), or to conform/comply, or to give up.</td>
<td>As actual, felt, visceral, embodied experience.</td>
<td>Terror, injury, pain, suffering, Grief, loss, guilt, shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social contract political discourse (violation of contract between governed and governing)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Victim position (physical threat to survival and threat to integrity).</td>
<td></td>
<td>Horror, shock, Empathy/shared identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morality and religious discourses (violation of deeply held social norms, belief systems and values).</td>
<td></td>
<td>Witness position (threat to life/integrity).</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling of being forced, conscious of change in self, feelings of loss of worth, loss of self-esteem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human rights and freedoms discourses and legal frameworks.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Perpetrator position (threat to life/integrity)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anger, hatred, bitterness, blame.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counter-discourses drawn from material experience and historical generational discourses that influence collective and individual identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Influenced by complex idiographic dimensions:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional turmoil, helplessness/loss of control, depression, hopelessness, ‘trauma’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equality discourse (unfair treatment and worth)</td>
<td>As defining the experience of conflict and root cause of conflict: political violence, occupation, oppression, discrimination, marginalization.</td>
<td>As an ethical construct, involving the violation of private &amp; collective values and beliefs (wrong, unjust, unfair, forced on/into, deliberate &amp; cruel, indiscriminate/sense less), the interpersonal nature of this, the nature &amp; degree of violence and suffering caused, the deliberate nature of it as forced on, the unequal power element of it, the indiscriminate nature of it as done to civilians (innocent, ordinary).</td>
<td>As the condition of lack of justice associated with human rights and freedoms,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
experienced as the violation of the self and what it is to be human.

As impacting on the private, the collective, interface between individual and structural, on local, regional, global levels; on past, present and future; and as historical.

Justice Discourses: Framing the Aspirational in Conflict Experience

Pursuit of justice defines the Palestinian struggle, the Syrian civil reform movement and civilian revolution, and the solution to Iraq’s, regional and global civil unrest.

Justice as an essential human need.

Justice ends suffering.

Justice as essential for human security, peace and stability.

Justice as key to the transition of societies from autocratic to democratic systems.

Justice has symbolic value in of itself, by giving meaning to suffering.

Justice empowers and readdresses the balance of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political, ethical, legal discourses pertaining to civil rights, human rights, humanitarian, redress and reparation laws and frameworks.</th>
<th>Employed within the dyadic relationship of the interview to legitimize and give credibility to subject positions, and to invite the researcher to share them.</th>
<th>Credible purposeful subject positions of resistance.</th>
<th>Justice as empowering, opening up space for agency and resistance.</th>
<th>Generate inspiration, hope of possibilities for change and foster resilience to endure.</th>
<th>Justice constructs and the discourses and counter-discourse they draw on become sources of hope and resilience that maintain resistance against the status quo in the face of enduring challenge.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pursuit of justice defines the Palestinian struggle, the Syrian civil reform movement and civilian revolution, and the solution to Iraq’s, regional and global civil unrest.</td>
<td>Pursuit of justice defines the Palestinian struggle, the Syrian civil reform movement and civilian revolution, and the solution to Iraq’s, regional and global civil unrest.</td>
<td>Pursuit of justice defines the Palestinian struggle, the Syrian civil reform movement and civilian revolution, and the solution to Iraq’s, regional and global civil unrest.</td>
<td>Pursuit of justice defines the Palestinian struggle, the Syrian civil reform movement and civilian revolution, and the solution to Iraq’s, regional and global civil unrest.</td>
<td>Pursuit of justice defines the Palestinian struggle, the Syrian civil reform movement and civilian revolution, and the solution to Iraq’s, regional and global civil unrest.</td>
<td>Pursuit of justice defines the Palestinian struggle, the Syrian civil reform movement and civilian revolution, and the solution to Iraq’s, regional and global civil unrest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
power.

Justice protects the individual from the excesses of power and the collective.

Justice as associated with inalienable human rights and freedoms, redress and reparation (human dignity, respect, worth, autonomy, self-determination, basic needs, protection, refugee right to return and reparation; freedom of movement, expression, belief, protest, from discrimination, oppression).

Justice as involving bearing witness, preserving memory, accountability (prosecution, recognition of crimes, punishment), remedy and reparation.

Justice as revenge.

Justice as aspirational, an abstract ideal that is attainable, through international instruments.

Justice exists of its self and is embodied not only in power but in the ordinary man.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resistance Discourses: Justice &amp; Power, Resilience &amp; Resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice as an abstract ideal that does not exist of itself, but is dependent on power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice credibility is being eroded by political power. Abuse of 'justice' as a cause of injustice at local, regional and global levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice looks to the past, maintains hate and injury in the collective memory, and generates injustice and cycles of violence and revenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice is secondary to survival. Justice cannot heal loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice as ‘freedom’ is not worth such massive injustice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection of justice discourses for reconciliation constructs, through dialogue and forgetting past, through forgiveness and sharing grief, through conversion, through shared rebuilding country, through paradigm shift in global foreign policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawn from material experience, which generate counter-discourses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-constructions drawn from various discourse strands, political, religious, cultural, humanistic, psychological depending on idiosyncratic dimensions that count for individual difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act to generate counter-discourses and subject positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed in the interview dyad to legitimize these counter-subject positions, which the researcher is invited to share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generates middle positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generates static positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generates distancing and/or withdrawing positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generates alternative positions of resistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice erosion impacts to disempower and closes down space for agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-constructs open up space for agency, maintained resilience and offer up resolution at different levels (private, community, national, global).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can involve helplessness and hopelessness, despondency, deadness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generates dissonance, ambiguity, confusion, tension and struggle between actual and aspirational, between conflicting subject positions, and within disempowered state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberate and or cynical erosion of justice ideals generate positions of struggle, which drive alternative counter-discourses and subject positions of resistance to status quo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propelling alternative counter-discourses and solutions for resistance, agency and change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results and Discussion

The seven-stage FDA highlighted complex and diverse idiographic constructions of justice, their location within wider social discourses, their function within the discursive context of the interview, the subject positions they offer, possibilities for action within these as opportunities made legitimate or limited, and the consequences of subject positions for subjective experience in terms of feelings, thoughts and experiences. However, analysis also identified key commonalities within and between the sample, suggesting three key themes, Injustice discourses: framing the actual in conflict experience, Justice discourses: framing the aspirational in conflict experience, and Resistance discourses: justice and power, resilience and resolution. Results relating to the constructions of justice along these three themes are detailed first, followed by the results of analysis of wider discourses, action orientation, subject positions, subjectivity, change and relationship to power.

Injustice Discourses: Framing the Actual in Conflict Experience

‘Injustice’ is one of three broad categories in which justice as the discursive object in the context of armed conflict experience is constructed within the sample. The other two are ‘lack or absence of justice’ and ‘justice’ itself, which are constructed as binary versions of each other where they appear in the texts. Analysis suggests that both constructs of injustice and lack or absence of justice are used as ways of framing experience of what is ‘actual’ in armed conflict, whilst ‘justice’ constructs describe what is abstract and or pertains to the aspirational and the future (with the exception of ‘revenge’ which is dealt with in the third theme under erosion of justice).

Discursive constructions of injustice

Injustice is constructed as a multidimensional discursive object. It forms an ethical construct which frames for the participant (and consequently draws in the interviewer) conceptual understandings of the nature of the three conflicts. It is also a socio-political moral construct that defines the parties in the conflict, and their actions, and positions the participant’s stance in relationship with these and with the locus of power within society. It is also a psychological/phenomenological construct used to define the subjective experiential condition of conflict itself and as such constructs injustice as equating with a powerful embodied condition.
Injustice as the discursive object is constructed semantically in the texts through illustrative narratives of events and biographical experiences referred to as ‘injustices’, as ideas which attempt to define the construct, and through the use of specific terms. These construct the meaning of injustice in overlapping and interconnected ways, with individual differences that suggest broader ways of relating to the world and psychological states relating to material conflict and diaspora experience.

Injustice is constructed as harm relating to the abuse of power (as pre-conflict cause, and current conflict experience); as the denial, suppression or violation of ‘rights’ and ‘freedoms’ and consequently of legal framework; as the violation of accepted social, cultural and religious moral codes of conduct, particularly in relation to the conduct of political actors, the nature and scale of violence and the degree of suffering; as ‘unfair treatment’ in the sense of unequal treatment, relating to human worth, dignity, self-esteem, the sense of ‘I’ in relation to ‘others’, and which generates intense emotions in the sense of social inequality and in the sense of harm forced on or having to endure against one’s will and beyond one’s control. These are illustrated ideographically below.

The construct of injustice is used to define the conflicts themselves, highlighting injustice as a political category defining how the conflict is referred to and understood in the context of the interview. The three conflicts are explicitly reframed, itself an act of resistance, from ‘armed conflict’ and ‘civil conflict’ and defined instead as ‘displacement’ and ‘Israeli military occupation’ (Palestinian/Israeli conflict), ‘regime’ violence against ‘its/the people’ and ‘revolution’ (Syria conflict), and as ‘US invasion’, ‘[implanted] sectarian violence’, ‘terrorism’, ‘war’ (Iraq conflict), with their implied meanings for subject positions and action orientation. There are significant idiographic differences within the clusters, reflecting nuances in injustice constructions, which are explained in terms of differences in psychological states and shifts in subject positions as the conflicts change and develop.
For Omar (Palestine (Gaza)) injustice is constructed as the ‘occupation’ (L19), synonymous with his experience of four generations of displacement and enduring subjugation, ‘we’ve been under this armed and this occupation for so long, four generations, 66 years now, so it’s too much’ (L67), through an extraordinary collusion of power against a people, ‘it’s not like between two armies, no! it’s innocent people, civilian people, and the [Israeli] army supported by big and very huge and some very strong countries in the world’ (L22). The manifestations of which, expressed through a continuous autobiographical narrative of material events witnessed and experienced, is all encompassing, ‘Israelis control everythings’ (L405). Injustice through physical and psychological threats and violations define his private and collective experience. He describes ‘every kind’ of ‘punishment’ (L314), ‘arrests’ (154), ‘shootings’ (L79), ‘destroying and demolishing the houses and killing the people’ (L6) and deliberate policies of ‘dehumanising’, ‘humiliating’, ‘play in your life’ (L306), ‘treating us less than animal’ (L108). He explains this as ‘strategic’ (L314) to ‘control’ (L325), whilst ‘uprooting the people from their houses and their villages’ (L7), ‘chang[ing] all the names’ of Palestinian villages (L54), in order ‘to make things happen on the ground and to change the demographics’ (L7).

He constructs injustice as an embodied condition relating to what it is to be human: ‘We feel sometimes we lose some of our identity as a human because we don’t have ju ju justice’ (L561), and as the root cause of human suffering for Palestinians: ‘I think for people who suffered for so long…injustice is very important, because it’s the reason of their suffering’ (L613). This is highly significant, since it positions justice as the solution to end suffering and the pursuit of justice as a source of ‘hope and resilience’ (L623), through which agency Omar finds ‘resistance’ (L112).

Similarly, injustice as abuse of political power frames the way in which the Syrian conflict is conceptualized, in the form of government violence against the civilian population, in relation to its historical and immediate roots, its escalation, and current manifestations, though with individual differences and shifts in subject positions following escalation of violence. For Leen (Syria), injustice is introduced from the outset and applied throughout to frame the conflict as government abuse of its citizens, ‘you could call it [the war] injustice you know from the regime’s side’ (L20),
as root cause and escalation into violence, and as the pre-war context of violation of civil rights and freedoms. Here, injustice is constructed as having a strong moral dimension, with socio-political undertones, as arbitrary and indiscriminate political mass violence against unarmed and vulnerable ‘innocent’ civilians who are ‘getting weaker’, and whom she identifies with ‘people like us, they’re normal people’ (L498), as well as involving the wanton destruction of the country:

[arrests, killings] just because they wanted, you know, to go on the streets and express their opinion, arrest them, torture them, em and just this random killing, random bombing, random you know shooting, random, this is injustice. (Leen, L26)

Injustice is constructed as embodied for Leen in parallel violent and destructive internal emotions, experienced as ‘killing me’ (L477), relating to her witness experience of violence and her own of psychological terror, particularly in relation to torture, and her profound experience of loss:

All these feelings of anger of what happened to people when, and the way they destroyed the country and killed it’s own people, and torture! Maybe because I read so much about it and I we heard so much about it, this is why it’s it’s killing me. (Leen, L475-7)

Mariam’s (Syria) conceptualisation of the conflict is similar, though consistently framed as the pursuit by ‘us the Syrian people’ (L12) of justice, ‘to make justice for this country’ (L623), rather than as the conditions of injustice for Omar. Injustice here is the condition from which emerges ‘revolution’ (L14), constructed as synonymous with the pursuit of justice, aimed at securing life free from political oppression, discrimination and intimidation and ‘rights’ and ‘freedoms’ which dominate Mariam’s account: ‘they want eh a free ehh a free life and eh they want to be ok eh without eh any eh pressure of any power like the regime’ (L35). Similarly to Leen (Syria), whilst recognising other ‘factions’, Mariam consistently frames the conflict as involving two clear but unequal sides:
A clash between two factions with the regime and one with opposition, one to defend about his revolution and one want his authority and his power still in this country. (Mariam, L12)

Her construction of injustice is drawn from material personal (now in hiding from the regime) and witnessed experiences, ‘my experience by my work’ (L12) of the conflict as a human rights lawyer documenting (through verbal testimony, photographs and reports) ‘violations’ by all parties, including government ‘killings’, ‘detentions’, imprisonment, ‘torture’, disappearances, whole family expulsions and house demolitions, which she describes through graphic narrated examples equated with ‘injustice’. Injustice here is also constructed as not securing justice, in terms of the aims of the revolution through the framework of the law and legal procedure, wherein lies her vulnerability and lack of autonomy. She relates this construct to her inability to secure justice for refugees through the law, as well as to the international community’s non-intervention in the face of such ‘violations’:

[injustice] means there is eh no one eh take any of his rights, and when you em when you when you get out of your country without your choice, when you leave everything and eh and eh go, and eh you can’t do anything for your people, who hurt or detention or killed in this eh war, this is I see that no justice. No justice when no one in the world do anything to eh to save these people. (Mariam, L325)

For Sara (Syria), injustice is equated initially with abuse of political power, though this takes on different dimensions as her own subject position changes in the light of observed, witnessed and personal experiences of escalating violence and loss. Her support initially (not for revolution) but for progressive secular civil reform was born out of her conceptualization of injustice as ‘social’ injustice, relating to the denial of ‘freedom’ of expression manifest in a culture of ‘repression and oppression’ (L216), which she experiences personally as ‘smashing any individuality’ (L750). Injustice is also associated with social inequality, involving her witnessed ‘deprivation’ of marginalised groups (Sunni and Palestinian) ‘who don’t belong to the family [Alawite ruling family] circle’ (L301):
I was not very politically active at that time, but I was very critical of the system, and I used to think of it on a social level rather than political one.
(Sara, L162)

However, following her own intense ‘pain’ and grief at the killing of her close friend by government forces, and escalation of violence and mass destruction leading to imminent threat for her immediate and wider family members, and her increasing sense of personal and collective loss (memories, belonging, culture, security), she reframes the conflict as ‘Syrians killing Syrians’ (L45). Injustice becomes synonymous with the experience of war as, ‘Horror. Death. Trauma’ (L63), experienced as completely destabilizing, ‘nothing makes sense anymore’, with herself in ‘the middle of all this chaos’ (L689). In this context, injustice becomes reconstructed as unfairness in relation to injury and loss:

it is unfair that all these people had to experience death, even if they liked it or not liked it, even if it was their decision or not their decision. It’s unfair that the country is no longer the country they experienced as home. (Sara, L830)

The moral context of the conflict now becomes redundant as injustice reflects only the pain and horror of grief and loss: ‘I think of injustice…it’s about a human being causing horror to other human being because of the belief that if this has been to me so why not being to another’ (L888). This now reflects Sara’s experiential condition and her subject position in relationship with the conflict, in which the external manifestations of injustice become embodied as the state of being physically dismembered:

It’s the combination of your experience and your relating to the different, different little bits of all these feelings, of feeling home, and feeling safe, and feeling the trusting other, and relating to other, feeling that you are allowed to to express whatever’s on your mind, I think, so it feels like all of that has been cut, it’s like your your hands and legs has been cut and the result is
somebody who is unable to move and un the only thing this person would have
is his voice to express whatever. (Sara, L853-58)

This is similar for Saif (Syria), who defines the conflict itself from his position now in
diaspora as ‘destroying people and country’ (L369), ‘a dead end’ (L4), as equating
with his own current state of mind. For Saif, injustice is conceptualized similarly,
initially in relation to a pre-war political context of a culture of fear of public
expression of ideas and beliefs, creating tensions between public and private realms
and an internal ‘desire always’ for ‘freedom’ shared by all Syrians. Hence his support
for the emergence of the student-led ‘movement or revolution for freedom’:

From the beginning I was really happy to see that this generation who doesn’t
eh live our experience who doesn’t feel eh afraid to say we want freedom, eh
he ask for this and try to take it by peaceful ways, so I feel sorry what it’s
ended after that. (Saif, L104)

He reframes the conflict as a ‘dead end’ following the government’s violent attempts
at manipulating the movement into a sectarian threat and its ‘natural’ escalation into
violence. He describes the subsequent ongoing massive ‘losses in souls and in
buildings and in heritage’, which he witnesses as ‘so so so painful’ (L159).

Here, Saif frames the conflict in moral terms expressing the inner tension he
experiences as witness to suffering and destruction of the people and country from
which he derives a strong sense of private and collective identity, whilst feeling
helpless to end it. Here injustice becomes constructed, like Sara, as relating to
unfairness (unequal and unjust injury):

My dreams related to Syria and what is happening because when you have a
dream and somebody breaks your dreams this is unfair you fee, this is unfair.
(Saif, L223)

Like Sara, for Saif injustice becomes constructed as an embodied condition reflecting
that which is being done to his country (its people, structures, heritage), to which his
identity is tied and which he finds so painful, ‘what is happening in Syria destroys you from the inside’ (L228).

In the case of the current Iraq conflict, as in the Syrian cluster, participants share similar understandings of it (counter to both dominant Western and Iraqi political discourses) though with significant individual differences, as amongst the Syrian cluster and the Palestinian, in terms of how injustice is constructed in relation to it, as reflective of the core subjective experiences within it.

For the Iraqi participants, who experienced multiple conflicts, injustice has strongly moral dimensions, as a violation of social (and religious for Yasmine) norms, values and beliefs. This relates to the conceptualisation of the conflict as an attack, ‘the American invasion’ (Kareem, L368) against Iraq as a nation of people, ‘the world force against Iraq’ (Yasmine, L40). For Kareem, injustice is constructed in relation to the concept of ‘just war’, which frames his conceptualisation of each war and his subjective position in relation to it. For Yasmine, injustice is constructed as the condition of war itself, reflecting her core experiences of fear, insecurity, her inability to make sense within her belief system of the conduct of others within it, leaving her asking ‘Why?’ For Tara, injustice is constructed as inequality, relating to her sense of discrimination within Iraq, and the life of Iraqis compared to those in the West.

For Tara, the Iraq conflict is conceptualized as ‘terror’, an experiential condition of ‘danger’ in which there is no ‘clear distinction’ in enemies, which state is described as a manifestation of injustice in the form of ‘sectarian conflict’, which term she consistently uses to frame the conflict, with injustice defined as ‘violence, discrimination, marginalization, exclusion’ (L412):

[conflict] it means terrorism to us, it means that your every day life is a is disturbed by eh by bombs, by car bombs, by street bombs, by fear, by by worry you are so so you cannot live a normal life…this is what what Iraq has experienced the last 10 years since 2003. (Tala, L3)
Here, injustice is constructed as political, economic and social inequality, the condition of not being ‘treated equally with others’ (L442), in the form of sectarianism, which frames her conceptualisation of the conflict’s nature and its root cause:

This is the main problem the discrimination, the the sectarian conflict, of course this is one of the things that we lack in the country, ehhh the sectarian problem it’s part of the justice problem huh? Yeah it is part of it…You you feel marginalised, you feel you’re not treated well like eh like the other sect this is this is how the the feeling of injustice will come to you. (Tala, L447-452)

Injustice as sectarianism is described as generated by the new political order with the ousting of the former regime, as ‘introduced’ by ‘the Americans’ and made official through constitutional and judiciary processes by the new ‘Shi’a dominated government’, out of motives of ‘revenge’, ‘own interests’ and partisan politics (L456). It manifests itself in policy as political, social and economic ‘discrimination’, ‘marginalisation’ and ‘exclusion’ of the Sunni population, former Ba’ath members, civil servants, police and army. It is experienced at the societal level as an extreme culture shift from secularism to religious intolerance, manifest as radicalization and polarization of individuals into constituent groups, as highlighted in the Syrian context by Sara, experienced personally as oppressive:

You are seen as a person by others that you belong to this sect and not that sect ok…This sectarian conflict and this eh these terminology you know it wasn’t in Iraq before 2003, after the change of the regime and after the war eh that happened, the invasion, the American invasion, they eh, such concepts was introduced, ehh wha, as I told you, I don’t know, I I the the the environment that I was raised with that I don’t know my neighbour is Shii, Sunni or Christian, this is what I eh this is what eh what we knew as Iraqis, there was no discrimination, no separation, but after eh 2003 you started to hear Shii, Sunni, and people eh em they fear each other. (Tala, L209).
Similarly, injustice for Tala is constructed as an embodied condition of ‘terror’, leading to a sense of inner change:

the fear inside me, the worries… I I feel the an anxiety I experience everyday, I don’t feel stable sometimes and I know the reasons, the reasons are the fear that I live everyday. (Tala, L347)

I’m a confused person, I cannot decide, take decisions eh very clearly, eh you know, I’m a hesitant person eh I became eh this is. (Tala, L543)

For Yasmine, the Iraq conflict is consistently referred to as ‘war’ and injustice is constructed as the generic condition of war: ‘War is so, war is unjust, any war is unjust’ (L467). Significantly, injustice is defined as the polar opposite of the condition of justice for her, as without ‘rules to live by’ (L744), embodying the state of chaos, ‘[injustice] It wasn’t just that even it’s all the chaos we have been put into’ (L463). Injustice is constructed as the breakdown of social order and a radical culture shift to religious intolerance, manifest in a constant sense of fear, daily hardship and deprivation, ‘even the abc of life becomes so hard’, and massive senseless multiple grief and loss, including equality as a Christian, identity and sense of belonging:

We were a a country and then we lost everything that is called a country. And then when you leave it you feel that, oh how much you belong to that culture, how how many nice things were were there, how it was all like eh stamped on. What happened? because even eh many people left, the eh structure of the country all changed. War is so, war is unjust, any war is unjust. (Yasmine, L463)

Injustice is constructed in moral terms of ‘good’ ‘innocent’ (Iraqi people) and ‘evil’ (actions) (drawing from her Christian values), as the violation of the very the foundations of her beliefs and values, including the ‘sanctity of human life’ and ‘human worth’ of the ordinary Iraqi man, whose perspective she takes and experiences the conflict from:
It is the simple Iraqi man, the simple Iraqi man eh was eh let me say, was eh crushed or like or like somebody stepped on him in the way, the simple Iraqi man eh was stepped on. (Yasmine, L50).

This leaves Yasmine with deeply painful unanswered questions, unable to make sense of the interpersonal violence she witnesses and her experience within this, ‘Why?’ (exclaimed 32 times in the text) as an expression of injustice, becomes her core state then and now:

I can’t make sense of it, why? It’s just why? Why you kill someone like? why you? it is like the [name of organization] made very good things for Iraq, they were responsible for the water, to be eh to be like portable or drinkable water. How how can anyone have such evil and do such things to all those who have families? Who are. Why? Why you put that? Just I can’t. It was so sad. So [pause] but it’s like when you say ok I yeah maybe I’m saved but and why I am saved? Why certain people are saved and others are not? (Yasmine, L172)

For Kareem (Iraq), the political conflicts he has endured over his lifetime in Iraq provide an autobiographical narrative in which he contextualizes the construction of injustice and the current conflict. He constructs wars in moral terms as ‘different kinds of turmoil’ (L7). And as with Yasmine (Iraq), he needs to ‘know eh what is going on, and why this is going on’ (L16) in order to make sense of conflict in moral terms as a ‘just war’ (L206) in line with his values and belief systems, which he equates with a kind of ‘remedy’ (L87). This makes it ‘easier psychologically’ ‘to absorb whatever hand comes to you’ (L13). Holding key positions of responsibility at the national level over the years, in non-political capacities, giving him a national perspective, this ‘just war’ constructs motivates him (similarly to ‘revolution’) and enables him to maintain his position as a ‘patriotic man’ (L155) ‘working for the country’. He is driven by a patriarchal sense of duty from which he derives his identity, motivation, and resilience. This is rooted in his family’s history as ‘tribal leaders’ (L405). In this way, a sense of ‘just war’ is constructed as giving deprivation, hardship and risk to life meaning, which otherwise he would experience as ‘tormenting’ (L231):
If you are killed, if you eh you lose a member of your family well this is em a price you pay em not happily but em you accept it. But in that em em part of the war em it was you know sort of you wouldn’t forgive yourself, you would think oh why didn’t I leave the country after there was a peace between Iraq and Iraq for instance you know, em it was not justified to be killed I mean for no reason, for no, you know this kind of things which was tormenting really. (Kareem, L266)

In this context, injustice is constructed as unfair treatment, ‘when you are treating similar things differently’ (L654), and has meaning as a moral category which relates to the motive and conduct of power at the national and international levels, in the form of ‘unjust act[s] towards nations’ (L688), used to frame the conflict itself, the form it took and the devastating impact it had on the body politic, on Iraqi society and on the individual, which he differentiates:

We have to differentiate between em em injustice to a nation and injustice to em a person. (Kareem, L678)

Injustice accordingly is constructed by Kareem as equating with the conduct of ‘the international community’, against a personified Iraq:

the worst thing ever em happen em em in the history of mankind that em eh the international community em em em eh gathered force against em em em a country who has been battered by embargo and previous wars and eh they eh make false alibis about Iraq. Everybody believed, in Iraq that Saddam should go but not the way it it was done. (Kareem, L446)

At the societal level, injustice is constructed as relating to the conduct and motives of the Americans post-invasion, as highlighted by Tara (Iraq), and as maintained by Iraqis, whom Kareem describes as appointed by the Americans and ‘unqualified’ to govern, in which it takes the form of divisive policies which ‘implanted’ sectarianism and division within Iraqi society and ‘criminalised’ and alienated’ (L659) whole
groups (Ba’ath members, military, police, civil servants, and families, Sunni population) for the purposes of consolidating power:

They implanted eh the divisions deliberately, they told Iraqis you are not em eh a nation, you are a collection of people, you are Kurd, you are eh Muslim, you are Christians, you are Sunni, you are Shiia and you have to think that way. (Kareem, L460)

The extreme and violent nature of these ‘injustices created by the Americans’ (L655), he describes as having the impact on Iraq of a ‘volcano’ and ‘epidemic’, which goes well beyond the political realm, to decimating all aspects of society:

it’s just like an area em with a volcano erupted em eh and em shattered people as at the same time there was an epidemic, so people sort of run away from each other, em you don’t know who is your friend and who is your enemy’ (L452); ‘it is just like em em an explosion of a volcano and eh you know, people have changed, you know, the the fabric of the society has been mutilated. (Kareem, L605)

Whilst at the individual level, injustice is constructed as ‘suffering’ caused by the conduct of successive ‘dictatorships’, pursuing ‘unjust wars’ and governing by virtue of their affiliations rather than capacities, ‘not capable’, motivated by ‘greed’, their own agendas, and partisan-interests (L771), as highlighted by Tala (Iraq), with ‘no place em eh for the people in their minds (L773). Significantly he does not frame in the same way the conduct of individual Iraqis, including his own kidnappers:

the fault of the nation who created dictators, like what they are doing now, now we are building dictators again, em eh it is eh it is not a fault of of individuals, I think Iraqi individuals they are great but eh once em they are organized in a very polarized way, I think this is where the danger is, and especially when these organisations are not em eh aiming at the best they are actually em eh em behind invidious em motives. (Kareem, L717)
This applies in all contexts across the sample, with participants framing counter-violence as ‘defence’ and as an understandable or ‘natural’ response to aggression committed by power, or as ‘revolution’ with perpetrators as ‘freedom-fighters’, highlighting how language frames political action in the texts and legitimizes certain actions and not others.

Ultimately, however, Kareem conceptualizes injustice, more so than other participants, as situated not only in immediate context, but as having a historical and wider regional and global political context, and as rooted in the ‘immorality’ of Western powers (L800) in the conduct of foreign policy in the region, its division into colonial oligarchies, support and removal of dictatorships contra to indigenous civil reform movements, and including ‘the displacement of the Palestinians [as] the root of all the injustice in in in in the in the whole Middle East’ (L801):

I think em em em the Iraqi nation has been treated unjustly just like many em countries in the areas because em now you can see in the Arab world em this turmoil which is never it will never end, em western civilization em em em supported regimes to last for 40 years and then suddenly remove them without thinking of em eh institutions to replace them, this is injustice. (Kareem L678)

**Justice Discourses: Framing the Aspirational in Conflict Experience**

Justice is constructed as significant in each of the three conflict contexts, though only two participants construct justice as relevant to personal and or collective resolution of conflict and suffering, with marked differences. Justice is constructed in a more formulaic and delimited way, with greater shared meaning across the sample than constructs of injustice, as aspirational, restorative and equating with accountability, but with marked idiographic differences in how justice and injustice constructs are seen to interplay and hence the potential that justice discourses offer for subjective agency and change.

**Justice constructed as aspirational**

Unlike injustice constructs which relate to what is actual, justice is constructed as an aspirational concept relating to what should be (constructed as inalienable and
absolute, inherent or legitimate through law), tenable through the agency of
independent institutions and mechanisms, or individuals and the collective. As an
aspirational construct, the pursuit of justice is defined as equating with the Palestinian
struggle, ‘we are fighting for justice’ (Omar, L548), the Syrian ‘revolution’, ‘want to
make justice for this country’ (Mariam, L623), and as a necessity in Iraq in addressing
injustices and restoring peace and stability (Tala, Kareem). For Omar (Palestine
(Gaza)), it dominates the text in juxtaposition to injustice, in which justice is
constructed in relation to human rights as the key to ending suffering and his source of
agency, hope and resilience, ‘if there is justice, [Palestinian] suffering will stop’
(L614). In Syria, justice associated with rights and freedoms variously across the
cluster frames initial Syrian aspirations, alongside the rights of marginalized groups
and refugees, but dominates Mariam’s text, who describes the ‘revolution’ as the
pursuit of justice itself, and her own agency as this in action, ‘we are law people, eh
our work is eh eh is based from law and eh our work have us to do that’ (L455).
Whilst for Kareem and Tala (Iraq), ‘justice concept in its global meaning’ (Tala,
L652) in relation to Western powers is constructed as the key to human security,
peace and stability in the region, ‘global justice is essential to extend peace to the
area’ (Kareem, L826).

**Justice constructed as restorative**

Justice is constructed as having a *restorative quality or capacity*, that restores to the
individual and the group those physical and psychological properties withheld, denied
or violated by power, specifically *human rights and freedoms* (Palestine, Syria), *social
equality* (Iraq, Syria), and *law and order* (Iraq). For Omar, (Palestine (Gaza)) justice is
constructed as restoring inalienable ‘human rights’, *his* rights specified by
(international) law, that were forcibly taken through displacement and military
occupation, ‘if I get my human my rights to be as a human and to get alllll the
things for justice’ (L651). These involve material restoration as well as psychological,
a restoring of his humanness (L561), worth, ‘dignity’ (L416), ‘respect’ (L569) and
above all autonomy ‘to live in freedom’ as the ‘basic’ needs for living as a human
being (L390):
we feel sometimes we lose some of our identity as a human because we don’t have justice…justice will give us back us as a human. (Omar, L562)

Here, for Omar justice is constructed as a psychological need, ‘essential human need’ (L912) associated with ‘healing’, without which ‘suffering can’t be healed’ (L913).

Whereas for Mariam (Syria), justice is constructed as having value in and of itself, which gives *symbolic* meaning to psychological suffering in a way that may facilitate healing, ‘Not will help people which dead but it will help the family of these people eh to feel that our son is not killed for nothing’ (L424). It is primarily constructed as the restoration of inalienable ‘rights’, granted by (international) law, ‘I want to take my right by court’ (L459), for the Syrian people denied under political oppression (‘rights’ referred to generically, and specifically as rights to freedom from oppression, discrimination, free speech, protest), as well as with respect to restoring the legal rights of Syrian refugees subject currently to poor treatment worldwide. Justice is constructed in psychological terms as associated with protection, power and autonomy of the citizen against the state, as it is for Omar, empowering and redressing the balance of power, ‘if you have your rights eh you will be strong’ (L59).

This construction of justice in its association with rights and freedoms is present across the Syrian cluster. For Saif and Sara, justice is constructed as associated with ‘freedom’ as the aim of initial Syrian aspirations, for Saif as an inherent human desire, for Sara rooted in influence of contemporary culture, for both enabling in psychological terms the expression of individual identity, against the collective culture of oppression for Sara, for Saif the political culture of oppression. Whilst for Leen justice is also constructed as the restoration of rights generically, including for refugees, as well as for Sara for marginalised communities.

Omar’s (Palestine (Gaza)) construction is shared by Tala (Iraq) of justice constructed in psychological terms as restoring a sense of being human, though this is in relation to justice as the restoration of *law and order*, which is consistent with the construction of justice across the Iraq sample, as enabling the ending of violence and restoring psychological feelings of safety, security and stability, ‘[seeking justice] will provide
me with dignity and and eh I’ll be safe there and I’ll be a human being’ (L647). This is similar for Yasmine (Iraq), whose construction of justice relates to the restoration of ‘rules to live’, a ‘system’, a ‘state’, the opposite of which is the ‘chaos’ of war, and which she associates with the restoration of ‘normal’ life, ‘justice is to have ordinary life (L737). Additionally, Sara, Saif (Syria), Tala and Kareem (Iraq) construct justice (and ‘global justice’) as the process of ‘fair treatment’ associated with the restoration of social equality, with equality between people within and between societies constructed as an inherent quality which is being violated through government and global states’ abuse of power (Tala, Kareem):

Justice is is eh similar eh treatment of people, we are the same, the human race is the same, emmm I don’t see eh anybody is better than me in an an any other country. (Tala, L378)

**Justice constructed as accountability**

Justice constructed as accountability, involves recognition of wrongdoing and punishment of the perpetrator, through prosecution, involving judicial processes requiring an independent authority, is the formulaic definition justice is given in the interviews across the sample. For Saif (Syria), this requires an authority not tainted by violence who is ‘able or deserve to be the judge in this’ (L379). For Kareem (Iraq), this requires similarly ‘moral authority’, involving ‘the machinery of government’ (L876), and ‘impartiality’, ‘the external help of eh an impartial em eh force’ (L874), ‘Justice comes eh justice comes em from eh em authority, and eh unless you have eh eh eh an an authority of of some kind which eh puts things em right and in order’ (L869). Similarly, for Tala (Iraq), whose core experience is described in terms of terror and alienation, justice constructed as relating to equality and law and order is constructed as the responsibility of government and society, ‘where justice is available, it’s the it’s the function of the government or the country as a whole it’s the society it’s eh it’s not my eh let’s say eh I cannot provide it for myself” (L433).

For Mariam (Syria) and Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), whose focus is ‘human rights’, justice is constructed as residing with international institutions (international courts and agencies) who grant justice. Though this is problematic for Omar (as detailed
below) who associates the ‘big organisations’ with power, and who constructs justice throughout as a thing *existing* in and of itself, despite being absent or lacking in his context and in relation to the continuing suffering of others he cites (‘Africa’, ‘Middle East’), and reframes it as residing beyond institutional power to within ordinary man:

The only little hope, very tiny and small, it’s ordinary people, when they stand and when they do solidarity and say ‘ok human rights’. (Omar, L592)

It is only Mariam and Leen in the Syrian context that this construct of justice as accountability through prosecution is given significance. Justice for both is constructed as part of the political process of transition involving the public prosecution of the current regime and its replacing with a new ‘democratic’ system of government. For Leen it is the psychological suffering aspect of the punishment that is significant:

I wish that they would realize one day that they did something really bad and they feel guilty about it and they can’t get rid of this feeling of guilt, that would be the worst thing for them, so I wish them very long life, a very long one with this feeling of guilt, that they cannot sleep, they cannot live, they can see punishment coming from God, you know, with their kids wherever, I wish that they could live long, sleep a lot and have all these nightmares about what they did and never never feel, you know, sorry about it, they should know that they, people will not forgive them, so this is what I wish for them. (Leen, L564)

For Mariam, the punishment of perpetrators is constructed as having significance in its own right, whilst giving symbolic meaning to suffering as ‘not for nothing’. It is constructed as an essential aim of the ‘revolution’, conducted through judicial processes by international courts, involving the documenting and preserving through testimony, photographs and reports, evidence of ‘crimes’, accountability through punishment of the perpetrator, and the preserving of the memory for generations to come.
In contrast, for Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), this construct of justice as accountability through prosecution does not feature, other than as a ‘right’ by international law, and is given secondary significance to the securing of ‘basic’ rights and freedoms for Palestinians, as these he conceptualizes will bring an end suffering (mental and physical). Justice as recognition of crimes and punishment is constructed as having some importance for Sara and Saif relating to Syria, given the tremendous levels of violence, loss of life and destruction, but is ultimately dismissed by both, as secondary to ending the violence and destruction, and to personal survival for Leen and Mariam in Syria, as well as Tala in Iraq:

Justice. People need to be punished for the, for the deeds they do, for the actions they do, they need to take the the whole responsibility over it. (Sara, L812)

it doesn’t mean I am with the corruption and eh ok tolerance, [Arabic yallah] come on let’s forget about what is happening, what is happening is not something easy to be tolerant about it, but eh I wish really to stop destroying people and country. (Tala, L367)

For Tala justice as punishment for individual crimes of terror in Iraq is constructed as only as significant as it will safeguard law and order, ‘what is happening now, the eh terrorism, that is because there is no law in the country and there is no punishment that that’s why we are living in a in a in a continuous emmmm eh emm ehhh situation of of insecurity’ (L496). For Yasmine (Iraq), it is rejected entirely as a violation of her Christian beliefs (as detailed below). For Kareem and Tala (Iraq), justice as accountability involves the correcting of moral ‘wrongs’ of the Western, historical and current, in relation to colonial and nation-state foreign policy in Iraq and the region:

the Western em power which have got the means em tries to em eh em to em make right whatever wrong has been done. (Kareem, L827)

Whilst justice is constructed as providing aspirational resolution for injustice and suffering, in different ways and to different degrees for Omar (Palestine (Gaza)),
Mariam and Leen (Syria), and Tala and Kareem (Iraq). This draws on discourses which have consequence for subject positioning, subjectivity and change, generating hope and resilience by empowering the individual and opening up legitimate possibilities for agency and change, for all participants, but particularly for Sara, Saif (Syria), and in different ways for Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), Yasmine, Tala and Kareem (Iraq).

However, justice constructed as resolution is undermined by the construct of justice in practice, in its relationship with power and its erosion by governments in the region and international system alike, drawn from material experience.

**Resistance Discourses: Justice and Power, Resilience and Resolution.**

Alternative constructs of the concept of justice and justice in practice are present in each text across the sample, representing conflicting constructs that undermine or erode the credibility of justice as equating with resolution (psychological and material) to varying degrees, leading to conflicting subject positions, emotions of anger, feelings of helplessness and loss of hope, delimiting opportunities for agency, in the same way as injustice, and leading in turn to the reframing or rejection of justice discourses and the generation of alternative counter-discourses for private and public resolution. This highlights the significance of the erosion of justice in practice and in public discourse, as well as people’s resourcefulness and ability to generate alternative forms of resistance discourses that maintain hope and resilience and open up the space for private and collective resolution through individual and collective agency, despite and in spite of power and the dominant status quo.

These conflicting constructs are drawn from material experience and equate justice as abstract, theoretical, inaccessible, rhetorical, limited, as backward looking leading to cycles of violence, and as morally wrong. They are detailed here under relationship between justice and power and the limitations of justice as resolution.

**Relationship between justice and power**

Justice is constructed as an abstract concept found ‘in the boring books’ (Sara, L20), which in practice is used as a rhetorical device alongside associated constructs such as
‘equality’, ‘human rights’ and ‘democracy’ to legitimise and maintain oppressive practices and consolidate power and resources (cited in all contexts). In its application justice is not present in the region, ‘if you look at all the countries, I mean if you look, you’ll never have eh a country full of justice to start with’ (Leen, L537), and is not tangible for the ‘ordinary people’ of these conflicts, ‘there are no rights and no justice in our case because eh the benefit of all countries around around the world with the regime not with us’ (Mariam, L123).

Justice in practice is constructed as situated with power, as a tool which serves the interests of power, ‘power defines justice’ (Sara, L1029). This construct is applied to the practice of justice in autocratic political systems in Syria and Iraq, in which justice is used to consolidate and maintain power. It is also applied to the conduct of Western powers and international agencies (e.g. UN) with respect to Iraq, the Syrian people and the plight of Syrian refugees, and with respect to the Palestinians (Omar), ‘And why this world, free world, lets this happen and support the the the occupation? Why?’ (Omar, L590). It is also applied to Western support for autocracies in the region against the democratic aspirations of their people, ‘supporting regimes who are em eh you know em eh working against those people’ (Kareem, L830). It is also applied in relation to apparent immunity from justice for the powerful (with respect to Palestine and Iraq), ‘no nobody em I mean who inva who joined an invasion of Iraq em eh em tries to identify where they have done wrong’ (Kareem, L780).

This results in an erosion of the credibility of justice as a legitimate means to resolution in all three context, ‘I don’t believe in trials because I did, was not living in a culture where the law is respected, maybe the father, the law in terms of the social law but not the eh the law from practical’ (Sara, L1016).

This is strongly present for Omar in the Palestinian context, ‘they call them a state of democracy, and they receive all the support, and they imposing, and they behaving in completely injustice way, and, as the victims and survivors you have pressure on your side more than the the person who is punishing you’ (L609).
He highlights this as a powerful challenge to the construct of justice as the route to peaceful resolution through political and legal means, generating anger, helplessness, loss of hope and agency:

ok there’s democracy and justice, where is the justice belong to the United Nations? When we talk to the people in Palestine they are laughing, they say ok [he laughs] justice it’s in the drawer, it’s in the, under the carpet, it’s if you are strong. It feels sometimes justice is like we’re living like a few centuries before and but the things make people angry it’s the sound and the open the news and you say ok, ‘freedom’, and ‘it’s a free world’ and all these nice words but on the reality it’s [claps hands] not there. (Omar, L601)

It is also strongly present in the Syrian context, in relation to lack of international support for the aspirations of the Syrian people, to end their visible suffering, constructed as a ‘crime’ and a source of anger by all, ‘I believe when you see something bad happening and you do nothing, oooffff this is a crime’ (Saif, L276).

It is also constructed in relation to the purposeful abuse of justice by the regime to maintain power and monopoly of resources, ‘injustice was there allll the time…from the regime itself, the way it was ruling the country…like for example if you want to have a business there and you want to have a very good business, somebody from this group should share this business’ (Leen, L505). As well as the deliberate erosion of justice through the corruption of judicial procedures by the regime, so that the culture of justice through law is not present in Syria:

There is no respect of law in Syria. The the regime made sure to to make the law very eh in very weak stages, so you can bribe, anybody could murder and if they have the right amount of money or contacts they can get away with it. (Sara, L890)

Similarly, in the Iraq cluster, this counter-construct is articulated by all, with respect to the violation of international codes of conduct in the invasion of Iraq, the abuse of ‘justice’ under the US occupation to perpetrate injustices framed as ‘transitional
processes’, ‘it’s like a revenge from the government’ (Tala, L60). It is equated with the breakdown of law and order as the failure of corrupt government practice aimed at the private consolidation of wealth, ‘it is like we have one one man who takes all the the benefit of Iraqi to himself, now there are certain more men only think about themselves’ (Yasmine, L75) leading to a culture of lawlessness and breakdown of trust, ‘trust is lacking between the government and the people, that the government won’t be able to do something to put a solution for this security bad security situation in the country’ (Tala, L151), and the erosion of justice in the political process:

in Iraq em we are not expecting em eh justice as em justice in it’s basic em definition, when you don’t have neither em eh em eh people who are em eh brought and educated em eh to em eh to accept em eh codes moral codes, and when you don’t have as well politicians who are em eh, who have got their own agendas. (Kareem, L763)

Limitations of justice: justice rejected
In addition to the conflicting constructions of justice as abstract, rhetorical, absent in actuality and the domain of the powerful, justice as process is also constructed variously as of secondary significance to survival (Mariam, Leen, Tala, Yasmine), as theoretical and irrelevant in the current context (Sara, Saif, Tala, Kareem, Yasmine), as limited in its capacity to address harm at the private and societal levels (Sara, Saif), as backward looking and perpetuating of anger, hatred and violence (Sara, Tala), and as morally wrong (Yasmine), requiring radical alternative solutions.

Securing justice as resolution is constructed as secondary to actual survival for Mariam (Syria) and her sister, and for Leen (Syria), who both have young children and whose core subjective experience in Syria is described as terror. Likewise for Tala and Yasmine but who, additionally with Kareem, also experience alienation in Iraq. This is unlike for Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), for whom under occupation life and death are experienced as the same, and who constructs justice as his only hope (‘small’), and for Saif (Syria) whose subjective experience is described as a sense of identity tied to Syria and who experiences added loss in diaspora and would choose to remain if he could.
Further, the breakdown of governance infrastructures and of law and order in Iraq (all), and the magnitude of killing and destruction in Syria (Saif, Sara), are drawn on in the construction of justice as theoretical and irrelevant in current conflict contexts, ‘I don’t believe in justice now I mean’ (Saif, L373):

[justice and governance] it will it will have to be created by the m people themselves, and without the external help of eh an impartial em eh force it will take some time, em it will take some time. (Kareem, L874)

Similarly, justice is constructed as ineffectual in relation to its capacity to address experiential conditions of conflict at the private level, to restore what can not be restored in terms of lives, heritage, culture, nor to psychologically ‘heal’ individuals and communities, ‘what could, make me feel, less, in less loss, let’s say? Is putting them in prison or killing them is gonna give me back my friend?’ (Sara, L966). It is constructed as instead perpetuating violence and maintaining hate (Sara, Tala), and as morally wrong (Yasmine). For both Sara and Saif (Syria), this relates to their core experience of grief and loss in the face of death and massive destruction, leading both to reject justice in its above definitions as resolution, and to frame for Sara the pursuit of justice (equated with freedom) as not worth the loss:

after all what people sacrificed is that what I have to say? But it [justice] doesn’t, honestly, it doesn’t worth it. (Sara, L810)

Similarly, for both Tala (Iraq) and Sara (Syria) justice is constructed not as progressive leading to societal development, but as backward looking, stuck in past injuries, maintained in the memory through commemorative acts across generations and by political regimes, perpetuating injury, and leading to cycles of violence and ‘revenge’:

nobody is willing to forget the past and and start a new beginning for Iraq, it it is revenge will lead to revenge and and this is it is a continuous ehh process of
of revenge, so it will never, it will never, eh we will never reach a point that we will say ‘yes, we have a new Iraq, we have a democratic Iraq. (Tala, L68)

I mean the amount of hate, the amount of eh anger, the amount of eh wish to take revenge, I don’t know really if it could be controlled or not. (Saif, L478)

Justice is also constructed as synonymous with ‘punishment’ and ‘revenge’, with the two terms used interchangeably to denote ‘justice’ desired by participants (Syria), state sanctioned violence (Iraq, Syria) and private acts of ‘natural’ ‘defence’ against government violence (Syria) or as ‘terrorism’ against government and civilians (Iraq). ‘Revenge’ is incorporated in Mariam’s and Leen’s (Syria) construction of ‘justice’ against the regime through judicial process, whilst for Leen this is constructed as deserved punishment through acknowledgement of wrongdoing and enduring psychological suffering, ‘I hope that they get their own revenge’ (L563). Saif and Sara (Syria) both fantasise violent ‘revenge’ constructed as private justice and a form of agency and resolution rooted in pain and anger, ‘I want this like a flood that’s happened in Noah and now everything is destroyed, I don’t c, I don’t care really now’ (Saif, 290); ‘I will go there and bomb, put a bomb, bomb the whole place, let them goo to non-existence. So there was, the revenge, very strong, it, and I think maybe revenge brings justice and it doesn’t have to be rational’ (Sara, L902). Similarly, for Omar (Palestine (Gaza)) throwing stones is constructed as a form of agency:

you feel you’re doing something, so otherwise I will feel very upset because I can’t do anything, so I founded just some things to ehhhh express my anger, my burning anger towards the soldiers by throwing the stones. (Omar, L76)

Whilst for Yasmine (Iraq), justice as both ‘punishment’ and ‘revenge’ is constructed as the desire to inflict harm, which she equates with state sanctioned execution and private acts of violence, both constructed as morally wrong within the framework of her Christian discourse, as violating the sanctity of life as God given, ‘I can’t give life to anybody and cannot take it from anybody’ (L648), and which make the victim and perpetrator both morally culpable:
[execution of Saddam Hussein] it is not like eh it is not revenge, it’s not revenge the way you become just like, if he was bad you are acting as bad as him right now, what you did not agree about how did you do that right now? It doesn’t make sense to me. (Yasmine, L655)

As such, justice in its association with violence, conflicts with the construct of justice as legitimate resolution, for most participants (other than Omar, Mariam and Leen), generating feelings of helplessness in the witness position:

When I am in Damascus I am angry because ehh I can’t do nothing, I mean I see this is happening and really I can’t do anything eh because eh I don’t want or I can’t, I don’t know now, eh to have a weapon and kill the others and eh I don’t believe in violence. (Saif, L217)

This has significant impact on subject positions and perceptions of agency. For all participants across the sample, hope is associated with justice and resolution. Counter-constructs that erode justice as a credible or legitimate resolution to injustice, are associated with the erosion of hope for resolution and limited subject agency, described by Omar (Palestine (Gaza)) as ‘the worst thing in a trauma’ (L201). This is associated with helplessness and despair (all). Whilst for Omar, justice is reframed as present in the ordinary man, Mariam dismisses conflicting constructs in order to be able to maintain her position. Whilst others search for private resolutions that meet immediate needs to sustain them (Omar, Leen, Tala, Yasmine, Kareem), rejecting justice constructs and generating alternative counter-constructs that offer them agency and the prospect of change at the private and collective level (Sara, Saif (Syria), Tala, Kareem, Yasmine (Iraq)).

Generating alternative constructs: resilience and resolution.

Mariam (Syria) maintains her position with respect to ‘justice’ constructed within legal discourse as the object of ‘revolution’ and the means of resolution. She draws on legal (not political) discourse to construct her sense of identity as a lawyer, finds empowerment through her work for others, a sense of purpose and agency for herself, as her source of resilience. Conflicting constructs which threaten this, relating to the
inadequacy of justice to materially effect change in the form of ending suffering, protecting citizens, supporting refugees, drawn from political events relating to the conduct of power and its relationship with justice, delimit opportunities available within legalistic discourse for subjective agency, impacting on her sense of capacity, and generating hopelessness and helplessness, which threatens to leave her incapacitated. However, Mariam is able to maintain her initial position, for now, and with it her resilience, sense of empowerment and agency, by reframing conflicting constructs of justice. This she does by drawing on legalistic discourse to reframe political events in legal terms as ‘criminal’, and by drawing on resistance discourses (the French Revolution) from which she draws hope and resilience, allowing her to re-construct her own and others suffering (as does Kareem) as ‘sacrifice’ giving it symbolic meaning beyond loss, thereby opening up the space for continued agency in the pursuit of justice as resolution:

I think every revolution in the world and eh have eh torture and have eh people who killed and eh eh and see a lot of this eh bad thing until today arrived to the free world and to take them eh to take them rights and great things, like France. (Mariam, L440)

Omar (Palestine (Gaza)) similarly, like Mariam, is able to maintain his construct of justice, drawn from human rights and psychology discourses, as key to ending Palestinian suffering (not only physical and material but more significantly for him as psychological, constructing justice as an essential psychological need, with the capacity to restore human dignity, self-worth, autonomy). This is despite his own conflicting constructs of justice as tied to global power and political interests, which he describes as impacting on hope and resilience for himself and collectively by continuously eroding opportunities for agency and change within this discursive construction. Omar does this by reframing his construct of justice and where power resides, as existing in and of itself, not only within the domain of institutional power, but to be found in individual agency, in his own action, (initially as throwing stones, sublimated into self-actualisation, then support for others through his professional capacities) which continues to sustain him. Likewise he reframes justice as to be found in the agency of others, ordinary people at the grass roots level of community,
who offer empathy and ‘solidarity’, opening up the possibility for change, reframed as long-term, sustaining hope and resilience, which conflicting discursive constructs break down, through the pursuit of justice:

The only little hope, very tiny and small, it’s ordinary people, when they stand and when they do solidarity and say ‘ok human rights’. (Omar, L529)

For Leen (Syria), justice as resolution, constructed as punishment for perpetrators, the securing of rights for the Syrian people and refugees, and political transition to democracy, is situated within the moral and political discourse she draws on to make sense of her material experience of the conflict, of survival within autocratic systems in Syria and region, and the relationship of justice with power, constructed as corrupt. Her discursive construction of justice is integrated within this construct and is described as only wishful, holding out little hope of resolution for the Syrian people, against which a strong sense of injustice drawn from empathy remains, generating continued ‘sadness’ and ‘anger’ in diaspora. However, this is distinguished for Leen more than others from her own private sense of distress, which involves to a lesser degree loss (property, savings, memories) but primarily ‘terror’ as psychological more than physical threat, lack of safety and insecurity for herself and her children, which prioritises survival as action, made more immediate by a more diffuse sense of national identity and belonging (as non-Syrian, displaced in childhood). In a more pragmatic subject position, in which political resolution is constructed as unlikely, she is able to distance herself from the conflict and secure private resolution by leaving the country and focusing on the needs of her children:

And now what matters is my kids. I’m thinking now if I didn’t have kids I don’t know whether I would have left Syria or not, to be honest, but because of the the kids, I had to to make the movement, eh I had to survive. (Leen, L684)

This is not the case for Saif (Syria), whose identity is described as tied to that of Syria, its people and culture, which massive societal destruction and loss of life he describes as his own and whose related sense of injustice is constructed in parallel terms as embodied, internally broken, stuck within a subject position of helpless witness which
generates intense pain and anger and a need for action, which he is unable to find through personal agency, in taking up arms within the ‘revolution’ (describing himself as ‘peaceful’). Whilst at the same time as a father, torn between staying in Syria and his and his family’s need for survival against life-threat. In diaspora, with a continued sense of injustice, hurt, and violent anger, he is unable to find resolution through justice, which he constructs as punishment through judicial processes, which will not address his sense of loss, and limits any sense of individual agency. Instead, he constructs resolution as a counter-construct involving the coming together of all culpable parties in the rebuilding of Syria. As an aspiration this offers no private sense of agency, and he finds himself for the time being ‘suspended’ in diaspora, waiting for the conflict to resolve:

if you do nothing, I mean like me, after that it make you kind of handicapped, I mean, because you feel you lost the ehh wish, the desire to, you don’t enjoy anything, you don’t like anything, you don’t eh interest in anything. (Saif, L245)

Sara (Syria) similarly rejects justice as resolution, which she constructs as defined by power and as irrelevant in the context of injustice constructed as massive private and collective grief and loss. Torn between her ethical beliefs initially in support of civil reform and revolution, from which she drew her sense of purpose and agency, drawing on moral discourse relating to social equality and a Western ideal for individuality free from the pressures of the collective, and her loyalties and fear for the safety of her family, whose lives are in very real risk, she finds herself in the ‘middle’, stuck within a subject position as witness and observer in which she experiences helplessness that offers no opportunity for agency. Further overwhelmed by her own sense of private grief and her experience of loss and destruction on all sides, which she constructs as injustice and equates with an embodied parallel process of fragmentation, she experiences intense pain and anger, which requires action, fantasizing violent ‘revenge’ which she rejects. Along with the premise for the ‘revolution’ as the conflict now stands, rejecting justice constructed as the pursuit of freedom as ‘not worth it’, leaving her no sense of purpose. Drawing on psychological discourse, through which she construct her experience of conflict, she instead
generates an alternative counter-construct to justice which offers subjective agency, beyond political power, that focuses on ‘healing’ pain, grief and fragmentation, through a coming together of individuals at the community level, in a private and collective act of reconciliation. As aspirational, this leaves her like Saif, in diaspora, suspended in the here and now in a state of overwhelming fear, helplessness and hopelessness, waiting for the conflict to take its course:

I feel helpless, but I think I feel hopeless as well. So it’s the mix, and it’s a vicious circle. And they’re becoming bigger and bigger and bigger and I feel I you know part of my soul is being swallowed by this tornado or whatever going on. (Sara, L694)

Similarly in the Iraq context, in the light of injustice constructs equated with harm from abuse of power that draw on broader socio-political, moral and religious discourses relating to the conduct of relations between nation states, social contract between the governed and governing, notions of equality and fair treatment, justice in practice offers no possibility for resolution at the individual and collective levels, nor as it stands at the national level in the conduct of relations between nations, offering no possibility for peace and stability. This leaves little room for agency at the private level, other than survival through withdrawal (escape) in the face of immediate physical threat of terror and threat to integrity from oppressive political practices, which create subject positions that require conformity (against sense of Self) or exclusion and alienation. Consequently private resolutions are sought by all in diaspora that generate a sense of safety, security and stability for Tala and Yasmine (Iraq), whose core experience is terror, and which restore a sense of integrity of the self and of dignity following experience of alienation for all the Iraq cluster including Kareem, though these maintain the sense of injustice unresolved:

I cannot provide [justice] for myself so I have to to eh to take a decision that I go to another place where I could find it, to another society. (Tala, L433)

Alternative resolutions are offered at the collective level involving counter-constructs to power and the current status quo, which represent paradigm shifts in ideas and
practice. For Tala (Iraq) drawing on reconciliation discourses from historical practice, taking Nelson Mandela and South Africa as example, this involves a coming together in reconciliation through dialogue and the culture of tolerance and a forgetting of past injuries. For Yasmine (Iraq), drawing on religious discourse, rejecting justice as punishment, she advocates love and forgiveness, and a recognition of wrongdoing through spiritual ‘conversion’ which leads to compensation through good deeds. For Tala and Kareem (Iraq), long-term resolution can only come through a paradigm shift in political relations at the level of nation-states involving the righting of enduring historical injustices in the region by Western powers and the conduct of relations based on moral principles of transparency, equality and fair treatment for the people of the region constructed as ‘global justice’, in order to end root causes of suffering and secure peace and stability for all:

I I think em eh em eh the the global justice is essential em to eh you know to to eh to extend peace to the em to the area, i.e. unless unless em eh em the Western em power which have got the means em tries to em eh em to em make right whatever wrong has been done, em li like like for instance em eh em resources em are exploited to the benefit of eh people, em justice to the Palestinians, em eh em justice to the people by not supporting regimes who are em eh you know em eh working against those people, this kind of, I I think now it is global global issue rather than em eh just local. (Kareem, L825)

**Beyond Semantics: Insights into How Constructions of Justice Function**

This section details the results of the analysis relating to the constructions of justice identified in the sample (injustice, justice, conflicting-constructs of justice, alternative resolutions) with respect to their location in wider discourses (ideas and ideologies), their deployment within the discursive context of the interview as action orientation, the subject positionings they offer, the relationship between discourse and subjectivity in terms of making available certain ways of seeing and being in the world, the relationship between discourse and practice in terms of opening up or closing down opportunities for agency, and the relationship between injustice, justice and counter-justice discourses and power and ideology.
Significantly, analysis suggests there are commonalities in the discourses drawn on to construct justice between conflict contexts, despite their very different political and social roots, as well as within the relatively diverse cluster groups. This suggests perhaps the hegemony of certain discourses within contemporary Arab society (which gave rise for example to the ‘Arab Spring’ civil uprisings), the influences of contemporary Western discourses within an interconnected global world (alluded to by Sara and Saif), and the shared roots of contemporary mainstream discourses, e.g. retributive justice construct and the principle of proportionality as common to most contemporary cultures, with roots in Islamic, Christian and Jewish discourse, predated by the Babylonian ‘Code of Hammurabi’ (1754 BC), explicitly referred to by both Sara (Syria) and Yasmine (Iraq) as ‘an eye for an eye’ (Yasmine, L530), within different conflicts and from different value bases, one secular, the other Christian.

At the same time, analysis suggests that differences in discourses drawn on in the construction of justice, reflect differences in conflict contexts, e.g. political/military oppression (Palestine, Syria) versus violent terror and breakdown of society (Iraq). It also reflects idiographic differences in subjective experience, including the different types of interrelationships in which participants are situated in or focus on, e.g. person to person (Yasmine, Iraq), societal (Sara, Saif, Syria, all Iraq cluster), the governed and governing (Omar, Palestine (Gaza), Mariam and Leen, Syria), and between people and states globally (Kareem, all). It also reflects participants’ subjective perspectives, values and beliefs, e.g. Mariam as lawyer, ‘activist’, sister, mother, and their experiences within the conflict (witness, direct experience, nature of), with implications for action orientation, subject positions, subjectivity and agency.

Further, analysis reflects that in idiographic constructions of justice a broad range and combination of discourses are drawn on with respect to the same discursive object as material events unfold, influenced by and influencing subject positioning, subjectivity and agency (e.g. Sara constructs injustice variously in the interview as the Syrian conflict narrative unfolds as situated within discourses of rights, social equality, moral fairness, psychology grief discourses). Discourses drawn on involve (as they are inferred or explicitly referred to within the sample) non-ideological discourses pertaining to rights (civil rights and human rights), political discourses (political
ideologies and systems of governance including ‘nationalism’, ‘democracy’, ‘authoritarianism’, ‘sectarianism’, and ‘social contract’), social discourse (social equality with regards to individual identity and group membership), moral, religious and cultural discourses (relating to individual values and beliefs such as ‘fair treatment’, ‘just war’, ‘sanctity of life’), legal discourses (pertaining to justice definitions, practice and process), psychology discourse (equating injustice/injustice constructs with psychological/experiential conditions), historical discourses (inter-generational narratives, e.g. Palestinian ‘nakba’ commemorating Palestinian displacement caused by creation of state of Israel in 1948, regional narratives, e.g. Arab Spring civil uprisings, other cultural narratives, e.g. the French revolution referenced by Mariam, and histories and material events of the conflict).

In terms of action orientation, specific discourses can be seen to be drawn on within the interview process to reinforce, legitimize, reframe, give value or meaning to idiographic constructs relating to acts of harm, experiences of suffering and resolution e.g. injustice constructed as human rights, itself a political ideology presented as universal, natural and common sense, depoliticizes the injury and legitimizes the subject and the political struggle for ‘justice’ constructed as ‘autonomy’ or ‘revolution’. Whilst at the same time, in terms of practice, they also appear to act to influence subject positioning and subjectivity e.g. ‘rights’ discourse symbolizes a discourse of resistance in the Syrian context in which dominant discourse is framed as defence of Syrian national identity, peace and stability in the face of ‘sectarian violence’ and ‘terrorism’. Rights discourse makes available in terms of positioning, personhood as an independent political entity, and changes the relationship between the governed and the governing from one of patriarchal and tribal loyalties to individual self-determination. It generates tensions in terms of subjectivity between the private and the public (Saif), the individual and the collective (Sara). It legitimates and empowers individual agency through ‘revolution’ including use of force, to depose the government, but in terms of justice as resolution, constrains agency as it requires the authority of international bodies, influenced by political power.

In terms of private and collective resolution, where injustice and justice constructs are drawn from differing discourses, e.g. injustice constructs are situated within
discourses drawn from actual experience of harm and suffering specific to context, justice constructs drawn from legal discourses relating to abstract or theoretical retributive justice and transitional justice processes, these are perceived to have little relevance to each other, generating counter discourses which offer private and or collective resolution.

In terms of injustice, discourses across the sample and in all contexts, subject positions involve direct or witnessed physical or psychological threat to life and integrity, which become polarized, ‘people became turned from one elastic stage into more stone stage’ (Sara, L351). These generate an intense struggle between perceptions of what is and what should be in terms of subjectivity, with powerful emotions expressed of injury, terror, horror, anger, grief, loss, intensified by feelings of helplessness, loss of control, loss of agency, particularly expressed in the identifying witness positions to injustice for all participants, ‘I feel so angry because I see there is something wrong happening and I can’t do really nothing’ (Saif, L221). These generate a desire ‘burning and destroying inside’ (Omar, L135) to ‘give it back’ (Sara, L914), demanding expression, action in terms of practice.

Here, justice constructs drawing on retributive justice discourses (including revenge) which draw on the moral principle of proportionality or human rights discourse which draw on the universality principle, provide legitimacy in terms of action orientation, and re-empower subject position, and create opportunity for expression and action in terms of practice by opening up the space for agency, providing hope and sources of resilience and resistance for some (Omar, Mariam, and initially Sara, Leen and Saif), ‘By doing this little hope and resilience you try to bring the justice, you might succeed, you might take long time but at least your taking action’ (Omar, L626).

Whilst for others, these are rejected, drawing on social, political, moral, religious and psychology discourses based on conflicting contextual, material and experiential conditions, relating to the relationship of justice with power, the erosion of justice, or the inefficacy of traditional retributive justice processes to address core issues equating with injustices (private and collective). This generates tensions and struggles, particularly where these conflict with strongly held beliefs situated within the
discourses that maintain them. Leading to disempowered subject positions, feelings of ‘complete helplessness’ (Sara, L104) and loss of hope in terms of subjectivity. Generating in terms of practice stuckness and suspension (Saif, Sara), despondency (Omar, Mariam), and distancing (Kareem, Leen, Yasmine, Tala) fuelled by the drive for survival and integrity.

This can also be seen to propel the construction of alternative constructs which constitute counter-discourses of resistance in context, that promote private and or societal resolution. These are drawn from psychology, religious, moral and socio-political discourses, and promote a coming together in the interests of the whole (Kareem, Tala, Saif, Sara), rebuilding (Saif), reconciliation (Tala, Sara), forgiveness (Yasmine), and healing (Omar, Sara). They offer up some hope and resilience in terms of subjectivity, and opportunities for agency in terms of practice, at the individual and community levels (Sara, Omar) beyond those tied to power and power structures, or at the international political level requiring a paradigm shift in the conduct between nations, drawing on justice discourses based on social equality, fair treatment and transparency that address the root causes of injustice (Kareem, Tala).

In both Palestinian and Syrian contexts, very different political conflicts, but in which the conditions of political and military oppression gives them shared meaning in relation to subjective experience, injustice constructs used to frame very different conflict experiences, are situated strikingly within the same Rights discourse, which is drawn on to give meaning to individual and collective suffering in a way that situates it as violation of rights that are universal and inalienable to all human beings, irrespective of political, cultural or religious contextual specificity. For Omar (Palestine (Gaza)) and Mariam (Syria), both injustice and justice constructs draw on this, explicitly in the form of human rights discourse, constructed as an inherent entitlement in the same way by virtue of being human (‘my right’, ‘our right’), encoded in international legal frameworks, specifically international law, to include international humanitarian law and international human rights laws (UN, n.d.).

Human rights discourse functions in terms of action orientation to construct justice as apolitical, common sense and natural, and creates a counter-discourse of resistance to
power in these contexts which rely on the politicizing of conflicts using dominant political discourses in the international realm to frame the Syrian conflict as national self-defence against ‘sectarian terrorism’, and the Palestinian displacement and occupation as Israeli self-defence against Palestinian terrorism:

[the world] respect [Israel] them and as a Palestinian they look us as a terrorist. Why? Because we want justice? We want freedom? Who took our hand land and our houses? Kill our children? (Omar, L570)

Human rights discourse serves to depoliticize subject positions within it, so that conflict no longer becomes about the ‘political’ or the ‘religious’ but relates to notions of inherent and or inalienable rights of personhood. In terms of subjectivity, there is no consideration here for other dimensions of human suffering (psychological) beyond the material and the symbolic. Human rights discourse allows for agency through only one kind of resolution, however, through national and international legal processes and frameworks.

For Mariam (Syria), it is situated within a non-ideological judicial process that offers her empowerment through agency (as a lawyer) but which is situated with authority and institution (UN International Court of Human Rights). This creates for Mariam a source of tension, impacting on subjectivity, she becomes despondent, and on agency, she feels helpless, where political interests undermine the truth of this discourse, as in the case for refugees in overseas countries she is unsuccessful in supporting through legal process, or the international community’s lack of active support for the ‘universal’ aspirations of Syrians. This she manages to reintegrate conceptually (but not psychologically) into her discourse in terms of agency, by criminalizing these actions, which offers her continued resilience, but with fading hope.

For Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), justice is not constructed as tied to any process or authority, but existing in and of itself, not only within political and judicial processes, but as shared by and within the agency of ordinary people who are able to influence these. This allows him to integrate conflicting constructs of justice as tied to power, and empowers him, becoming the source of his agency, hope and resilience, This is
because for Omar, within human rights discourse, injustice is also situated within psychology discourse (himself a psychologist) specifically ‘trauma’ as equating with an embodied condition of loss of identity as a human being. Unlike for Mariam, for whom justice empowers, through human rights and retributive justice processes tied to institutions, but within which discourse other aspects of human subjectivity are excluded, justice within Omar’s discourse, has the capacity to heal, making whole, by restoring sense of humanity, dignity, self-worth, and through his agency with ordinary people, outside of politics and power, he is able to derive a sense of psychological ‘healing’, which the interview process he describes is part of.

Whilst for Saif, Leen and Sara (Syria), injustice constructs are situated within civil rights (civil liberties) discourse, which emphasizes the protection of individual freedoms, described in non-ideological terms. For Saif, this is depoliticized and universalized as a private desire within all Syrians, made public at this point in history by regional events and the influences of social media. Similarly for Sara it is something ‘taught’, without reference to an inherent or inalienable quality. Additionally, for Sara, this construct of injustice also draws on social discourses relating to individualism (versus collectivism or social conformity), social equality and social justice pertaining to relations between different groups within society of which government she sees as a part and extension of and not distinct. Whilst both Saif and Leen take up legitimised supportive witness positions as citizens within these discourses (Leen’s maintained throughout). Sara is initially empowered, experiencing euphoria, and becomes active in social ‘reform’ in a non-political way intended within this discourse to enhance rather than disrupt social cohesion between groups.

As the violence intensifies and becomes life threatening, all three are drawn closer into the conflict, positioned as witnesses and experiencing threat. For Leen injustice becomes equated with terror, particularly of torture. For Sara and Saif injustice becomes equated with grief, loss and internal fragmentation in identity with the collective whole, drawing on moral discourses relating injustice as unfairness, generating intense anger and expressing divided positions, and in terms of action helplessness and loss of agency. Whilst Leen expresses relief in retributive justice discourses (akin to her of revenge), this is aspirational and reliant on external agency,
leaving her to seek survival as private resolution through exodus. For Saif and Sara, with violence on all sides, this is rejected as bringing no resolution to ending the violence or repairing loss, leaving them helpless and without *agency*, generating counter-discourses promoting re-integration and reconciliation, though aspirational. For Sara, this is drawn from *psychology* discourse (herself a psychologist) relating to grief and healing, conflicting with initial *rights* discourse, which she rejects as ‘it doesn’t worth it’ (L810). She constructs a counter-discourse of resistance to the political ideology of ‘them versus us’, based on reconciliation through shared healing at the community level, from which position she derives her greatest *agency* as a psychologist, and her source of hope for the future.

In terms of *action orientation*, significantly absent from both conflict contexts are explicit political, cultural or religious discourses. This is despite that the aim of the ‘revolution’ in Syria is to bring about the deposing of the political regime and the transfer of power from autocratic to democratic system of government. This too is framed within human rights and civil rights discourses so that ‘democracy’ becomes apolitical, natural, common. In this way, *rights* discourse acts to reframe and depoliticize conflict, appealing powerfully not to religious or political ideology or belief but to universal human values, which acting to decontextualise violence and harm in a way which draws empathy, both requiring the pursuit of justice and legitimizing struggle in the form of resistance against oppression (be it ‘throwing stones’, civil ‘reform’, ‘revolution’). Similarly, within the context of the dyad of the interview, rights discourse powerfully invites the other in, in solidarity (as Omar does in his work, as Mariam does in hers), and to become an active witness (as narratives unfold) of injustice and to experience in parallel process through empathy, the participant’s experience of witness to injustice within these conflicts.

In contrast, the Iraq conflict is conceptualized as rooted in the political, and as involving the conditions of ‘terror’, ‘chaos’, ‘sectarian violence’, caused by political actions. In this context, for Kareem and Tala (both working at national levels) injustice constructs draw on socio-political moral discourses relating to equality and fair treatment. This applies to the conduct of political relations between nation states (drawing on progressive ethical foreign policy discourse); the conduct of national
government (drawing on for Kareem nationalist and for Tala explicitly democratic principles relating to good governance, social accountability, transparency, political equality, inclusivity, political participation); and between social identity groups within local and global society. Whilst for Yasmine (whose experience relates to daily life) injustice constructs draw on Christian religious moral discourse relating to the interpersonal conduct of people within society, particularly relating to the principle of the sanctity of life, ‘I can’t give life to anybody and cannot take it from anybody’ (L648).

These function in terms of action orientation to reframe the Iraq conflict in a way which re-contextualizes, politicizes and situates within a moral framework acts of harm and suffering (rather than present them as value free) which had been made legitimate by power and ideology. In terms of positioning, they produce legitimised subjects, alienated by their experiences of and within conflict, generating feelings of helplessness in terms of agency, as change is dependent on global and political actors, and in terms of subjectivity feelings of anger and bitterness:

there is no justice on earth, this is this is our feeling and eh and eh and the wealthy life of other countries, emmm there there is a difference between our life and and and eh other people in other countries, and you feel you feel sometimes angry, why there is a discrimination like that, why why other countries are stable and and and ours is not, why we are living such a life and and others are not. (Tala, L371)

Justice drawn from procedural and retributive justice discourses in this context is rejected as requiring a culture and authority absent in Iraq (Kareem), as backward looking, divisive and generating cycles of violence and revenge (Tala), and itself equating with moral ‘harm’ (Yasmine). Instead, alternative counter-constructs are generated situated within their counter-discourses, which address injustices in a way that alleviates suffering and promotes wider societal wellbeing. Through Christian forgiveness, acknowledgement of wrongs and compensation through good deeds for others at the interpersonal level (Yasmine). Political tolerance, dialogue and progressive government in the national interest at the national level (Tala).
Transparency and ethical conduct in the interests of peace and stability at the international level (Kareem). Whilst these counter-constructs provide prospects for hope and resolution at the collective level in the longer term, they are aspirational, dependent on the agency of others, such as ‘God’s intervention’ and ‘the big powers’ ‘coming to their senses’ (Yasmine, L678). They also act, however, to legitimize and make necessary private agency involving exodus from Iraq, with participants remaining with unresolved feelings as witnesses to unfolding ever deepening crisis.

At the same time, these counter political constructs, like those of others, drawn from various societal discourses which operate outside of the geographical boundaries of traditional power (such as the civil uprisings of the ‘Arab Spring’, the global exchange of ideas via new media, and the historical narratives which symbolize resistance or provide and maintain hope, such as the French Revolution for Mariam (Syria), the Palestinian ‘nakba’ for Omar, Nelson Mandel’s transitional process in South Africa for Tala (Iraq)), in themselves mark paradigm shifts in thought within the context of these conflicts, and in their voicing within the context of the interview become themselves courageous forms of action and resistance in the face of a climate of fear and significant hardship and suffering.

**Further Discussion & Conclusion**

It’s it’s the language that the people who have the power use it. (Sara, L15)

These findings suggest that what constitutes (in)justice can be seen to be socially constructed and has significance in constituting subjectivity, agency, and change, reflecting the power of language in the construction of social reality.

Additionally, findings suggest that past and present social and material reality (in the context of the three conflicts) also influence to constrain (in)justice discourse, and are implicated in the generation of conflicting and alternative counter-discourses which bring about private and collective resolution, within a new interconnected global context, in which the discourses made available are no longer constrained by traditional political, social or cultural boundaries.
Additionally, and perhaps most significantly, findings suggest that this process appears a dynamic, conscious, autonomous one, in which discourses impact on but are also being impacted by that which we can refer to as selfhood (in its various constructions as that which accounts for individual subjectivity), so that as (in)justice discourses are appropriated by and intimately bound up with political power, they are drawn upon or discarded and alternative discourses generated through a conscious and autonomous process of resistance, resilience and search for private and collective resolution free from the conditions of ‘injustice’ equated with human suffering.

As the results analysis suggests, these findings have implications for psychological distress, mental health and wellbeing both private and societal, and are discussed further in this section, together with implications for the discipline of psychology and the clinical field, followed by strengths and limitations and further recommendations for research.

Findings highlighted complex and diverse idiographic constructions of justice, alongside commonalities within and between the three conflict contexts, labelled according to three themes, Injustice discourses: framing the actual in conflict experience, Justice discourses: framing the aspirational in conflict experience, Resistance discourses: justice and power, resilience and resolution.

The findings of the analysis suggest that to understand what should constitute justice one needs to understand what constitutes injustice, as the primary construct. This is a key finding which further clarifies the preceding research. Further, that injustice is constructed not simply as the lack or absence of justice, but is distinguished in a number of ways. Injustice is constituted as an independent construct and does not equate with justice constructs other than for Mariam (Syria) and Omar (Palestine (Gaza)), where injustice is constructed as the lack of justice equated with human rights in the context of abuse of authoritarian and foreign power respectively. Injustice also equates with that which is actual and material (varying in terms of what the construct is equated with depending on context, subjective experience within the conflict, idiographic differences in psychological states and subject positioning within context), whilst justice equates with the theoretical, the abstract, the ideal and the
aspirational. In these differences, injustice and justice discourses generate psychologically very different subject positions, subjectivities and agency, with implications for what constitutes justice if at all relevant in terms of the material ending of violence and suffering and resolution at the private and collective levels of society.

These findings run counter to dominant Western discourse within philosophy and jurisprudence literature, which focuses on the primacy of justice to understand injustice, but support a minority view expressed by Von Hayek (2012) who traces the idea of the primacy of injustice to ancient Greek philosophers. Whilst Shklar considers this as one of the ‘failings’ of the normative model of justice, ‘limiting its intellectual range’ (Shklar, 1989, p.1151). Injustice as an independent construct similarly has received little focus in mainstream psychology literature, where proponents of the psychological significance of justice as a basic need or precondition for the satisfaction of basic needs (e.g. Taylor, 2003, Maslow, 1943), alongside psychological investigations into models of justice, consider injustice within these theoretical constructs, including in relation to anger, ‘moral outrage’ or ‘unfairness’, as discussed in the initial literature review. Whilst in the context of its significance to war trauma experience similarly the psychology of injustice tends to relate to ‘lack of redress’ and its relationship with PTSD (e.g. Basoglu et al., 2005). This suggests that the psychology of the construct of injustice itself and its significance in war trauma experience merits further research.

Findings suggest that injustice as a social construct is an idiographic, multi-dimensional discursive object, drawn from a variety of discourse resources, including social, political, moral, psychological, legal and historical, influenced by local, regional and international cultural discourses. It is used by participants as a construct that frames the conflict itself, their experiences within it, and the experience of others for whom they share an identity and have empathy. It is constructed variously as equating with the experience or witnessing of individual and collective harm relating to the abuse of power (massively unequal power relationship, the nature of abuse, degree, intent, impact), with denial or violation of rights, and of social, cultural and religious moral codes (private and collective), with unfair treatment (as unequal and
unethical), and with inequality (political, economic and social) in relation to others
(groups, states, peoples).

Within injustice discourses are subject positions involving direct and witnessing
experience, both but particularly the latter equated with violent emotion at the injury
caused to others, including intense horror, pain, grief, loss, violent anger and a sense
of helplessness, generating internal struggle between what should be and is. Within
this position, in terms of subjectivity, injustice is constructed as equating to a visceral,
embodied condition with distinct psychological phenomena, which parallels the core
psychological state described explicitly within the conflict. As such, injustice is
constructed as a powerful motivator for action, requiring agency. Whether this
involves ‘revenge’ (constructed as ‘natural’, or ‘revolution’), or justice processes
involving retributive justice or alternatives constructs, here justice is constructed as
the potential vehicle for agency.

The powerful emotions injustice is equated with here are also reflected in psychology
literature investigating, for example through neuroscience, the physiological impact of
‘unfair treatment’ (e.g. Evans & Yamaguchi, 2009), and considerations of ‘moral
outrage’ in response to perceptions of ‘injustice’ as defined therein (e.g. Darely &
Pittman, 2003; Goodenough, 1997; Rozin, Lowery, Imada & Haidt, 1999). These and
its construction as ‘a call to action’ distinguish it according to Cahn from justice (in
Ledewitz, 1985, p.286).

Justice on the other hand, whilst of significance to conflict experience in all three
contexts in very different ways relating to material contextual ideographic differences,
is more limited in its constructions (reinforcing Shklar above) with greater shared
meaning than that of injustice. It is constructed as aspirational and potentially
restorative, though also equated with limited formulaic notions of accountability for
most, drawn from retributive justice discourses tied to institutional process, seen as
highly problematic for all (other than for Mariam (Syria), a lawyer). Justice constructs
in the case of the Syrian and Palestinian conflicts equate with civil and human rights
discourse, drawn from multiple local, regional, historical and international influences,
and with idiographic differences. Whilst in relation to Iraq, drawn from political,
social, moral and religious discourse, justice constructs equate with social equality and fair treatment (moral, equal, transparent, for the good of all) in relation to interpersonal conduct and the conduct of government and states.

Further, as highlighted, justice is constructed as interdependent and equating to injustice in distinctly different ways and with different implications for positioning, subjectivity and agency. Justice is constructed as equating to resolution for injustice in terms of bringing about an end to displacement, occupation and suffering in Palestine (Omar) and providing individual empowerment, protection, autonomy from tyranny of dictatorship in Syria in the transition to democracy (Mariam). Here, where the pursuit of collective justice is constructed as equated with a personal sense of purpose, justice becomes a positive vehicle for agency, legitimising and empowering subject positions, opening up the space for legitimate action and in its pursuit provides a powerful source of resilience, resistance and hope in terms of subjectivity (Mariam and Omar).

Whilst justice, in the context of Iraq, as an aspirational construct unrelated to material conditions in the world, is re-constructed as equated with social equality and fair treatment in conduct at all levels, to bring about peace and stability in Iraq, regionally and globally (Kareem, Tala). As aspirational, involving the agency of others at the national and international levels, this provides no immediate opportunity for personal agency within the context of current material events.

The constructions of justice here do not align readily with psychology literature equating justice with support for traditional retributive and transitional justice processes at the collective level, particularly as tied to institutional processes connected with power, including the premise that higher levels of moral outrage increase support for punishment and retribution (Darley & Pittman, 2003). These are for complex contextual and idiographic reasons drawn by participants in the construction of conflicting justice constructs and alternative constructions of resolution.

For most, discourses constraining justice to limited, ineffective or abusive retributive justice and transitional justice processes, generating a rejection of these for alternative discourses that maintain hope and resilience and provide the prospect of progressive
resolutions for current conditions of suffering, are drawn from conflicting constructs of justice as constituted by power and its institutions, from experience of material conditions in context. These equate with the perceived relationship between justice and power in practice, at the international level in the conduct of Western state power in the Arab region (towards Syrians, Palestinians, Iraqis) and the conduct of national autocratic power, both implicated in the withholding, use, and abuse of ‘justice’ as a tool to perpetrate injustices.

Consequently, justice is constructed variously as rhetorical, corrupt, abstract and irrelevant, reflecting the erosion of justice itself and perceptions of its capacity to provide peaceful and progressive change. This has direct relevance to the political realm and the field of international relations, and supports research on the deleterious impact of the use and abuse for example of associated human rights discourses including in ‘The War on Terror’, through their politicisation and co-opting in the advancement of power, which devalues the instruments themselves (Jahren, 2013).

Resultant justice constructs conflict with subject positions invested in justice discourse, generating emotions of anger, helplessness, loss of hope, and delimiting opportunities in the same way as injustice constructs. This generates a reframing of initial justice discourses to maintain their power as enabling continued survival, hope and resistance to power in context. For Omar this involves relocating justice and hence agency in the solidarity of others, for Mariam this involves criminalizing the actions of states rather than politicizing justice as a construct itself. For the others it involves the generation of alternative counter-discourses, which address the conditions equated with injustice as equated with individual but also primarily collective harm. These draw on justice discourse relating to reconciliation, religious discourses relating to forgiveness and repentance, psychology discourses relating to healing through shared grief and loss, socio-political moral discourses relating to progressive social equality practices, all of which open up opportunity for private resolution through, significantly, societal resolution.

These are aspirational for most, limiting private agency, as dependent on structural changes and the agency of others, reducing opportunity to one of suspension or
withdrawal, though actual for Yasmine who finds personal agency and resolution within this discourse. At the same time, as counter-discourses in context, they constitute acts of resistance through language, and the interview process itself to those appropriated by oppressive political power, in a way that reflects selfhood and symbolises paradigm shifts within context.

Interestingly, these discourses, drawn from different social contexts, parallel developments in ideas within Western jurisprudence, social sciences and philosophy relating to restorative justice discourses, and more recently in psychology literature investigating such concepts as ‘forgiveness’, ‘mercy’, ‘reconciliation’ and their positive and negative relationship to mental health (Exline, Worthington, Hill & McCullough, 2003). These investigations focus primarily, as with (in)justice research, on the individual, assuming mistakenly, as in mainstream psychology research on war trauma, that the replication of individual experience is universal and captures the collective and inter-generational experience of systematic political violence and subjugation of entire populations in the context of armed conflict (El-Shazly, 2011). In relation to shared collective experience, within this context, this may be an area for further research.

In terms of the role of discourse in constituting not only the object (justice) but also the subject (here participants) in terms of positioning, subjectivity and practice, and the influence of the social and material (conditions of armed conflict) in this process, and also the subject as actively, autonomously and consciously constituting discourse, these are reflected in findings relating to action orientation, within the dynamic relational discursive context of the interview. Here the same (participant) self, can be seen to take up a range of at times conflicting subject positions in relation to the discursive object ((in)justice), chooses discourses that limit opportunities for action, whilst rejecting those that open them (Saif and Sara), and vice versa (Mariam and Omar), whilst those in the same social and material context take up different subject positions (Leen, Mariam v Saif, Sara), as do those within different social and material contexts (Syrian focus on rights, Iraqi focus on equality).
This is further illustrated in the language used to construct not only (in)justice but also the political context of war, as explicitly made conscious in the deconstruction by all participants of the research term used to introduce the investigation, ‘armed conflict’, in common usage in psychology research. Its neutrality is itself political, mediating a specific kind of political reality, through the discourse appropriated by power in these conflicts to suggest an enemy of equal force (rather than e.g. ‘occupation’), with implications for the subject positions of perpetrator, victim and observer, constituting subjectivity and practice. The research term is rejected and the experience reframed through language that mediates a different kind of experience. Prompting reflections on the role of the researcher, the discursive context of the interview as a ‘reality producing force’ (Cruickshank, 2012) in which meaning (like that of the therapeutic relationship) is co-constructed, and the function of the research effort itself a vehicle which influences and is being influenced by the discourses it seeks to investigate. This is highly significant in this context, as the act of participation becomes itself (like that of the therapeutic relationship) a way of gaining insight and making sense of experience through the relational process of the interview, and itself becomes an act of defiance and resistance. This suggests that psychological insights into the power of language to mediate and construct social reality and our own relationship with it might empower clients similarly within the therapeutic setting.

Consequently, these findings suggest that, in contrast to the Foucauldian perspective (Foucault, 1982), whilst social and material reality is mediated by language, social and material conditions in turn play a significant constituent role in constraining, making redundant or generating discourses relevant to psychological states and needs of the individual and collective. This involves an active, conscious and autonomous process, that appears to relate to individual psychological differences (given insight in the research process by explicit autobiographical information and the psychological and emotional insights of participants about themselves in the course of recruitment and interview), which provides valuable and more complete insights into the people who make up the subjects under investigation within discourse analysis. These findings support the more critical realist epistemological perspective of discourse analysts (e.g. Parker, 1992; Sims-Schouten et al., 2007), which highlights the limitations of FDA research on subjectivity on the basis of discourse alone (Willig, 2008), and
suggests the value of psychosocial approaches to discourse analysis (e.g. Frosh & Saville Young, 2008).

**Strengths and Limitations**

Accordingly, a key strength of the current research is the use of semi-structured interviews rather than anonymous texts sources, conducted as a dialogue with open questions that allowed for a broad and in-depth exploration of participants’ experiences and their understandings of justice and injustice within these contexts. The process yielded biographical information in terms of life history and experience, as well as explicit accounts of the social and material reality of conflict context itself and its influence as stated. This in turn informed the analysis, and also allowed for valuable insights into the emotional meanings attached to particular subject positions, making less speculative the link between the discursive constructions used by participants and the actual subjective experience within it, in terms of what is thought, felt and experienced (Willig, 2008). This helped to mitigate to a degree the limitations of FDA relating to the researcher’s ability to understand subjectivity through analysis of discourse alone and the relationship between discourse and social and material reality.

A limitation, however, was in the re-use of the existing interview schedule/transcripts, that did not allow for a more explicit investigation into the social influences from which discursive constructs are drawn, except where these were expressly stated, in order to take into account the different cultural context of participants. Where this was not specifically expressed, it was drawn from biographical information gained through the recruitment and interview process.

Further, whilst the re-use of primary data for re-analysis using different qualitative approaches to offer new insights is now well established (Mason, 2007), as for example here where primary data was rich and access to new data challenging given the research topic, nevertheless this generated epistemological challenges and limitations, principal of which related to the nature of the data itself and the researcher’s engagement and reflexive stance in relation to it.
Since data can be said to be created through a process of co-construction between the researcher and participant/s in the research process, primary data can be seen as the product of a specific context (time and place, project, interactions), whilst the process of re-analysis, through the new research project and relationship between the researcher and data, similarly involves a “re-contextualising” and “re-constructing” of data rather than its ‘re-use’ (Moore, 2007, para. 2.3). This raises epistemological questions as to whether qualitative data can indeed be used in this way, particularly problematic where context knowledge is lacking and the primary researcher/s not involved. Although both were mitigated in the current instance, since contextual factors remained largely constant and indeed as highlighted have been used to advantage in the FDA, the data itself nevertheless remained the construction of a different research context and process, and in this way impacting on findings, an issue which the generation of new data would otherwise mitigate.

In addition, the relationship between the researcher and the data raised further challenges. This involves, in approaching the new study, the risk of the researcher’s remaining embedded within the initial data context, experience and meaning-making process, and having been shaped by the experience and ‘knowledge’ gained, bringing this into the FDA research process of data analysis and findings. In turn this raised challenges to reflexivity in approaching the second research, which may have become problematic in this context, since the researcher risked not gaining sufficient distance for personal and epistemological reflections on subjectivity and biases in terms of her relationship and emotional connectedness with the data and the experience of conducting the initial research, from what had become familiar, interpreted and newly assimilated as ‘knowledge’.

Whilst, further, in terms of ‘knowledge’ gained, the ‘re-use’ of data risked limiting the scope and breadth of the second enquiry and the opportunity for fresh insights into the research topic, which new data might otherwise have offered up, as well as adding further to the richness, diversity and depth of understanding in the area of research.

In acknowledging these challenges and limitations, strategies adopted to help address them where possible in order to enhance credibility involved primarily reflections on
the researcher’s stance and engagement with the data. A conscious attempt was made to adopt what Mason (2007) terms “investigative epistemology” (para. 1.4), that is, being able to use “any qualitative data” as long as this is done “carefully, revealingly and reflexively” (para. 1.3). This involved reflecting on the research experience of the first study and approaching the data by adopting an open and curious stance, consciously attempting as far as this is possible to ‘bracket’ (Husserl, 1999, p.63) the researcher’s position in relation to the data, shaped through the experience of conducting the IPA study, in the same way as approaching the initial literature review and the first study data collection process, in order to become open to engaging with the data set in a new way. This was facilitated by a seven-month analytic distance between the two studies, during which the first study was not re-visited until the analysis and results write-up stages of the second were completed. Further, a distinct seven-stage research process for carrying out the FDA was designed which further facilitated a new way of engaging with the research material, and which further helped to address these challenges (see Appendix 1. Reflexivity). However, limitations relating to the nature and scope of the data, which the collection of a new qualitative data set would have addressed, remain as considerations for future studies.

**Relevance to Counselling Psychology and Clinical Practice**

The current study takes an alternative approach to engaging with psychological trauma in the context of conflict, which recognizes that human subjective experience is relational, embedded in context, mediated through language, and which can be deconstructed to reveal the social, cultural and political influences that make up our social reality. In this way, the current study is part of a body of research which highlights the limitations of the current epidemiological epistemology and clinical approach, defined and constrained by that which seeks to heal.

In addition, it highlights that this approach in itself constitutes a powerful discourse which defines and prescribes the psychosocial approach to human distress, including what is significant in terms of health and wellbeing (as constituted in NICE guidelines in the UK) and consequently the role of the Counselling Psychology clinician (Schryer & Spoel, 2005), particularly within national health service settings, and that
of the discipline of Psychology itself, in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of individual survivors, as well as in affecting progressive change within wider society.

The significance of the construct of (in)justice to human suffering in this context calls for a more holistic and integrated approach to working with survivors of conflict and political oppression within the clinical field, and in interdisciplinary engagement with legal and development fields and international humanitarian aid work, in supporting individuals and communities affected by conflict to find resolution, peace and stability, and an end to suffering and the spirals of violence and revenge that currently blight us:

These acts of violence not only demean us as human beings, but humiliate the entire human race. (Niazi, 2011, p.xiv)

**Recommendations for Future Research**
The current study investigates the constructions of justice and its significance in a non-clinical population. As an extension of the current study, how a clinical population might construct justice and how significant this is to their experience of trauma merits further investigation, for the purpose of deconstructing the influences of political, social and cultural forces in which language and experience is embedded, with the purpose of informing therapeutic practice and the contributions that Counselling Psychology can make to supporting survivors in their search for justice.

Alongside this, research using FDA to understand how psychological trauma itself is constructed in a clinical population diagnosed with PTSD and how epidemiological discourses construct subjective position, subjectivity, and act to constrain or otherwise open up opportunities for agency and change, would be valuable in informing therapeutic practice as well as contributing to the wider debate on the value of the construct.

The contribution that Counselling Psychology can make to inform the psychosocial support given to survivors within their communities is significant, particularly in relation to support for whole communities, as well as investigations on the
significance of the construction of injustice in inter- and intra-community conflict and resolution. This is an area highlighted by Niaz (2011) in the face of spiralling tension in the Middle East and elsewhere.

FDA has proven a useful tool in understanding the power dynamics at play within the therapeutic relationship. Further research that explores the application of FDA in therapy, specifically as this relates to the relationship between power, discourses and subjectivity, in trauma work, but also with other client groups may also open up new avenues that promote a more contextualized and holistic approach to understanding subjectivity, health and wellbeing.
References


Cruickshank, J. (2012). The role of qualitative interviews in discourse theory. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines, (Vol.6)*.


http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries


Rozin, P., Lowery, L., Imada, S., & Haidt, J. (1999). The CAD triad hypothesis: a mapping between three moral emotions (contempt, anger, disgust) and three


Shafiq, R. (2013). *A review of literature on the meanings and significance of the concept of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of mass violence and gross human rights violations in the context of armed conflict*. Unpublished manuscript. School of Psychology, University of Surrey, Guildford, Psych/D.

Shafiq, R. (2014). *A qualitative exploration of the meaning of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of armed conflict*. Unpublished manuscript. School of Psychology, University of Surrey, Guildford, Psych/D.


Appendices

Appendix 1.
Reflexivity

Appendix 2.
Table 3. Results of FDA by Participant

Appendix 3.
Tables 4., 5., & 6. Palestinian/Israeli, Syrian and Iraq Conflict Profiles
Table 7. Participant Profiles Informing Process of Analysis
Table 8. Example of FDA Seven Stage Process: Transcript 8. Kareem (Iraq Conflict Context)

Appendix 4.
Protocol Cover Sheet (Ethical Request)
Ethical Approval, Research Project Part 1. (Shafiq, 2014)
Interview Schedule, Research Project Part 1. (Shafiq, 2014)
Table 9. Example of Transcript: Transcript 02. Omar (Palestinian (Gaza)/Israeli conflict)
Appendix 1. Reflexivity

As detailed in the Reflexivity section of the Literature Review (Shafiq, 2013), the current research series originated from and is an extension of influences generated as a result of personal and professional experiences, clinical and research interests and interactions to date with the subject of civilian armed conflict experience, undertaken from a broadly relativist, social constructionist ontological perspective, which recognises the significance of the relational to human experience, and the need to engage holistically not only with subjective experience, but also collective experience, embedded in context (including social, cultural, political and historical), in order to understand in a meaningful way human distress, health and wellbeing.

Accordingly, given the importance of personal and epistemological reflections on the influence of the researcher in the research process, and conscious of the personal interest and resonance the research topic has for me, a number of steps were taken to enhance research credibility.

Since this second research study followed on from the first (Research Project Part 1, 2014), and used the same primary data set, re-analysed through the different methodological approach of FDA, reflecting on the significance of this, a conscious attempt was made to reconstruct a new relationship with the data in order to be able to approach it in a new way, adopting an open and curious stance, whilst consciously attempting to ‘bracket’ (Husserl, 1999, p.63) as far as this is possible the researcher’s ‘knowledge’ and position with respect to the data as a result of the experience of conducting the former research. This was facilitated by a distancing time period of seven months before commencing the FDA study, whilst the initial IPA study was not re-visited until after the data analysis and results stages were completed.

In order to facilitate this further, the transcript text themselves were approached deliberately in a different way to the earlier study. The original transcripts were re-formatted in new tables without columns for the purposes of the FDA, and were read anew, taking time to be immersed in each text afresh, from an FDA stance. The data analysis process involved a different sequence, involving analysis of case studies in
three conflict clusters, within which each case study was analysed fully before moving on to the next. This involved conducting all seven stages of the analysis on each text systematically (1 to 7), whilst recording notes during each stage in a bespoke seven-column table format, distinct from the earlier IPA process (see Appendix 3. Table 8. Example of FDA Process). Analysis was then further interpreted and summarised in the writing-up process for each case study, in order to preserve the holistic integrity of each case study, before moving onto the next text within the cluster, allowing for commonalities and differences to be noted as the analysis developed within and across the sample, whilst checking back to the original transcript sources at each stage.

The experience of conducting this second study using FDA was again highly challenging and enlightening. Challenging from a methodological perspective relating to the intellectual demands of the FDA process, which required reflections on one’s own use of language and a stepping outside or distancing (as far as this can be possible) from the social world one inhabits, to examine and question the mechanisms which influence, shape and communicate it. As a result the experience was enlightening, providing new insights from a different dimension into the nature of human distress in this extreme context, as well as, through the methodological perspective, highlighting the significance of language in not only transmitting and reflecting, but also in constructing and shaping meaning, and in understanding this, the powerful and liberating potential this suggests we have as individuals and societies to progressively challenge, influence and reconstruct our social world.
Table 3

Results of FDA By Participant

Key: black = justice discourse, red = discourse conflicts. Plus influences: blue = perceptions of the conflict, purple = core experience/psychological state in the conflict green=resolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discursive constructs</th>
<th>Discourses</th>
<th>Action Orientation</th>
<th>Positionings</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Subjectivity</th>
<th>Relationship of discourses with institutions, power &amp; ideology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is ‘justice’ constructed? What type of object (‘justice’) is being constructed?</td>
<td>What discourses are drawn on? What is their relationship to one another?</td>
<td>What do constructions of justice achieve? What is gained by deploying them here? What are their functions? What is speaker doing here?</td>
<td>What subject positions are made available by these constructions of justice?</td>
<td>What possibilities for action are mapped out by these constructions? What can be said and done within these subject positions?</td>
<td>What can be thought, felt, experienced from the available subject positions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Palestinian/Israeli conflict: Omar

Justice constructs are material and central to the conflict (perception and experience of), perceived as a military occupation. Justice constructs relate to what it is to be human, in this context.

Injustice is an embodied condition, experienced as a reduction of the human condition (‘dehumanising’), a threat to life and more substantially to survival through sublimation and political resistance, where otherwise survival through violent resistance, or existential death where ‘life and death’ are the same and which involve resignation, despair, mental illness, suicide.

Acceptance and thriving in condition not possible given his collective narrative, childhood

Historical discourses frame, legitimises and maintains sense of self and struggle.

Layered on generational collective discourses drawn from historical material experience, and material childhood and adult experiences living in

Counter-discourses around relationship between justice and power have the potential to

Justice constructs allow for survival and resistance within context of ‘occupation’, by making possible private agency in the form of grass roots advocacy, solidarity with ‘ordinary people’, and offer possibility of change.

Burning anger inside viscerally felt, experienced as destructive to the self if left without taking action.

Determined cultivation of ‘hope’ and ‘resilience’.

Rejects justice as held by power in the form of political entities (nation states and their representative institutions), specifically the West, ‘free world’, as protectors of international law, human rights, the vulnerable.

Ordinary people (himself and others) hold the key to political change and
integrity (of the self).

Justice, associated with human rights, is restorative, equalises.

Justice (and human rights) exist as material constructs outside of the political realm.

a refugee camp in Gaza.

Material experience around relationship between justice and power.

experiences, nature of global world in which we live (significance of time, place, history).

Syrian conflict: Sara

Injustice is material and central to the conflict. It is unfairness, associated with abuse of power, social inequality, denial of freedom. It is injury that is experienced as an embodied condition, reflecting her psychological state (loss, pain, grief, dismembered), mirroring her experience of the conflict.

Justice as accountability? is not relevant to her perception of the conflict, (as morphed from a civil rights movement motivated by struggle for equality

Justice and injustice constructs allude to contemporary political, social and international human rights discourse.

Justice as revenge is drawn from Hammurabi’s law, and historical commemorative practice (marking suffering across generations).

Material experience and observation make sense of her current psychological state and position (static), and act as counter-discourses to dominant discourses relating to justice, human rights, and possibilities for reform through violent revolution and political change only.

Position her in the middle of the conflict, stuck between both groups in the conflict, marginalized civil populations she empathises and identifies with on the human level as witness to suffering, the other ruling family which she identifies with in terms of familial relationships, leaving her in a state of inner conflict between her individual values and her social identity, and on the outside of the sociopolitical realm.

Injustice characterizes current status quo and offers no possibility for agency in its support, creating a tension where this may lead to harm of loved ones.

Justice through political change (revolution, now discredited as cycles of revenge & war economy greed) no longer offers possibility for agency.

Injustice as revenge (primitive and further destructive) offers no possibility for private resolution.

Current state is stuck, Pain, grief, loss. Anger and desire for revenge, suppressed. Visceral need for inner healing and reintegration of self, in relationship with others.

Whilst injustice is the cause of reform, revolt and violence, justice as it is defined by dominant discourses of power which are partisan is rejected, in favour of a different kind of resolution, which offers personal agency and collective agency at the community level, the sharing of pain leading to reconciliation and healing.

Ordinary people hold the key to their own healing and resolution.
and freedom, to violent multi-agent revolution and spiral of violence and revenge on all sides, with no credible political alternative). which she perceives from a position of divided loyalties in the middle

Justice is abstract, associated with equality, but given lip service. Its credibility is eroded, it is a tool of political power. It requires a societal culture change of tolerance and respect for justice at the national political sphere to be viable.

Justice as revenge is the bi-product of injustice, involving pain from grief, giving rise to primitive emotions of anger leading to a need to defend the self by giving back, leading to cycles of injury and revenge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syrian conflict: Leen</th>
<th>Injustice frames her</th>
<th>Draws on discourses</th>
<th>‘Injustice’ is key a</th>
<th>Her subjective</th>
<th>Given her material</th>
<th>In the context of the Construction of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Resolution draws on own material experience and shared human experience of grief, and psychology discourses around therapeutic models of healing. static, frozen, whilst in the midst of ‘whirlpool’ of violence, without agency. Psychology discourse offers up agency at the human collective level, outside of the political sphere. It requires healing through shared grief and forgiveness at the human level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions and Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A perception of the conflict as the unprovoked acts of government against its citizens, of summary killing, torture of unarmed and innocent civilians, and wanton destruction of the country. Rej...dominant discourse of civil war to define conflict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Injustice** is the violation by government of civic rights, particularly relating to freedom from torture of children, women and families. Injustice is the unfair and inhumane treatment of the vulnerable and displaced by neighbouring countries. Injustice is experienced and witnessed, the latter particularly in relation to torture of.

Possibly draws on construct used from outset and throughout to define the conflict. 'Justice' is initially defined through inference in relation to 'injustice', more specifically in relation to her own response to injustice, and directly in relation to her hopes and aspirations for Syrian society. It does not feature in relation to her personal resolution, position in resistance, however, is rhetorical in nature, given the material context of threat, and her identity as a civilian, woman, wife and mother of two small children. It allows her to feel terror, horror, anger, helplessness, guilt, with little recourse for action, in the context of the witness experience and in the face of the material experience of overwhelming, massive, uncontrolled, and unprincipled, political power and violence.

Experience, justice constructs are limiting in terms of possibilities for action. Leaving her with one course of action in relation to her immediate needs. Her key priority is survival for her children, which she defines in terms of safety and stability and which she relates to both her immediate situation - her resolution was to leave the country and live displaced for the second time in her life - and her future uncertainty given the political instability in the region. This addresses her current state of anxiety and her immediate needs for survival, both psychologically and materially, in line with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory (1943).

Intensely painful eyewitness experiences she describes, particularly in relation to torture, of injustices carried out against innocent civilians, she experiences terror, anger, sadness, helplessness, and possibly underlying guilt.

Injustice highlight her rejection of the dominant discourse of the Assad government in relation to the nature of the conflict in Syria as caused by 'terrorism'. She uses her constructs of justice to develop a position of rhetorical civil resistance, not based on partisan political affiliation, but on the notion of basic inalienable rights of all people, and in this way rejects the current political status quo.

What alleviates her distress then is the formulation of a plan to leave the country, her only sure recourse if she is to ensure survival for her children, which is her focus.
families is emphasized as ‘horrific’.

Injustice is an embodied sense of terror, from constant sense of threat to life, at any time, without any probable cause, but more from the thought of torture of her children, husband or herself in front of each other, which she describes as ‘worse that death’.

Justice is aspirational and eroded in the region. It is conceptualised in terms of political change, restoration of rights, retributive justice, right to redress.

Justice is ‘revenge’ against the ‘regime’, involving specific actions, the collapse of the Assad government, political change to democracy and civil rights, a right of return for refugees, and a restoration of the international discourse on the conduct of countries in relation to conflict.

Counter-discourse draws on historical practice regionally with regards to refugees displaced from past wars (Palestinian, Iraqi) to highlight the ‘unfairness’ and inhumane treatment of Syrian refugees.

Social and religious morals and values specific to her culture and religion, both of which she cites as significant to her.

Draws on religious discourse of concept of accounting for sins in an afterlife, to reject forgiveness - rejecting conflict resolution discourses relating to restorative justice processes.
country in terms of its ‘identity’.

Justice in relation to perpetrators, conceived as ‘revenge’ involves punishment of the perpetrators in the form of imprisonment, indicating a judicial process, as well as enduring psychological suffering in the here and now without hope of forgiveness from ‘God’ or people.

Rejects concept of forgiveness, in favour of justice as a type of everlasting punishment in the here and now giving sense of the magnitude of injustice she perceives, intensity of her emotions, continuing injustices of the conflict itself.

In terms of her own personal resolution, justice as she defines it, does not feature.

**Syrian conflict: Saif**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describes initial conflict in terms</th>
<th>Draws on (not directly referenced)</th>
<th>Language of justice and injustice is</th>
<th>Drawing on discourse relating to moral</th>
<th>This position leaves little room for action</th>
<th>From these injustices, he</th>
<th>The lack of credibility of arbiters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Injustice is described as a state of being morally wronged, as a result of actions that are unfair, destructive, and that have a negative impact on individuals. This concept is embedded in a rich discourse on the cultural and historical context of Syria, which includes its unique identity, aspirations, heritage, and society itself. Injustice is characterized by a loss of identity, the destruction of personal expression, and a sense of unfair treatment.

In the context of contemporary discourse on international human rights and freedoms, as well as inalienable (by natural law) and inherent to Western democratic models of governance (by inference but not stated), but also highlights regional political influences (Arab Spring in Egypt), influences of international education in Syrian private schools, and the ‘global’ culture of communication amongst the younger generation which integrates internet and social media technology and practices have made possible. ‘Unfair’, as ‘unfair’, draws on contemporary notions of ‘freedom of the pursuit of happiness’ as an inalienable right based on natural law, found in contemporary Western political discourse as well as absent from his account until introduced. Freedoms are not associated in any direct way with justice (as a drive for justice or its absence as a form of injustice) in Saif’s account.

Counter-discourse relating to significance of freedom of expression creates tension, but appears as a way of integrating dichotomies. Relating it to private expression in order to preserve life, safety, stability, offers up a rejection of contemporary discourse on ‘freedom of expression’ and ‘freedom of thought’ where it does not affect private identity and integrity, although beliefs advocating non-violence, dialogue, a coming together of minds, both in interpersonal relationships and the conduct of political affairs, his only recourse for action, within an environment of political violence, dominated by the discourse of power, violence, threat and non-tolerance, is to continue to witness and be exposed to suffering through passive resistance within the private realm in Syria, or to focus on survival of his family and to withdraw/‘avoid’ by leaving the country.

Though the former is preferable as more empowering, because of his sense of intense empathy and social identity and ‘belonging to Syria’ and Syrians, and consequently he is able to maintain some and change, it is a suspended position, one of passive waiting, since resolution in the immediate sense is a cessation of violence and destruction at the societal level, where none is offered and the future of Syria and its people remains ‘uncertain’. This is particularly so for those who have suffered significantly, directly referencing the plight of Syrian refugees, and drawing on his own experience as a fraction of what might be theirs, he speculates on the uncertainty of the future given levels of anger and hatred and the potential for revenge and abilities to contain it.

At the personal level, his resolution for himself is a return to Syria, though this generates an internal conflict, as a father and husband with a experiences intense emotions of pain, anger and hatred. His feelings of anger are multiple, anger at the situation in Syria and the protagonists who are culpable, anger as resentment against his host people in diaspora, anger at the regional and international players and powers for their culpability in not ending the suffering and destruction, where they have the power to do so, and anger at himself for his not being able to take action himself, as a ‘peaceful man’ he feels unable and unwilling to take up arms – to be violent, despite feeling that what is happening is morally ‘wrong’ and that he or people are ‘being wronged’.

Injustice describes the situation in Syria, referenced in moral terms as ‘wrong’, and its impact on the ordinary Syrian as ‘unfair’, as massive loss of ‘souls’, ‘destruction’ of aspirations (‘dreams’), of ‘heritage’, and of society itself of Syria (as a nation state with its unique identity, culture and heritage).
a very real and felt sense as an internal ‘destruction’ of the self, reflected in his identity with Syria, in the empathy he feels for the suffering of those he knows throughout the country, for the ordinary Syrians who have suffered, for the destruction of heritage, and of future aspirations that are personal to the ordinary man.

Injustice is the continuation in power of the current regime, requiring political change.

Revenge (not in reference to justice) is ‘natural’ and understandable response to the killing of family members, as avenging for another’s life, as an expression of grief and a form of redress.

Justice is ‘accountability’ for

| contemporary notions of justice as fairness (Rawls). | it is the difference between feeling alive and invigorated (felt in a physical sensory way) and monotony. | sense of self and integrity through this action, both positions leave him in the passive witness subject position, witnessing suffering and destruction beyond his control and abilities to stop it, and feeling helpless (‘handicapped’) and changed (‘disfigured’), by unfamiliar intense negative emotions of pain, anger and hatred which are new to him for a man who ‘loves people’, and which he experiences as threatening his sense of self (his integrity) in an alarming way. |
| Draw on discourse relating to moral beliefs advocating non-violence, dialogue, a coming together of minds, both in interpersonal relationships and the conduct of political | Revenge draws on values within a collective society in which social identity take on significance over or are a strong part of individual identity. |
| Justice as accountability draws on retributive justice discourse, with aspects of judicial redress at a societal level possibly drawn from international humanitarian law. |
| Drawn from material experience, erosion of credibility of | focus on his family’s safety and stability as a priority. | focus on his family’s safety and stability as a priority. |
| focus on his family’s safety and stability as a priority. | | |
those responsible directly and indirectly for the ‘destruction of people and country’, involving ‘sharing’ in the rebuilding or reconstruction of the country, inferring justice as restoring balance or harmony.

But this justice is a ‘dream’, aspirational, and irrelevant since it can neither stop the current violence (Saif’s immediate priority), nor have credibility given that all significant political players (local, regional and international individuals/powers is inferred) are culpable either directly or indirectly by sharing in the Syrian situation.

**Syrian conflict: Mariam**

**Injustice frames the civil war, as the purposeful denial of ‘rights’ of the civilian population by the government.**

**Injustice also**

Justice constructs here is primarily drawn from contemporary (western) legal human rights and humanitarian discourses but also

Public and private aspirations are different.

Her whole purpose has been to document and publicise atrocities, to raise

On a private level, Mariam doesn’t hold out for much immediate comfort from justice, her needs are for safety and stability come first, and a continuing

For herself, she wants ‘an ordinary life’, she never thought before the war that she would not be able to live ‘a natural life’, which she
characterizes the witness experience as her being unable to do anything for Syrians (including refugees) being killed, imprisoned, hurt.

Injustice is the absence of ‘world’ intervention to save the Syrian people.

Justice is constructed in relation to the most disturbing image of injustice she recalls, as giving a meaning to the suffering, as ‘not for nothing’.

Justice has a restorative quality as restoring loss (home, country memory), including return of refugees.

Justice is the removal of the regime, freely elected President by the people, right to return of refugees without fear of arrest or being killed, Syrian refugees overseas have their full rights, living in

inferences political democracy constructions – rights and freedoms are entitlement of every citizen before responsibility. And they are part of what is due to citizens of a national state by the government. The government is seen as the elected representatives of the people, as opposed to currently a power governing for its own sake at the expense of the people/citizens of the country. The bloody process of revolution to democracy is then framed within this discourse to be acceptable to have meaning as the necessary process of change within history.

awareness and action. This allows on an individual level for acceptance of situation (in terms of having symbolic meaning), purpose (agency) and hope (similar to P2). Which maintains her and positions her in resistance to power. Her vulnerability perhaps comes where she experiences ‘shock’, ‘helplessness’ and ‘hopelessness’ when faced with the dichotomies between the abstract principle (just cause, rights and freedoms as rights of civil population) and the political (the ‘world’ seeing but not taking action or in support of the Assad regime), dichotomy between principles and abstract workings of legal frameworks and judicial processes, and their relationship to power, they are implemented by the purpose to help the suffering through her legal work, and for her sister a judicial process interestingly is also secondary to immediate survival/safety, and aspirational, but is envisaged in a much more personal way that offers her sister agency, which is through her own written word, the ability to get justice for herself.

associates with having stability and safety and to be able to settle down for herself and for her children, having moved from house to house. She aspires to studying for an MSc or PhD but this was interrupted by the war. She has no passport (in effect is stateless) as regime won’t renew her citizenship, which means she can’t travel. She aspires to continue to do her work in a way she ‘can be useful’ to her ‘country, people, children’, which is to help Syrians and Syrian refugees.

She also wants her sister to be released, as a ‘good’ person who has done much for Syrians, helped a lot of people free them from prison.
‘dignity’.

Justice is fair treatment of refugees with ‘humanity’, ‘respect’, dignity, not as criminals arrested and detained.

Justice (as process) requiring documenting (taking testimony, recording it, and evidence such as photos) people’s experiences to raising awareness of what’s really happening, of the suffering of the people and ending the war; Commemorating past, passing on in collective memory from one generation to another (the power of discourse for shaping thought and action); raising cases in international court of human rights in order that victims ‘take their rights in the future and judge who’s doing that’ (remedy and reparation).

powerful (‘the world countries’), whilst at the same time power rests with power, in the case of Syria with tyranny and not with the victims of tyranny.

even prior to the war when she describes ‘a hard period when all the people were silent, she was talking and demanding’. In terms of justice for her sister, she first wants her to be released – this is the priority – then she wants justice for her sister but she believes once released her sister will obtain her own justice ‘in her hand, in her voice’ (different from judicial justice that they are working towards!), through her own agency, through the pen, her sister being a writer will obtain justice ‘she can write everything and can take her justice’.
Judicial process as important to ensure accountability for crimes, restoring rights, and to give meaning to suffering, ‘that’s not going for nothing’.

She frames what’s happening (massacres, killings, torture, pain) as a ‘natural’ process of revolution, referencing the bloody history of France, that leads to democracy, rights, 'a very good country'.

Justice as ‘symbolic’ rather than necessarily materially healing.

Judicial processes in obtaining ‘rights’ following injury, rather than taking matters into one’s own hands, are ‘very important’.

Justice frames her aspirations for the future of the country: she wants a ‘peaceful country’, killing to stop, accountability for crimes, political change.
which takes the form of democracy, living in freedom, and return of refugees. But she has ‘no hope’ after three years that this will happen.

Justice aspirations also involve the international community to help the opposition secure justice by deposing the regime. She considers their non-intervention despite full knowledge of the atrocities being committed as ‘criminal’, drawing on international humanitarian and human rights discourse.

Public related to needs of society relates to context of ‘revolution’ i.e. movement for political change in the country which brings about a radical change of political system, specifically ousting of current regime and authoritarian governing to ‘democracy’. 
election of president and democratic system which brings with it rights and freedoms.

Justice in this context is the process which brings this about, it is seen as giving symbolic meaning to suffering (which then becomes sacrifice – see p1), as if contextualizing suffering, which brings accountability and reparation/redress through court systems and international institutions, it is seen as the legitimate process which legitimizes actions taken through this process.

Justice in this way is seen as a ‘symbolic’ process, as having symbolic meaning, which serves society, and individuals who have suffered, but does not necessarily bring private healing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iraq conflict: Tala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice is political tool, as revenge it is used by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within this context her only option for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hence as resolution to injustices (violence,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injustices are constructed against</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the state (governing party) to consolidate power (‘De-Ba’athification’ and ‘justice process’), and to inflict injustices, to discriminate, exclude, marginalize whole segments of society based on their sectarian identity.

Justice policies and practices are consequently experienced as injustices and are leading to cycles of violence and revenge.

Justice as such is past focused and is an obstacle to future progress. Justice in this form is rejected.

At the same time holds to a construct of (social) justice as equality, that all Iraqis are equal despite their different religious identities, as Iraqis are equal to people living in other countries.

survival, is by conforming, or herself becoming radicalized, or maintaining her sense of identity, values and beliefs and personal safety by an exodus from the situation, in this way securing agency and resolution for herself that meets her needs for equality and safety.

discrimination, marginalization), and protection from threat to self and integrity (caused by injustices, in the form of sectarianism and revenge leading to rise in violence, insecurity, terror), she rejects justice as satisfaction (punishment), in favour of justice as reconciliation and seeks for herself justice as equality within society. But neither are possible in the current context, since new political powers, institutions and policies are about consolidation of partisan power.

this to describe her experiences in the context of the conflict as violence, terror, discrimination, marginalization, both within society in Iraq, and Iraqis within the global political system, where in both justice as equality (of opportunities, resources, treatment) does not exist.
Injustices are constructed against this to describe her experiences in the context of the conflict as violence, terror, discrimination, marginalization, both within society in Iraq, and Iraqis within the global political system, where in both justice as equality (of opportunities, resources, treatment) does not exist.

On the collective level she favours forgiveness, tolerance, dialogue, democracy, between people which can carve out a new future.

**Iraq conflict: Yasmine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justice is an empowered nation state in which basic needs are provided for, defined in terms of peace, normality, transparent systems, rules and obligations which regulate the conduct of individuals in their relations with</th>
<th>Justice constructs are drawn from her material experiences of revenge in the war, and her Christian faith, in which ‘love’ is central. Central to this definition is the sanctity of human life, that God loves all people equally</th>
<th>Her faith may give her a sense of empowerment (though this is not referenced). Her personal resolution appears to lie in her faith, which has become strengthened. This appears to help her</th>
<th>It is a state in this respect which, having survived and now in diaspora with her brother, living an alien life of non-belonging, so contravenes her own sense of morality (‘right’ and ‘wrong’) that it</th>
<th>In terms of the wider social/political resolution, she sees little chance of change, without ‘big powers’ ‘coming to their senses’ and intervening in a genuine way to support the hopes of ordinary people. Here</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>others, in which opportunities enable aspirations, expectations and planning for the future, in which a future exists.</td>
<td>Injustice is the condition of war, which is ‘helplessness’ and disempowerment, in which the ordinary man has no ability to effect political change, as it denies (deprives) all of these ‘basic needs’, reduces living to basic day to day survival in a constant state of instability, fear and anxiety for safety of self and others. It is ruthless and random disregard for the sanctity of human life out of individual ‘greed’ and self-interest, human life that is precious, not ours to give or take away, and in disregard for personal obligations to the other and the collective. Justice is conceived as (criminal or Pope), and which follows a differentiation between the human being and the act/deed, so that punishment and individual satisfaction which ‘takes life’ in this respect are seen as the same (revenge), irrespective of whether enacted out of State authority, or individual satisfaction or criminal acts. ‘direct her will’ to accept her past suffering as something she has passed/overcome, to be thankful for what she has (rather than dwell on losses, which she makes a deliberate effort not to) and to strive to focus on her present. Her actions take the form of prayer for others, and for herself for ‘conversion’, acceptance, thankfulness and worship, and a striving to find the goodness in all people and to love. This allows her to move on, within her focus – which is on the personal, the relational, and the day to day. leaves her with unanswered and unanswerable questions. Her resilience derived from the strength she draws from her Christian faith. she looks again to Divine intervention.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘revenge’ (punishment and satisfaction) and is rejected.

As a result she seeks neither forms of justice, and justice has no significance for her in terms of her personal resolution.

In terms of how she regards those who have injured her/others, drawing from her faith, she does not allow herself to think ill of the perpetrator, nor to wish them ‘harm’, but she ‘prays’ for their ‘conversion’ and ‘repentance’, involving a knowledge of truth (enlightenment), including the harm done to others, the cessation of harm, and the desire to ‘compensate’ through good deeds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iraq conflict: Kareem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice in the form of ‘just war’ ethical frame shapes his perceptions of numerous wars, impacts on his perspective is political, patriarchal. Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice on a personal level does not feature for him. His perspective is political, patriarchal. Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice is not used to apply to his own kidnapping, but instead feels no personal ‘hate’ for Kareem resolution for injustice, involves ‘global justice’, a change in Western</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
motivation, ability to tolerate war experience and his psychological resilience.

‘Unjust war’ renders loss of life amongst senseless and forgetting and forgiveness impossible.

Injustice as unfair treatment, frames his perception of US-led occupation policies in Iraq (treatment of all military as enemy, all Ba’athists as ‘criminals’, leading to alienation, deprivation, US appointed government as ‘unqualified’, and as injustices ‘go on and on’).

Distinguishes between injustice done to nations and individuals.

At the individual level, injustice is suffering of families and children caused by situations the government has created by courting war, of his is political.

His private resolution is to be able to continue in his work for benefit of the country, but having been used to working within the law, through institutions, he does not feel he fits in with the current conduct of government, divided, chaotic, corrupt, and is not the ‘right sect’, to be able to work in Iraq or help. He has been asked but declined on the basis that he didn’t want to be a ‘toy’ to be manipulated, especially at this age, whereas if he were younger maybe things would have been different.

As a result, he is resigned to his current situation.

the perpetrators, who he believes are ‘simple’ and deprived, coming from the poorest area of Baghdad, an area which he worked hard to help develop, ‘to promote their lives’:

Instead, he feels a sense of ‘bitterness’ at the political ‘situation’, blaming not the individual Iraqi who he believes is essentially ‘great’, but the societal collective ‘we’, ‘the people’, ‘the fault of everybody’s’, ‘the nation’, for becoming ‘polarised’, ‘turning against each other’, ‘creating dictators’, ‘building dictators again’, in the current ‘politicians’ and the role of Mullahs in political affairs of the country, who are

foreign policy which is ethical, which rights the wrongs it created. This should involve ‘justice for the Palestinians’, not supporting regimes working against the interests of their people, resources to be exploited for the benefit of their own people, transparent in relation to the long term aims of policy on the break up of Iraq, Syria, Egypt and the need for buy in from the people otherwise there will be ongoing bloodshed as opposed to peace in the region and globally.
own ‘displacement’ by people who are ‘not capable’, and as injustices done to Iraqi people that ‘you can go on and on to enumerate’.

Injustice is not used in relation to his own kidnapping. Justice in relation to his personal experience does not feature.

Justice is the opposite of ‘injustice’, as ‘similar treatment’, but that it requires ‘authority to enforce the application of justice’. He describes Iraqis as ‘not expecting justice’, because neither are the people educated to abide by moral codes, nor the politicians adequate to apply it as they have their own agendas (greed, loyalty to Iran Kurdish tribal loyalty), not that of the people. In this way justice as resolution at the national level is manipulating ‘the masses’ which take on a dynamic of their own.
rejected, since the political culture is itself corrupt.

Justice as not part of the current situation in Iraq as requires credible ‘authority’ to apply it, put things ‘right and in order’, none inside as government members are ‘totally biased’ and no ‘impartial’ power outside, so he describes this as needing to be created by the people which will take time, gives it 50 years.

From dismissing justice at the national level he goes to the regional political and global levels where he locates the root of injustice (as associated with unethical, immoral conduct and injury) in relation to Iraq. He locates the root of injustice (and therefore justice) with the conduct of “Western civilisation” (foreign policy) in the region,
Western foreign policy in the ME as itself ‘unjust’ leading to the current ‘turmoil which will never end’ (support for dictatorships & their removal in ‘not an orderly way’). At its centre the ‘displacement of the Palestinians is the root of all the injustice in the whole of the ME’, and that ‘injustice started from the immorality of the Western people who have inflicted it on the area’. He sees this as the ‘root of the problems of the ME’ and ‘of the whole world’ now.
Appendix 3.

**Table 4**

*Palestinian/Israeli Conflict: Political Context From Which Constructions of Justice Are Drawn.*

At the time of the interview (April 2014) the ‘Occupation’, which is the term used by Omar for the conflict, was 66 years old, but its modern beginnings go back further. In 1897, Theodore Herzl founded the Zionist Organisation (a European Jewish political movement) and established as its aim the creation of a Jewish state, as a solution to the ‘Jewish Question’ in Europe, including growing anti-Semitism, and following considerations for Africa and South America, Palestine was decided on at the first congress meeting. In the ‘The Balfour Declaration’ (1917), in a bid to shore up Allied support (US, Russian, and European) in the First World War through Jewish support and influence, Britain promises to support Jewish aspirations for ‘a national home’ in Palestine, then under Ottoman rule (then 95% Palestinian Muslims and Christians, 5% Jewish), whilst ‘it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities’. Whilst Britain also secured Arab support against the Ottoman Turkish Empire, through promises to support their aspirations for independence and national autonomy.

However, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the former Arab provinces under Ottoman rule were divided into British (Palestine, Jordan, Iraq) and French (Syria, Lebanon and northern Iraq) control under the secret ‘Sykes-Picot Agreement’ (1916). Britain occupied Palestine and from 1918 to 1948 sponsored European and US Jewish colonial immigration, whilst crushing Palestinian and Arab revolt. Following Zionist militia attacks, Britain handed over the issue of Palestine to the UN General Assembly, which passed UN Resolution 181 in 1947, for a Partition Plan proposing the partitioning of Palestine (at the time consisting of 1/3 Jewish population in 6% of the land) into ‘an independent Arab state’, ‘an independent Jewish state’ to which it proposed assigning 55% of Palestine, with Jerusalem under ‘international trusteeship’.

Following the First Arab-Israeli War or the Israeli War of Independence (1948), marking the end of the British mandate and Israel’s declaration of independence, Israel occupied 78% of Palestine (all the territory assigned to it by the UN Partition Plan and 60% of the remainder), during which over 400 Palestinian villages were ‘depopulated’ or destroyed, 13,000 Palestinians were killed and 85% of Palestinians (750,000) became refugees, descendants of which live in some 100 refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. UN Resolution 194 (1949) called on Israel to allow the return of the refugees, this right of return affirmed in subsequent UN Resolutions. Today they comprise some 6.5 million refugees and displaced people and are the largest and oldest unsettled refugee population in the world.

During the Six-Day War with Egypt in 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip (the ‘Occupied Territories’) bringing all of historical Palestine under Israeli rule. UNSC Resolution 242 (1967) calls on Israel to withdraw from these territories, which it continues to hold under military control, instigating a
‘settlement policy’ involving currently 120 Israeli colonial settlements on prime Palestinian agricultural land, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention according to UNSC Resolution 446 and the International Court of Justice (2004). In 2005, Israel removed 8000 illegal settlers from the Gaza Strip, but then sealed it off in 2007, imposing a complete blockade on the 1.4 million Palestinians who live there, following Hamas’ takeover of Gaza. In 2008–9, in ‘Operation Cast Led’, Israel killed 1,300 Palestinians, about 1/3 children (13 Israelis were killed by Palestinian militants), and destroyed 25% of it (including homes, schools, mosques, police stations and the university). Its actions were condemned as ‘war crimes’ in the UN-sponsored ‘Goldstone Report’. In 2012, ‘Operation Pillar of Defence, 174 Palestinians were killed (107 were civilians), (6 Israelis were killed, 2 of them soldiers). In ‘Operation Protective Edge’, during July 2014, Israel killed 2,300 Palestinians (66-75% civilians, including 490 children), (66 Israeli soldier and 5 civilians were killed), 100,000 homes were destroyed or damaged and 30% population made homeless.

Sources:


At the time of the interviews (April and May 2014) the conflict was three years on and had been rapidly escalating and changing in nature, since it began with civilian (initially youth) protests in Deraa in March 2011, following the arrest and torture of teenage boys for painting anti-‘revolutionary’ slogans on their school wall. The protests came in the context of a political environment dominated by a one party Ba’ath secular authoritarian rule. The Ba’ath party came to power in a nationalist military coup in 1963, overthrowing a minority feudal elite established by French. It came to be dominated by a political elite led by the Alawite Al-Assad family following the military coup of 1970. The Alawites are a minority Shia sect, who were supported to a position of power in the military by the French, following the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1918, which partitioned the Ottoman Empire between British and French colonialist powers.

The protests came in the context of wider regional ‘Arab Spring’ civil demonstrations that had begun in Tunisia in Dec 2010, then across the Arab world in different manifestations in 18 Arab countries. By the start of the Syrian demonstrations, uprisings had already seen the overthrow of governments in Tunisia (Jan 2011), Egypt (Feb 2011) and later in the year in Libya with intervention from NATO (Aug 2011) and Yemen (Feb 2012).

The Syrian conflict developed rapidly from initial civil demonstrations advocating political reform to calls for the resignation of Assad, after security forces opened fire on protesters in Deraa, leading to further protests and spreading to nationwide protests of more than 100,000 people. Protest escalated rapidly into armed conflict, following violent government crackdowns and military sieges of Homs and other cities, as opposition supporters began arming themselves in defense initially and then to expel security forces from their areas. Violence escalated into civil war by Summer 2012, as rebel brigades fought for control of cities, towns and the countryside. Violence reached Aleppo (second city) and Damascus by 2012. By December 2012, Turkey, Gulf states, US, UK and France formerly recognised Syria’s opposition ‘National Coalition’ as the ‘legitimate representative’ of the Syrian people. The conflict took on sectarian, regional and intraregional dimensions, including the emergence of non-state actors such as ISIS, and the involvement of world powers.

With no end to the violence currently in sight, and predictions that the conflict will continue to 2020, by 2013, in a population of 21 million people, over 200,000 killed, 7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, 11 million people have become homeless, 3.5 million people are refugees. In 2015, there is an unemployment rate of 57% one of the highest in the world associated with severely underdeveloped nations, predictions that it will take 30 -50 years for the economy to return to pre-war levels, from a developing nation state despite Syria being an oil producing country and formerly having a stable and diverse economy with agriculture, tourism and consumer sectors being the primary economic sectors, moves towards a more decentralized liberal economic structure and a large educated young population providing economic potential.
Sources:


Table 6.
Iraq Conflict: Political Context From Which Constructions of Justice Are Drawn.

At the time of the interviews (April and May 2014), the conflict was 11 years on since the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Iraq’s current conflict has historical roots. Iraq, (known as Mesopotamia in antiquity), the area of the Tigris to the Euphrates, has a cultural history of over 10,000 years, hence known as the ‘cradle of civilisation’. More recently, it became part of the Ottoman Empire (1533-1918), divided into three provinces ruled from Baghdad, Basra and Mosul.

It was invaded by Britain in the First World War, with the help of Arab tribes who were promised autonomy and independence in exchange for their support. However, in line with the secret Sykes-Picot agreement 1916, which divided the Arab provinces between France and Britain, who were left to draw up their boundaries, Iraq fell to Britain under mandate in 1920, which imposed a monarchy under Hashemite rule, establishing an oligarchy government and quelling revolt. In 1927 oil was discovered in Kirkuk and a British company (Iraqi Petroleum Company) was granted exploration rights. Following nominal independence in 1932, during which Britain retained military bases, unrest continued, multiple coups followed from 1936 to 1941.

During World War II, Britain re-occupied Iraq and reinstated the ousted pro-British regent in 1941, maintaining British control over Iraq’s oil resources and transport access through its ports. Widespread protests were quelled against the renewal of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty in 1948, effectively returning Iraq under British protectorate. In 1958, a military coup overthrew the monarchy and proclaimed a Republic.

In 1963, the Ba’ath party, a pan-Arab nationalist (anti-imperialist) socialist movement, took power, but was shortly overthrown by a military coup which established a pro-Nasserite government. A second Ba’ath coup in which Saddam Hussein was a leading figure, re-established a Ba’ath government in 1968. De facto head of Iraq for several years, he assumed official Presidency in 1979. Territory disputes and fear of Iranian inspired Shia insurgency led to the Iran-Iraq War in 1980-88, supported by US. Longstanding territorial disputes led to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and the Persian Gulf War 1991 that followed, Kurdish and Shia insurgencies, Iraqi no-fly zones and UNSC imposed economic sanctions 1991-2003.

Neoconservative led policy of regime change in Iraq became official US policy in 1998, and in the aftermath of the environment of fear created following the September 2001 unrelated attacks on the US, this policy gained political ground. In 2003, US and Britain invaded Iraq illegally under international law, on the pretext of ‘weapons of mass destruction’ and ‘human rights’ abuses. The violence of the invasion, along with US occupation policies, led to the country’s subsequent collapse into civil war and failed state status.

In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, it has been well documented that US troops encourage mass looting of hospitals, government facilities and national institutions (including world heritage treasures), as part of the destruction of basic infrastructure and of the state-run sector of Iraq’s economy, tripling the cost of reconstruction. This along with US policies to open up the economy, disbanding publicly owned factories and businesses, for the benefit of private US companies and...
foreign investors, and IMF imposed economic reform packages ending subsidies of fuel and health.

The US interim administration, the Coalition Provisional Authority, Headed by Paul Bremer, who held supreme legislative, juridical and executive authority, acting directly under Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, implemented the ‘De-Ba’athification’ policy, which removed 500,000 civil servants, policemen, soldiers, doctors and teachers from their jobs, including 80,000 permanently barred from public sector employment, 300,000 armed men, stopping the pensions of thousands of ex-officers, depriving ministries of 30,000 civil servants. Overnight the State was deprived of its most experienced and skilled personnel, and individuals and their families from their living. Since Sunnis were disproportionately affected, this in effect disenfranchised a significant minority of the population from taking part in the new Iraqi state. It also created a security vacuum allowing new hitherto unseen radical groups to infiltrate Iraq, including al-Qaeda offshoots, and the formerly banned Iranian backed al-Dawa and SCIRI groups. These, together with the initial US-authored constitution of 2003, which promoted sectarian-factionalism, laid the foundations for Iraq’s decent into civil war.

As a direct result of the war, 150,000 to 400,000 Iraqis died, 3.5 to 5 million Iraqis were displaced from their homes (1 in 20), 4.5 million children were orphaned, 2 million women became primary breadwinners. The destruction of Iraq’s economy led to unemployment levels of 60%. Birth defects rose by 17%, environmental contaminants from depleted uranium. 7 million of 30 million Iraqis live in poverty, and 50% in slum conditions. Iraq ranks one of the highest countries for corruption worldwide (175/182).

Sources:


### Participant Profiles Informing Process of Analysis
(NB. Key identifying features have been omitted, obscured or changed for confidentiality)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant information on Omar (Palestinian/Israeli conflict):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omar is in his 30s. He was born in a refugee camps in Gaza, third generation displaced. He was one of many children living in two rooms. He describes the camps as ‘prisons’, Palestinian (civilian) lives as ‘completely controlled’ by Israeli army, and the conditions of the refugee camp as of poverty and deprivation (cramped, alleyways, no greenery, lack of food, medicine, fuel), that ‘life and death were the same’, he describes being surrounded by ‘suffering’, every family had experienced loss, physical injury (handicapped), he describes a policy of daily humiliation and dehumanization by the Israeli army, of mass ‘punishments’ for resistance (house demolitions, killing whole families), people were suffering from depression, some committed suicide. He was keenly aware from a young age that their lives were different to ‘other children he saw on television’ and his question was ‘why?’ His parents were made refugees at young children when they fled with their parents in 1948 when Israeli army invaded and expelled people from their village of xxxx (near Al Ramla, central Palestine then), which no longer exists on the Israel map, (he describes it as near Tel Aviv now), as he comments on how Israelis have changed the names of the Palestinian villages they occupied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He threw stones against soldiers as a teenager and was shot in the leg as he was running away, captured by soldiers, but dragged away by Palestinian adults. So as not to go against his parents he channelled his anger (/revenge, desire to defend/protect himself and his family) into his education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He graduated as one of the top students in Gaza and was offered a scholarship to study in the West Bank, where he excelled. He describes how the Israelis would not allow him to cross from Gaza to West Bank to do his final exam (he didn’t know why). He used his friend’s ID to cross from Gaza into the West Bank but was arrested and given a prison sentence, his parents were asked to pay for his release but he asked them not to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The prison was in the Negev desert near ‘Beersheba’. He describes being afraid he would die in prison initially, but was able to turn a ‘bad painful experience’ into one in which he learned a lot from the other prisoners – doctors, engineers, who’d been there for 10-15 years, ‘forgotten people’. He used it as an opportunity to ‘educate’ himself, pass on messages to families, and communicate the ‘suffering’ and conditions in which prisoners were detained (no communication or visits from families).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He became a xxxx, and worked with children, and felt he was unable to help them as they were ‘traumatised’, hyperactive, couldn’t focus. He decided to train as a psychologist, and then obtained a scholarship for post-graduate studies in xxxx in the UK. His wife is also a refugee living in a refugee camp with her parents in another part of Gaza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His experiences under Occupation he describes as ‘dehumanising’, and he gives examples of being told he would be allowed to travel then being refused, of being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
made to wait for hours and days at checkpoints, including spending many days sleeping on the floor waiting at the Rafah crossing before they opened so he could leave to the UK to study. He describes living in Gaza as ‘living in a prison’, with the Israelis ‘controlling everything’. He was in danger risking his life crossing from one end of Gaza through checkpoints at night passed the curfew to another to take his wife her bag when she was going into labour. He was unable to see his son for almost two years after he was born because he was unable to enter into Gaza from the UK and his wife unable to exit despite a UK visa, as the Israelis had closed the border. His wife needed a serious operation but was not allowed to leave Gaza, despite UK visa, UK doctors contacting Israeli embassy, until the border with Egypt was broken and he managed to smuggle his wife and children through Egypt military check points and out through Cairo to the UK. He describes seeing hundreds of sick people desperate for medication lied to and put on coaches and sent back, and others imprisoned in Egypt.

Describes his daughter as being frightened of getting on the plane because ‘it kills people’ and on arriving frightened on knocking at the door and letters through the letter box, associated with Israeli bombs and attacks on homes. Describes his own ‘flashbacks’ from fire works. Returns only with his work accompanied by a British delegation, in case he is arrested by the Israelis or the Egyptians on route, though he describes himself as having done nothing other than throw stones as a teenager.

Currently he considers himself ‘lucky’, living with his family in the UK, but is active with the whole family in communicating the conditions of Palestinians with aim of raising awareness and promoting solidarity with ‘ordinary’ people in the UK, through shared humanity, to generate ‘help’ for those who ‘lack justice’, Palestinians. Considers himself and family as ambassadors for Palestine. Has a sense of cause in promoting awareness of Palestinian suffering and is working to create change to secure justice. The interview was conducted face to face in the UK.

Participant information on Sara (Syrian conflict)
Sara is in her 20s, Syrian born with parents from the majority Muslim Sunni sect and the Alawite political ruling elite. She trained as a xxxx and provided psychosocial support for Iraqis displaced in Syria following the US-led invasion of Iraq, and then carried out research work with Syrian refugees displaced in the region.

At the time of the interview she had been three years in the UK, carrying out postgraduate studies and working in a therapeutic community. Whilst in the UK, she learned that her best friend (a ‘civil society activist’ training civilians to capture what was happening to them on video/camera footage) had been killed by government tank fire. On the days preceding the interview, she had learned that ‘rebel militia’ had advanced ten miles away from the town in which her parents lived, and that they were in material danger for their lives (or capture and torture) in particular should one of them be taken. The interview was conducted face to face in the UK.

Participant information on Leen (Syrian conflict):
Leen is a Lebanese Muslim (Sunni) woman in her late 40s. She spent her childhood holidays with her cousins in Syria as her paternal and maternal aunts and uncles lived there. She went to university in Syria, and met and married her Syrian husband and was settled there, living in Syria for ten years prior to leaving with her family to Lebanon a year after the outbreak of conflict.
She feels she has no particular national identity nor attachment to a national home, having been displaced already at a young age with her family from Lebanon following the civil war, when her family moved to a neighbouring country, initially temporarily until it would be safe enough to return, which was 18 years later. There, she grew up and went to school, and more recently moved to Syria for university, where as a non-Syrian nationalist institutionally she was made to feel she did not belong. She became displaced for a second time more recently from Syria, and has been living in Lebanon where her parents and sister live for a second year at the time of the interview. Her husband’s family and many of her friends remained in Syria at the time of the interview.

At the commencement of the conflict she had young children and was pregnant with another. They had been on their annual summer holiday at her parent’s in Lebanon when the situation in Syria worsened and they decided to stay, initially for one year until the situation improved. They are now two years in Lebanon with little hope of returning, and fear further instability in Lebanon and the region. The interview was conducted via Skype from the country in which she currently lives in diaspora.

**Participant information on Saif (Syrian conflict):**
Saif is a Syrian Muslim (Sunni) in his 50s, married with young children. He is the eldest son (head of the family) of a Syrian family which settled in Damascus in 1700s and became established as part of the social elite from the end of 19th century. A year after the war, on a family holiday outside of the country, the violence in his neighbourhood in Damascus intensified, and for the sake of the children he decided to stay temporarily for one year until the situation stabilized. This would allow him to pursue his postgraduate studies, which he had been planning and had saved up for, as well as a chance to recover from the stress he felt under from the war, and his children attend an academic year in an international school outside their country. He describes himself as ‘depressed’, crying everyday for the first three months, and has been on anti-depressants in the first year outside of Syria. He returns monthly to Damascus for visits with his family. The interview was conducted with him via Skype in the country where he is currently in diaspora.

**Participant information on Mariam (Syrian conflict):**
Mariam is a lawyer in her 20s. She works with a Syrian human rights organization documenting human rights violations on all sides in the war. Her sibling is a human rights activist in Syria, who worked with political detainees to publicise the human rights violations of the Assad regime ten years prior to the uprisings and civil war. In a similar vain, due to the extent of violence, her sibling set up an organization following the outbreak of civil war to document and publicise initially government atrocities and then all others. Mariam became active as part of this shortly after the start of the war, initially publicizing detainee treatment on their release, then wider crimes being committed, through testimony, photos, and reports on a website, as well her role as an administrator of two chat rooms bringing medical specialists from outside Syria with civilians and activists needing medical advice and support.

Her sibling was kidnapped a year ago with her partner and two friends, by an ‘opposition’ group which Mariam describes as ‘criminals’, doing ‘criminal’ acts, ‘ugly things’, because her sibling had publicised opposition as well as regime violence, ‘every violation’. She believes these groups should leave the country,
because ‘they didn’t so anything useful to their country, they do ugly things’.

She herself with her husband and young children had to escape to a neighbouring country for their safety, as her husband is ‘wanted’ by the Assad government for human rights activity and they were afraid he would be ‘detained’ also. Her husband has been arrested several times in the new host country because he does not have papers. Her wish is for safety and stability for herself and her children. Prior to this they were living with her parents in a part of the city being targeted by the regime and bombed every three hours. They moved there for safety from her own house as her area of the city had been ‘besieged’ by the regime, bombed, many whom she knew arrested, there were also many informants, it became too dangerous.

She aspires to doing postgraduate studies but these aspirations were stopped by the war. She wishes to continue to ‘be useful’ to her country, people and children and wants to continue working to support Syrians inside and refugees outside the country. She wishes for ‘an ordinary life’ to be able to feel peace, stability and settle down for herself and her children, but currently has no papers (passport etc.) as Syrian government won’t renew them, which restricts her travels even within the country she’s in and she/her husband are at risk of arrest. The interview was conducted through Skype from in a neighbouring country through voice only to preserve confidentiality.

Participant information on Tala (Iraq conflict):
Tala is a single woman in her late 40s. She comes from an Iraqi Muslim Sunni family. She considers religion a private matter and does not wear the head scarf, and now increasingly feels apart and an alien in her work which is dominated now by Shia and in her own country. She is a professional, and post 2003 invasion she began working as a civil servant in the new government, and achieved a senior position working in the development sector. Her parents died in a few years ago, she lives alone, her brother’s daughter experienced sectarian discrimination at school now dominated by Shia, and they left abroad to start a new life.

She lives in a state of terror, daily risks her life traveling from home to work through check points, faces real danger every time she passes a traffic jam because of the risk of explosions in crowded places. Her life has become restricted to survival, she never goes out other than for daily work to earn money to live. She cannot walk in the street because she doesn’t feel ‘free’, as a woman, the ways she dresses and for fear of terror attacks. She doesn’t feel safe at home, two female neighbours were killed in their home 50 meters from hers, nobody knows why or by whom, and a car bomb exploded in the main street in her neighbourhood which she narrowly missed 150 meters away.

She has become exhausted from being in a constant anxiety and feels she has changed, has become unsure of herself, unable to make decisions, unable to focus, unable to trust others, she feels trapped for now, having to endure terror on the one hand, whilst planning to make enough money to be able to survive outside of her country. The interview was conducted via Skype from Iraq.

Participant information on Yasmine (Iraq conflict):
Yasmine is a Christian Iraqi woman (single) in her 30s. She lived in Baghdad in a district populated by families who had received privileges and given free housing and consequently in which there was significant disaffection and violence post-invasion.
She left Iraq with her younger and only brother following his targeted kidnapping and release for a ransom from (Sunni-pro-Ba’ath) militia, at the height of post-conflict civil violence in mid-2000s, to a neighbouring country and then sought asylum in the US, where she currently resides (at the time of interview, which was carried out by Skype).

During the interview she talks about a number of conflict experiences: She lost a good well-paid job together with her aspirations of being financially independent, and a week later her organization was bombed, her colleagues killed and she returned to see her office (chair, desk) decimated. She is dropped off at her home after work by a friend and has to dodge fire fight amongst teenagers to get in safely. Her neighbour and friend whom she loved was killed in a bomb blast which targeted her place of work because they had American contracts. She is unable to make sense of it. Her work colleague, a father of five children was attacked and killed in his car. Her relative, a doctor, went out to buy something and was caught in a bomb blast and killed, leaving his new wife and one year old son, who left the country and applied for asylum. She becomes a refugee in her home country, was told at work by her mum not to return home because there was fighting and the road was blocked.

She and her family had to leave her familiar family home of 15 years to stay in rented accommodation in a ‘safer’ area. Much of their belongings (which she invests with memory) had to be left behind. It cost them additional money in rent they had to find. They lived through hardship in the new home which had no heating over winter and they were unable to access their winter clothes in their home. While they were away their home was taken over, and their belongings stolen or destroyed. They were then asked to leave the temporary flat and had to find another place to rent for a second time. She felt as if she had become ‘a bedouin’ in her own country.

Her younger (and only) brother was kidnapped in front of her father by an Iraqi militia group. She had left her home to work one day and gone to stay at her sister’s for a celebration, to learn that her brother had been kidnapped, and so never returned home again, as it was ‘unsafe’. She describes how kidnapping was being done widely as a strategy for money to fund political/terror activities, how lists were drawn up of wealthier families/individuals to target, how some would be released having been killed but that families would ‘have the chance to bury the person’. Their friends (highlighting the interwoven nature of Iraqi society then) came to their aid to find the area he was taken to and also to influence the group/s to have him released alive on ransom. They lost their life savings.

She experienced it as ‘difficult’ for her to leave her country, ‘everything she knew’, ‘all the people she knew’, she ‘belonged to that culture’. But her own focus at the time became reduced to one of survival, ‘how can I escape?’ ‘how can we/they be safe?’ ‘where should we go?’

She has aspirations to visit Iraq again, to walk along the river in Baghdad, to visit her university, her neighbourhood, her places of work, but she is ‘afraid’ and most of the people she knew have now left. She has a friend who studied with her but she has now moved to the north and they lost touch during the war. She hopes to visit her uncle and grandmother who moved for safety to the north of Iraq as her grandmother is sick.
and she was a great influence on her childhood.

Towards the end of the interview she also references ‘many stories’, in terms of war experiences that Iraqis/her family endured, including Iran/Iraq war, in which conscription was compulsory and they lost touch with her uncles, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, the first Gulf War and then this context. She references in more detail her experience during the first Gulf War, when she was in her early 20s as a university graduate. She recalls her terror in the shelter at the sound of the bombs, having to hold her chin as her body shook. She uses this to illustrate her journey to ‘appreciating the simple things in life’. The interview was carried out via Skype from her current place of diaspora.

**Participant information on Kareem (Iraq conflict):**

Kareem is in his 60s, now living with his family in diaspora in a neighbouring country following his kidnapping and release in Iraq. In Iraq he held senior civil service/professional positions in a key national sector. He comes originally from a large Sunni Arab tribe of which his family are leaders. He is Sunni and his wife is a Shia university graduate. He has experienced several violent political conflicts over the years in Iraq since the 1950s.

Beginning with the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958 and demonstrations including violent clashes which he witnessed as a school boy growing up in the north of Iraq which he conceptualized as between Arab nationalist and communists vying for power.

The Iran-Iraq war 1980-88, during which period he was stationed in Basra in a senior post in the energy sector, his house shelled and his security guard killed, later ransacked and the family inheritance stolen as the family were forced to leave overnight.

The Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which he described as a ‘bad move’ by the ‘regime’. Followed by six months of ‘suffering’ and hardship under international sanctions, prior to the ‘First Gulf war’ in 1990-1991. His family were living in Baghdad at this time and he held a senior civil service position in a key government ministry, he remained working in Baghdad while his family left to safety of a relative’s home outside the city after the first night of the aerial bombardment. He describes the first night of US-led bombings on the city, the sound of planes, shelling, and explosions, in terms of its effect on his family, including his very young daughter who was 3 years old, who he held in his lap, ‘shivering’ her heart ‘thronbing so violently’ that he was frightened for her life, the family as ‘very scared’ that night in their make-shift shelter inside their home, prior to leaving to the north.

He then describes the years of ‘being forced into’ deprivation and poverty of an entire country and a generation of children under international sanctions from 1991 to 2003, which he believes ‘left people in a really difficult psychological mood’. During which time he immersed himself in the work of helping to rebuild the country 16 hours a day.

With his family he lived through the US invasion of 2003 and subsequent occupation. The invasion lasted two months during which he worked continuously along with
other civil servants in Baghdad, having sent his family outside of the city to stay with relatives for their safety. Thereafter he refused to leave Iraq unless he was killed or kidnapped, driven by his sense of ‘patriotism’, ‘background’ and ‘upbringing’. He was kidnapped and then released, after which he left with his family to live in diaspora in a neighbouring country, his family is now dispersed, he stays in touch with Iraqis also in diaspora from his generation and is active in commentary in his specialist field. The interview was conducted via Skype from his current home in diaspora.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References (direct and indirect) to ‘justice’ as the ‘discursive object’</th>
<th>Discursive constructs</th>
<th>Discourses</th>
<th>Action Orientation</th>
<th>Positionings</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Subjectivity</th>
<th>Relationship of discourses with institutions, power &amp; ideology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>References (direct and indirect) to ‘justice’ as the ‘discursive object’</td>
<td>Discursive constructs</td>
<td>Discourses</td>
<td>Action Orientation</td>
<td>Positionings</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Subjectivity</td>
<td>Relationship of discourses with institutions, power &amp; ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First introduction to concept of justice: relates to justifiable war concept (First Gulf War).</td>
<td>How is ‘justice’ constructed? What type of object (‘justice’) is being constructed?</td>
<td>What discourses are drawn on? What is their relationship to one another?</td>
<td>What do constructions of justice achieve? What is gained by deploying them here? What are their functions? What is speaker doing here?</td>
<td>What subject positions are made available by these constructions of justice?</td>
<td>What possibilities for action are mapped out by the available subject positions?</td>
<td>What can be thought, felt, experienced from the available subject positions?</td>
<td>His political understanding and his private values (which come form his education, background, identity) define what is just in such a way as to develop a private position of resistance to the dominant discourse of the regime, and of the US/western discourse we receive here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P. Em actually the the em em the shelling em was shattering in in em Baghdad, it was so violent em you cannot imagine em eh you know the the effect on the eh moral [morale] of the people. Em it was em that that date was different from previous experience. You felt first

First introduction to concept of justice: relates to justifiable war concept (First Gulf War).

Em it actually the the em em the shelling em was shattering in in em Baghdad, it was so violent em you cannot imagine em eh you know the the effect on the eh moral [morale] of the people. Em it was em that that date was different from previous experience. You felt first

Construct of just draws on construct of ‘just war’ the conditions which make war morally right, morally justified, morally defensible. Previously war in defence is inferred as just. Here going to war was a political ‘mistake’, which could have been avoided, hence the risk to life could not be justified morally.

Just in this sense is associated with morality, rightness, what is deemed ethical conduct within the

To be part of what is ‘unjust’ creates internal moral struggle for Kareem reflected here (conflicts with his sense of his responsibilities as a father to protect his family – virtues approach; - and with common good ethical approach appealed to his sense of patriotism above self protection, though to a degree resolved this by sending the family to safety in each

Subject positions available within this discourse are limited:

First he does not agree with the premise for the war, but as a father is responsible for the safety of his family. His recourse for action lay in the past not now, now he is unable to take his family out of the country.

Second – his

Need to endure but with high sense of self-blame.

Psychological distress.

His political understanding and his private values (which come from his education, background, identity) define what is just in such a way as to develop a private position of resistance to the dominant discourse of the regime, and of the US/western discourse we receive here.
Iraq that you know, Iraqi shouldn’t have gone to the to Kuwait, em we em this war should have been avoided. em eh there’s you know there is no way to defend it. So em eh I really felt that em you know if one loses eh himself or loses em eh em a son or daughter it it it will be very very difficult to forget to forgive oneself, it is em it is not a just war. em we thought that we brought it to to ourselves.

difficult for him to forgive himself had one of his family members been harmed in the war, death would have been senseless. Psychological significance of being able to make sense of experience (within value system) especially injury/death – significance of discourse here. (Sara, Yasmine, Mariam).

value system of individual/society.

case). Highlighted in this early part of the interview, in defining the meaning of conflict for him, it is a preface to his position on the current conflict.  

personal motivation comes from his sense of duty and responsibility, (uses the ‘virtue approach’ to dealing with ethical dilemmas) this is affected given he does not buy into the premise of the war. He has no choice but to endure in the hope of survival. He reduces risk to his family by sending them away, while he remains on duty (this is a dictatorship, he has no choice, but also he needs to work in defence of his country).
Appendix 4.
Protocol Cover Sheet (Research Project Part 2.)

Submission for the Ethical Review of a Study

Protocol Cover Sheet

Name of Ethics Committee reviewing Protocol: University of Surrey Ethics Committee

Title of project: A qualitative exploration of how civilian survivors of armed conflict construct the meaning of ‘justice’ and its implications for subjectivity and experience: Gaza, Syria and Iraq case study text sources.

2) Names of Principal Investigator or PhD: Ms Reem Shafiq
   Qualifications BA English, PGCE Oxon, MSc Public Relations, MSc Psychology, Trainee (3rd year) Psych/D Psychotherapeutic & Counselling psychology
   Department/Institution: Psychology, University of Surrey
   Supervisor: Dr Dora Brown, Department of Psychology, University of Surrey

   Please note that supervisors must be listed in submissions from all researchers who are registered as students of the University. Whilst the student may be the principal researcher, for the purposes of the University the supervisor must sign the application to undertake responsibility for the conduct of the research.

   Names of Co-Investigators: N/A

3) Signature of Supervisor (where appropriate) to indicate that (s)he has read and approved the protocol submission prior to its submission to the University Ethics Committee:
   Signature:
   Date:

4) Details of Other Collaborators: N/A

5) Who is acting as sponsor for this research? N/A

6) Is this research funded? Delete as applicable: No
   Is the funding source external to the University? Delete as applicable: N/A
   If yes to the above, who is funding this research? Please give details below:
7) Details of payments to Investigators, Departments, Schools or Institutions. Investigators who receive payment as part of an annual consultancy fee should advise the Committee of the situation: N/A

8) Where will the project be carried out? (e.g. University, hospital, etc.):

Involves Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of verbatim transcripts of semi-structured interviews from the initial study, Research Report Part 1 (Shafiq, 2014) which received FAHS Ethical approval in 2013.

9) Source of the participants to be studied: See 8.

[The initial study from which text sources will be drawn, followed IPA and used purposive sampling to recruit participants, based on specificity, rather than random or representative. The concept of homogeneity was sought, involving recruitment of a more closely defined group of participants for whom the research question was significant and which, here, is the experience of war trauma which defines the boundaries of the sample.]

10) Estimated number of participants:

The sample size will be kept small, 8 verbatim transcripts of semi-structured interviews as text sources will be used. As qualitative research benefits from small sample sizes to facilitate a detailed and in-depth case-by-case idiographic approach to analysis within the group.

11) Details of payments to participants: None

12) Investigators are asked to note that research proposals involving the following must be submitted to an NHS Research Ethics Committee for ethical review. Please indicate which of the categories below, if any, applies to your research, and provide details of your NHS REC application. The Ethics Committee will not consider research proposals which meet any of these criteria until a favourable ethical opinion from the NHS REC has been obtained. N/A
   a. patients and users of the NHS. This includes all potential research participants recruited by virtue of the patient or user’s past or present treatment by, or use of, the NHS. It includes NHS patients treated under contract with private sector institutions.
   b. individuals identified as potential research participants because of their status as relatives or carers of patients and users of the NHS, as defined above.
   c. access to data, organs or other bodily material of past and present NHS patients.
   d. fetal material and IVF involving NHS patients.
   e. the recently dead in NHS premises.
   f. the use of, or potential access to, NHS premises or facilities.
   g. health-related research projects using prisoners.
13) Has a risk assessment been carried out in respect of this research, either for potential participants or the researchers? If yes, please attach a summary document of the issues considered. – see below:

The proposed study involves analysis of primary text sources only drawn from verbatim transcripts of semi-structured interviews already carried out as part of an ethically approved study (Shafiq & Brown, 2014).

Although the topic deals with challenging experiences of armed conflict for the researcher, this is a specialist area in which the researcher has extensive experience, including working at first hand in armed conflict environments, and currently in the clinical field, and has good support from clinical supervision, academic supervision and personal therapy.

14) What are the potential adverse effects, risks or hazards for (a) research participants? (b) researchers? See 13.

15) What are the potential benefits for research participants? N/A

16) Please provide details of arrangements for the collection, retention, use and disposal of research data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please ensure that, where appropriate, the following documents are submitted along with your application:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A summary of the project, (approximately 500 words), including its principal aims and objectives ; this should provide a clear description of who is doing what, to whom, to how many, where, when and why in non-technical, lay terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The detailed protocol for the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of agreement of other collaborators N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of the Information Sheet for participants (on letterhead) N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of the Consent Form (on letterhead) N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of questionnaire/Interview Schedule N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of standard letters related to the project (on letterhead) N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of risk assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consent in writing has already been sought for the use of interview data as part of the initial study (Shafiq & Brown, 2014).

To maintain confidentiality, all names and key identifying features have been altered in verbatim transcripts and any written material and those accessing the study will be able to read extracts from anonymised transcripts of the interviews only.

Data is stored electronically in a password-protected folder to which only the researcher has access.

Data will be kept for up to ten years in the event of publication before being destroyed in line with university guidelines.

17) Has a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check been carried out in relation to this research? (This will be required for research activity which will bring staff and/or students into contact with children or vulnerable adults). If yes, please attach copies of the relevant documentation. N/A

18) **For Drugs Trials**  
   a. Please state Phase:  
   b. If a new drug, does it have a Clinical Trials Exemption Certificate or Product Licence Number  
   c. If a new drug, give details of toxic/side effects so far reported:  
   d. In addition to the recorded toxic/side effects, state any potential risks to the subjects and the precautions taken to deal with the situation:

19) **Checklist of Accompanying Documents** (Please tick the appropriate boxes)  
20) Names and signatures of all Investigators: Ms Reem Shafiq  
21) Date of Application:
Ethical Approval, Research Project Part 1. (Shafiq, 2014)

Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences
Ethics Committee
Chair’s Action

Proposal Ref: 964-PSY-14
Name of Student/Trainee: Xxxxxxxxx
Title of Project: A qualitative exploration of the meaning and significance of justice to the experience of civilian survivors of armed conflict
Supervisor: Xxxxxxxxx
Date of submission: 20th December 2013
Date of confirmation email: 5th February 2014

The above Research Project has been submitted to the FAHS Ethics Committee and has received a favourable ethical opinion from the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with conditions. The conditions stipulated after ethical review have now been addressed and the relevant amended documents submitted as evidence prior to commencement of your study.

The final list of documents reviewed by the Committee is as follows:
Protocol Cover sheet
Summary of the project
Detailed protocol for the project
Participant Information sheet
Consent Form

This documentation should be retained by the student/trainee in case this project is audited by the Faculty Ethics Committee.

Signed: ___________________ Professor Bertram Opitz
Dated: Chair

Please note:
If there are any significant changes to your proposal which require further scrutiny, please contact the Faculty Ethics Committee before proceeding with your Project.
**Interview Schedule, Research Project Part 1. (Shafiq, 2014)**

1. **What do you understand by ‘armed conflict’?**
   - What does it mean for you?
   - Which armed conflict is important to you and why?

2. **Can you tell me about your experiences of armed conflict?**

3. **How do you feel about what happened?**
   - How does this/did these experiences impact on you?
   (thoughts, emotions, beliefs, values, behaviour)

4. **How do you feel about others’ experiences in this conflict? And in other conflicts?**

5. **If I use the word ‘(in)justice’ what does it mean to you?**
   - How relevant is injustice/justice to your experience?
   - How has your experience of injustice/justice affected you?
   - Has that changed over time? How/why?

6. **How do you see the future?**
   - What would you like to see happen?
   - How does justice feature, if at all?

7. **Is there anything else you would like to add about ‘justice’ in the context of armed conflict in your experience?**
### Example of Transcript

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line No</th>
<th>Transcript 02. Omar (Palestinian (Gaza)/Israeli Conflict) Page 1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>R. If we start with the idea of armed conflict and what the, how you understand the meaning of armed conflict for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>P. ehh armed conflict it is eh soldiers or eh occupation or maybe internal conflict in the same country. In my situation it’s eh armed conflict mainly happen in Palestine ehh by the Israeli occupation so that’s, and they used the power and the military and eh all these bombs and yeah, destroying and demolishing the houses and killing the people to make things happen on the ground and to change the demographics, and….yeah and uprooting the people from their houses and their villages, so that’s the armed conflict, which in my experience, what I come across and how I born, I was born, and see allll these things across generation, and still ongoing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>R. Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>P. Yes since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>R. So you’re still kind of living it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>P. Yeah, it’s a since 1948 so, it’s like come across our grandparents, my parents and now myself and my children because they will ask me where is our land, where is our farm. We have a farm, we have land, but we lo we lost these things, because of the armed conflict, you see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R. what words would you use for armed conflict, eh are you comfortable with those words?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>P. yeah eh, it’s more than occupation. Errr especially in our, in my context, it’s not just armed, eh, conflicts, it’s different, in Palestine, it’s eh, like settler stolen our lands, so it’s not like between two armies, no! it’s innocent people, civilian people, and the army supported by big and very huge and some very strong countries in the world, so they use it against the innocent and civilian people, so that’s, I don’t see it as a armed conflict in our context, it’s just one arm, army impose and, it change the facts on the ground by using the force and the ehhh, so it’s in Palestinian context, I don’t feel that comfortable on armed conflict because armed for me, em, my understanding between two groups who has some arms. So in Palestine you have very few militant groups, for like freedom fighters which is big scale compared to the Israelis as an occupation eh authorities. So it’s very deep, it’s more than, it’s not just, the armed conflict doesn’t fit in our situation, more than that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>R. So rather than it being armed as in two armies,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>P. Yeah. Yeah!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>R. it’s a different eh situation for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>P. Yeah yeah yeah. It’a, I feel it’s like it’s not balanced, so it’s just people they’ve been suffering from just one armed group, so it’s not armed conflict, armed conflict my understanding is between two, they have weapons here and here, [he laughs] In my situation was I have a stone we use as in my childhood just threw stones against the soldiers, so that is not armed against like a gun, so it’s [he laughs] completely different.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>