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Transformative Gender Justice:

Constructions of Justice, Violence, and Reparations for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Northeastern Nigeria

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Abstract:

Alongside global acknowledgements of the gendered nature of conflict, the academic field of transitional justice is shifting towards the newly emerging concept of transformative justice. Within this, reparations are particularly seen as the most agent-centric tool for structural transformation. In northeastern Nigeria, the conflict between Boko Haram and the state has seen a prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence, but survivors have struggled to claim their right to reparations. In this context, the Global Survivors Fund has established an interim project to ensure survivors have access to reparations. Through qualitative interviews with project staff and partners, this case study aims to explore how concepts of justice and transformation are constructed in the local context, and uses a gender lens as central in the analysis of these constructions. Principal findings were that justice for survivors is constructed within the rigid gender hierarchy present in the Northeast, and that gendered stigma manifests itself differently, with females subjected to societal and economic ostracization, and males unable to identify as survivors due to the risks to their masculine identity. The provision of greater agency, education, and reduced community stigma around survivorship through reparations were constructed as transformational aspects of the Global Survivors Fund's project.

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Contents

Key Abbreviations

Conflict-related sexual violence	CRSV
Civil Society Organization	CSO
(Sexual and) Gender-Based Violence	GBV/SGBV
Global Survivors Fund	GSF
Internally-Displaced Persons	IDPs
Interim Reparatory Measures	IRM
Local Government Area(s)	LGA(s)
Transitional Justice	TJ

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the gendered nature of conflict and war have gained global attention. In 2000, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 officially declared the need to consider conflict's gendered nature, and established what is known as the Women, Peace and Security agenda (UNSCR, 2000; Aroussi, 2015). The elimination of and punishment for conflict-related sexual violence is one of the pressing issues on this agenda. In the same stride, academic literature has begun to clearly address this topic within the field of *transitional* justice. This field is primarily situated in the theory of international relations and international human rights law, but has received criticism for its legalistic, state-centric, and top-down approach to justice. Thus, the field has begun to evolve and discuss the idea of *transformative* justice, a frame which takes a survivor-centric approach and which aims to establish justice that disrupts embedded structures of social, economic, legal, and cultural violence.

Previous research on transformative justice is still largely situated within the legalistic frames of analysis familiar to the field of transitional justice. However, this legalist conceptualization is also primarily based on a Western, universalized notion of justice which does not fully represent the complexity and often context-specific understandings of justice, violence, and peace in conflict contexts. Along these lines, many proponents of transformative justice actively state the need to put gender at the center, rather than the periphery of the field. This case study utilizes this idea as its point of departure, and as such contributes to the body of knowledge by putting gender at the center of analysis of transformative justice. This gender centrality represents a paradigm shift, and thus allows for the bottom-up perspectives and local contextualization of justice to inform broader understandings of the *transformative* elements of transformative justice. To achieve this, this study contributes an understanding of constructions of justice at the local level so as to bolster the body of knowledge of transformative gender justice.

The research questions leading the study are as follows:

1. ***How is justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence constructed by civil society project staff in northeastern Nigeria?***
    a) ***How does gender shape and underlie the process(es) of justice?***
    b) ***How are structures of violence and power characterized in this context?***

This qualitative study makes use of twelve semi-structured interviews with project staff and partners working with the Global Survivors Fund's recently established Interim Reparations Project in northeastern Nigeria, which aims to provide reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

One of the key findings of this study is that the informants' construction of justice is shaped by the rigid gender identities and patriarchal hierarchy present in the research context. This leaves little space for the complexities of conflict-related sexual violence and its impact on survivors and their identities. With constructions of a feminized "victim" and masculinized "perpetrator," survivors struggle to escape communities' association of their violations with their identities. The feminized construction of survivorship leaves women and girls at great risk of severe stigmatization and marginalization within communities, leaving room for powerful local actors such as community leaders to exploit the situation. The masculinized construction of perpetrators and manhood, combined with female survivors' remonstrance, contribute to a hostile atmosphere in which male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence are essentially unable to identify themselves as such, thus leaving challenges for transformative reparatory efforts.

Nevertheless, the project's survivor-centric approach to delivering reparatory measures to survivors was perceived as a justice mechanism which will provide transformation from the bottom-up, by providing female survivors with foundational support. Civil society staff constructed these reparatory measures as something which would positively transform the stigmatization of survivorship in communities, potentially improve future livelihoods and participation in society, and reduce dependence on community gatekeepers and thus transform survivor's relationships with their communities. Thus, the structural violences of stigma, loss of education, and loss of livelihoods were perceived as likely to be transformed by reparations. However, it remains to be seen whether or not the entrenched gendered hierarchies and institutions which reinforce these aforementioned structures of violence will be transformed by the project. The thesis is structured as follows: first, the background of the case study is outlined in greater detail, followed by a review of the literature. Afterward, the theoretical frame of analysis is described, with the methodological choices expanded upon. Lastly, the analysis of the case is laid out, with concluding remarks and suggestions for future research.

2. Background

In recent decades, substantial efforts have been made to acknowledge the deeply gendered nature of war and violent conflict, as well as to enact measures to prevent victims of the gendered nature of conflict from harm (Cahn, 2018). In 2000, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 declared the need to consider the role of gender in conflict, and urged all actors to work to eliminate the use of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict, in accordance with international humanitarian law (UNSCR, 2000). The resolution was the first step in acknowledging the agency of women and girls as well as the need for inclusion in conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts (Dam, 2013). Over the course of the following two decades up to today, many strides have been made in reducing the impacts of SGBV and acknowledging the role of gender in conflict and post-conflict settings.

A major aspect of this Women, Peace, and Security agenda also pertains to justice for victims of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). Justice relates to many aspects, and while the most frequently referred to form of justice is related to legal repercussions, scholars also note that justice can and does also take form in social, economic, and environmental ways (Evans, 2019; Gready and Robins, 2019). There are many mechanisms for these multi-faceted forms of justice. In the last two centuries one tool, reparations, has been used to remedy many global wrongdoings, such as slavery, colonialism, human rights violations, environmental catastrophe, and major conflicts (Taliadoros, 2018; Forrester, 2019; Marxsen, 2020). Since 2005, victims of conflict who experience "gross violations of international human rights law" are guaranteed to have a right to "adequate, effective, and prompt reparation for harm suffered" (UNGA, 2005).

Nigeria, a West-African nation often referred to as the "Giant of Africa" (Tella, 2021), is no stranger to the occurrence of CRSV. Since 2009, the northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe have been severely impacted by the conflict between the Nigerian state and the insurgent group known as Boko Haram, and in recent years also the Boko Haram offshoot group called Islamic State of West African Provinces (ISWAP) (Ahmed, 2019). This conflict has displaced a significant amount of the northeastern Nigerian population, approximately 2.2 million of a total population of 13 million (CARE and Plan International, 2022). Women and girls have been particularly affected, with more than 1.2 million displaced (approximately 55% of total) (ibid.). Moreover, the conflict has also become infamous for its violence, particularly violence of a gendered nature. Kidnappings (many of which take place in schools and universities), sexual and physical violence, and forced marriages have been common practices employed by fighters. The conflict has not just victimized women and girls, but also weaponized them. Boko Haram has utilized more female suicide bombers than any extremist group in history. As Warner and Matfess (2017) have identified, females made up more than 70% of bombers whose gender was identifiable after attacks.

Alongside the direct impacts of the conflict, female victims of CRSV often faced the burden of a double stigma upon return to their communities. Not only are they seen as "the enemy," they are also seen as impure, and any children borne to them as a result of CRSV are also seen as extremists and are ostracized (Malefakis, 2022a). Women have been disproportionately impacted by the conflict in the northeastern region of Nigeria, but men and young boys have also been affected by CRSV in complex ways (Njoku and Dery, 2021). In many cases, female and male survivors of sexual violence may also be placed by the Nigerian state in so-called deradicalization camps, where they are at risk of revictimization by security forces, forced abortion, sterilization, and poor living conditions (Carsten *et al.*, 2022; Malefakis, 2022a; Levinson, 2023). These situations often expose greater vulnerabilities for these women, and also men, to be further exploited by more powerful actors (Bhadra, 2022). For example, as survivors often also lose their livelihoods and opportunities for education as a result of the violence and displacement, they may be exposed to sexual exploitation by soldiers (Malefakis, 2022b).

Alongside the Nigerian conflict and over the course of the previous 3 decades, global discourse has shifted not just towards the elimination of CRSV, but also towards seeking more adequate and prompt justice for victims of conflict, as the rights of survivors are rarely fulfilled. This discourse has been most prevalent in the field of transitional justice (TJ), which focuses primarily on post-conflict and transitioning contexts. Efforts to shift the dominant discourse towards that of conflict transformation and transitional justice aim to create space for survivors of CRSV to have their voices to be heard, as well as give them greater agency to advocate for their rights and for justice to be delivered. This movement has also had practical implications. In 2018, human-rights activists Nadia Murad and Dr. Denis Mukwege received the Nobel Peace Prize for their dedication to work on advocating for the rights of victims of CRSV (Nobel Peace Prize, 2018). In the wake of this prize, the pair established an international organization called the Global Survivors Fund (GSF). The organization specifically advocates for the rights of survivors of CRSV, and works through providing so-called Interim Reparatory Measures (IRM) to give survivors immediate reparations, whilst simultaneously building ownership and advocacy at the national level in order to convince duty bearers to continue these reparations in perpetuity.

In Nigeria, GSF has begun to establish an IRM project to provide reparatory measures to survivors of CRSV in the Northeast, in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. Similar to GSF's work in other conflict and post-conflict settings, the Nigerian IRM project takes a survivor-centric approach to identifying desired individual and collective reparations and delivering them in a way that contributes to transformative change. What this means in practice is that survivors will be involved in the decision-making process. GSF has conducted the initial phase of the project, sending enumerators to the local government areas (LGAs) in the northern states to conduct interviews and focus group sessions to identify survivors and develop an

understanding of their wishes for individual and collective reparatory measures. With regards to decision-making, GSF is also establishing steering committees in each state. These committees will play a major role in shaping the decisions on reparatory measures. True to GSF's agent-centric methods, survivors make up the majority in each steering committee, with other members representing government, civil society organizations (CSOs), and community leaders. To carry out the project, GSF also partners with local CSOs, such as Youth Initiative Against Terrorism and Center for Girls Education.

In summary, the Women, Peace, and Security agenda has over time led to a shift in both academic and professional circles working with the delivery of justice, towards a model of agent-centric, structural change. The Boko Haram insurgency and GSF's push for prompt reparatory measures for survivors of CRSV thusly presents a valuable case to explore the construction of justice from the bottom-up. The following section outlines the existing body of literature on the topic of transitional and transformative justice, as well as reparations as a justice mechanism.

3. Literature Review

The following section primarily focuses on literature related to concepts of transitional justice and the shift towards transformative justice. Literature on reparations as a right for victims of violations of conflict is also expanded upon.

3.1. Transitional Justice

In the recent, post-World War era, a new concept of justice emerged, known as transitional justice, which came to prominence during a period of multiple countries' transitions away from authoritarian governments, particularly in Latin America in the 70's and 80's (Lambourne, 2009; Robins and Wilson, 2015). These so-called transitions brought about numerous challenges to democratization and questions with regards to the delivery of justice for survivors of gross violations of international law (McGill, 2019).

More clearly described, transitional justice refers to a number of almost entirely legal mechanisms which are often utilized – and sometimes obligatory – in post-conflict or post-transition states,(Gready and Robins, 2019; McGill, 2019; Evans, 2022). TJ practice and theory, according to McGill (ibid.), was originally centered around four core mechanisms: reparations, truth-telling, institutional reform, and legal prosecution. Truth commissions often seek to elucidate violations and past wrongdoings of the state and members of armed groups (ibid.). Institutional reform demands change at a structural, often governmental level, so as to ensure non-recurrence of violations (Lambourne, 2009; McGill, 2019). Prosecution, whether for corruption or perpetration of human rights violations, is seen as another core legal tool post-transition (Arthur, 2009; McGill, 2019). Reparations, the fourth core mechanism, are a tool designed to provide some form(s) of justice for victims, and can be distributed in many ways, be they financial, livelihood, shelter, education, etc. (McGill, 2019). Adopted in 1985 in the UN General Assembly's *Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power*, these various forms are defined as restitution (e.g. return of property) compensation (e.g. monetary payments), rehabilitation (e.g. medical, legal, and social care), and satisfaction (e.g. apologies, guarantees of non-repetition), and have been subsequently adopted in international legal standards (UNGA, 1985; Furuya, 2020; Salmón and Peréz-León-Acevedo, 2022). Reparations, according to many scholars, are seen as the most victim-centric mechanism possessed in the toolkit of TJ theorists and practitioners (Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine, 2015; Bradley, 2019). This is arguably due to the contrasting top-down, state-centric, and legalistic approaches which comprise the rest of the TJ repertoire.

Though broad in scope, TJ theory has been widely critiqued for a plethora of reasons. As mentioned, the top-down, often national scale at which TJ processes occur is often seen to leave the concerns of victims by the wayside, and thus unlikely to produce long-term, systemic justice for many affected populations

(Evans, 2019; Waldorf, 2019). Despite attempts to overcome TJ's historical lack of gender perspectives, scholars argue that there is much to be done to transcend the mere equation of gender with women (Scanlon and Muddell, 2009; de Almagro and Schulz, 2022). In addition, it is imperative to note that the field of TJ often describes justice and its ascribed instruments as *restorative* in nature. Whilst this restorative nature of TJ theory is not specifically in the crosshairs of academic critique, many scholars do however criticize the field's lack of focus on non-legal forms of justice which transform post-transition societies in ways which create structural, lasting change (Falk, 2019; Killean and Dempster, 2022). Thus, in recent years, an observable shift has taken place, with many TJ scholars turning towards a more recently conceptualized idea known as *transformative* justice (Gready and Robins, 2019; Evans, 2022). Although it is contested whether this is merely an evolution of TJ theory or in itself an entirely new field, for the sake of this literature review transformative justice is considered as a newly emerging field of study.

3.2. Transformative Justice and Reparations

Over time, the critiques of TJ have led to the newly established field of transformative justice. Transformative justice, as defined by Gready and Robins (2019, p. 32), is understood as:

> *"transformative change that emphasizes local agency and resources, the prioritization of process rather than preconceived outcomes, and the challenging of unequal and intersecting power relationships and structures of exclusion at both local and global levels."*

This shift towards the local as the locus of action is highly significant. Transformative justice flips the top-down order of approach promoted by TJ theorists, and focuses on justice from the bottom-up, putting the needs and participation of affected populations at the forefront of justice processes (Waisbich and Coelho, 2019; Hoddy, 2022). Whilst some may argue that the semantic difference between *transitional* and *transformative* justice is insignificant, it can be argued that putting transformation at the core of justice and peacebuilding is not only significant, but necessary to achieve the sustainable long-term impacts which are often perceived to not have been achieved by transitional justice efforts.

As pointed out, reparations were already seen as the most victim-centric tool of transitional justice, and the shift towards transformative justice has only amplified their status as an essential tool due to their focus on providing agency at the local level. From the legalistic perspective of TJ, reparations, as Bradley (2019) notes, are just one tool in the "arsenal" which can be used for restorative justice. Transformative justice literature, however, outlines more clearly how reparations can go beyond their restorative intentions and provide transformative change. Reparations can take form in both the material and symbolic, and can also be delivered at the individual as well as the collective level (Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine, 2015).

With the field of transformative justice, this expansion beyond the restorative nature of reparations leaves significant space for new perspectives. Feminist, international relations, social sciences, and other scholars have all weighed in with various critiques of TJ theory and suggestions for how transformative justice may provide certain remedies. Framing reparations as victim-centric, structural tools for change rather than restorative measures allows reparations to take on a new life in the field, particularly in relation to violations pertaining to sexual violence. Reparations are not only seen in the literature as a tool for fixing structures which enable CRSV and SGBV, but also as a potentially transformative apparatus with which future sexual and gender-based violence may be prevented or diminished (Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine, 2015; Durbach, Chappell and Williams, 2017; Bradley, 2019). However, reparations cannot achieve transformation alone, and must also be implemented in tandem with other tools and partners to address systemic challenges in the longer term (Williams and Opdam, 2017).

Due to the recent expansion in the multidisciplinary nature of the field of transformative justice, the contribution from the field of social science is still limited. Though the concepts of transformative justice as well as the specific tool of reparations seem promising in their shift away from top-down approaches, scholars also note that many questions still exist with regards to the field of transformative justice. Evans (2019, p. 1) poses the question: "What exactly would transformation look like and what is or is not being transformed?" Waldorf (2019, p. 162) poses a similarly relevant question: does transformational justice seek to provide transformation at a political, social, economic, or individual level? Ní Aoláin (2019) critically reflects: to what extent can justice truly be "transformational" if it doesn't consider the gendered nature of conflict? With these questions in mind, I situate my research below:

3.3. Situating the Research

It is clear from the presented literature that sufficient research and discourse exists in the field of both transitional and transformative justice. Despite this, the majority of contributions to this newly emerging field remain situated in the legalistic framings of international relations and international law scholarship. Despite calls to recenter the field around the subjects of justice, namely victims of conflict, their agency, gender, and intersectional identities, little has yet to be published with these topics as the central point of departure when conducting research.

With this in mind, and particularly the questions previously highlighted, I argue that this research is not necessarily filling a perceived gap in the understanding of justice, but is putting the notions of local constructions of justice at the forefront of analysis, so as to contribute to the transformative justice body of knowledge in a manner in which agent-centric approaches are central. In addition, gender is not taken as a secondary demographic aspect to be considered in the delegation of justice measures, but is centralized as one of the main foundations of exploration and analysis. Importantly, this research is also situated not in

the overall theorizing of answers to the question of "what" exactly is (or is not) being transformed in transformative justice, but rather seeks to provide contextual insight into the meaning of transformation at the local level for victims who have been subjected to conflict, more specifically CRSV. The following section further details the theoretical framework upon which the research and subsequent analysis sit.

4. Theoretical Framework

In this section, I lay out a theoretical understanding of the concepts of violence and justice, and how these pertain to the theory of human development as freedom. Subsequently, feminist theory is applied so as to supplement and broaden the theoretical frame of the research and analysis. These theories are described and combined with a central, underlying gender lens to address the limitations of the aforementioned theorizations of violence, peace, and justice.

4.1. Galtung's Dichotomies of Peace and Violence

Johan Galtung's 1969 work *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research* was instrumental in setting out a modern theoretical understanding of peace, defined as *"the absence of violence."* (Galtung, 1969; Confortini, 2006; McGill, 2019). Oppositely, Galtung's second principal contribution was the establishment of a core definition of violence, defined as: "*present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations"* (Galtung, 1969, p. 168).

More importantly, however, was Galtung's foundational dissection of the concept of *violence* into two distinct dimensions: that of *direct*, or personal violence, and that of *structural*, or indirect violence. Decades later, in 1990, Galtung also amended this theory with the addition of so-called *cultural* violence (Galtung, 1990). According to Galtung, *direct violence* can be understood as *"violence where there is an actor that commits the violence,"* with the emphasis being that this violence is visible and inherent (ibid.). On the other hand, *structural* violence relates to violence where no so-called *actor* commits said violence, rather, as the name implies, the violence inflicted is embedded in structures, and both results in and is reinforced by inequities of power (ibid.). In Galtung's expansion of the theory, violence that is *cultural* in nature is related to elements of human culture (such as religions, language, ideologies, etc.) which, according to him, are used as means of justifying both direct and structural violence. Cultural violence can also be seen as the tension present in a society which can precede and result in large outbreaks of direct violence, for example in the case of a violent conflict between a state and an insurgent group.

In addition to defining violence and peace, Galtung laid out core "dimensions," of violence, which also can be seen as dichotomous properties inherently in contrast with one another: physical-psychological, negative-positive peace, object-subject, intended-unintended, and manifest-latent. Interestingly, Galtung (1969) also distinguished a key relationship by equating the terminologies of *direct violence* and *social injustice*. In other terms, *peace* could be then therefore seen as direct violence's juxtaposition: *social justice*. Through creating these binary categories, Galtung also labeled these dimensions, particularly structural violence, as "static," silent phenomena which are denoted by their stability and ongoing presence (Galtung, 1969).

Though Galtung's work has done much to formalize the understanding of the different levels of violence, the theories are not without limitation. The primary limitation which must be addressed is the aforementioned dichotomization of the dimensions of violence. This has been especially criticized by feminist scholars as not accurately reflecting the gendered nature of violence (Confortini, 2006; Banwell, 2020; Parashar, 2022). As the theory also lacks a multi-disciplinary categorization of mechanisms to transform so-called violences into peace, it would benefit greatly from theoretical perspectives from the field of development, so as to better understand peacebuilding as a form of developmental practice.

4.1.1. Peace and Development as Freedom

It is important to note that conceptualizations of peace, violence, and justice cannot be decoupled from theoretical understandings of human development. As previously alluded to, I posit that these two theoretical realms are inherently intertwined. At the advent of the 21st century, Amartya Sen (2001) reframed the contemporary practical and academic perception and framing of human development, defining it as *"a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy."* Development as freedom, according to Sen, was essential in allowing development theorists and practitioners to expand their gaze beyond the economic lens with which development had primarily been viewed up until that point. Furthermore, the process of development described by Sen calls for the dismantling of so-called sources of "unfreedom," which can be understood as socioeconomic phenomena and structures such as poverty and social exclusion, whilst also ensuring that human freedoms are enhanced in the process (Sen, 2001).

One must acknowledge that Sen's conceptualization of development and its terminologies run complementary to Galtung's work on defining violence. When combining these theoretical perspectives, it must be considered that peace, defined by Galtung as the absence of violence, is closely related to the process of human development, which Sen describes as being at odds with the aforementioned sources of *unfreedom* which humans experience. Barnett (2008) characterizes this combination of the two theories, outlining a complementary understanding of "*peace as* [human] *freedom.*" With this framing of peace, violence can be seen in the development lens as directly related to (and arguably another constitution of) so-called unfreedoms. Unlike Galtung's static categorizations of violence and peace, the framing of *peace as freedom* allows peace to be understood as a process, one which involves the removal or alleviation of both direct and structural violence, and the forms of cultural violence which may underly their manifestations. Alternatively, when linked to Sen's terminologies, the process of peace can be seen as an inherent act of development, an effort to eliminate *direct* and *structural* unfreedoms. Another crucial contribution made by Sen is the centrality of the agency of individuals in this process. According to Sen (2001), unfreedoms restrict the agency and opportunities of individuals, and agency is both shaped by and shapes the social context in which individuals live. By putting agency as central, it is argued that this will

in turn also contribute to greater reductions of unfreedoms beyond the social sphere (ibid.). Equipped with a multidisciplinary theoretical understanding of peace as an inherently developmental process, one can turn to the core critique of Galtung's theory of violence(s): the issue of gender.

4.1.2. Peace and Violence as Processes: A Feminist Perspective

Galtung's theory of violence, as Confortini (2006) postulates, suffers immensely from its omission of feminist contributions. She also asserts that it is imperative that this theory of violence be supplemented and understood with a gender lens, and provides key suggestions for a unified frame of understanding which incorporates feminist theory to supplement the understanding of the phenomenon of violence (ibid.). By defining violence in dichotomous terms, and through the use of gendered language, Galtung contributes to a binary framing of the world which reproduces and reinforces hierarchies of gender, which can also be understood as hierarchies of power (ibid.). Moreover, by framing these dichotomies as in opposition between two static states (such as perpetrator-victim, negative-positive, intended-unintended, etc.), Galtung does not accurately depict violence and peace as feminists would see it, that is, as existing in a *continuum*, one which is reliant on and reinforced by the notion of these gendered binaries with which Galtung first defined these three levels of violence (Yadav and Horn, 2021; Parashar, 2022).

Confortini (2006) responds to this, stating that gender can serve as a useful tool for breaking down the dichotomies of violence whilst better conceiving of ways to bring about transformative change. Crucially, it is emphasized that with this perspective, it is no longer possible to see the various forms of violence (direct, structural, and cultural) in isolation from one another, and that these levels of violence *"cannot be viewed as independent from the social construction of hegemonic identities, be it hegemonic masculinities or hegemonic races"* (2006, p. 357). This is a pivotal examination, as the layers of violence, or unfreedoms, can be understood as interconnected, and thus as forces which can exacerbate one another.

4.2. Transformative Gender Justice: Justice as a Process

When combining feminist perspectives and development theory, one is able to obtain a more holistic view of violence and peace. Critically, the concept of (social) *justice*, framed by Galtung as an alternate term for peace, can be understood in a broader light. With violence and peace no longer relegated to static states, *justice* can finally be understood as a process, not dissimilar to human development as a process. Rather than merely enhancing the freedoms enjoyed by humans, justice can be seen as a process in which the multiple dimensions of violence which humans are subject to are diminished or eliminated. Thus, I argue that what *development* is to development as freedom, *justice* is to peace as freedom. Linking this to the aforementioned literature review, I argue that justice as a process, as described above, can be interchanged with the theoretical concept of *transformative justice.*

Nevertheless, transformative justice must be recognized as a deeply gendered process which not only is shaped and influenced by gender hegemonies, but which has the power to re-shape and re-influence them. Ní Aioláin (Ní Aoláin, 2019) adamantly argues for the inclusion of gender in transformational justice as a fundamental property of the field, rather than allowing it to remain in the periphery of focus of transitional and transformational justice scholarship.

4.3. Gender as Central

The primary aim of putting gender as central in the theoretical framework of analysis is to highlight the understanding of peace and violence as a continuum (Krause, 2015; de Almagro and Schulz, 2022). Embedded structures, be it the state, strict gender hierarchies and roles, sociocultural norms, etc. are seen to be responsible for producing, reproducing, and preserving visible and invisible forms of violence (Braithwaite and D'Costa, 2018). Particularly in contexts of conflict in the Global South, Western, colonial narratives of women purely as victims of conflict and as vulnerable actors in need of protection must be broken down, as well as the portrayal of men as perpetrators, and masculinity as inherently incapable of vulnerability. This dichotomizing of masculinities and femininities does not acknowledge the complex actions and needs of survivors of CRSV, nor does it acknowledge their agency or heterogeneity.

Along these lines, feminist theory allows us to break down patriarchal structures in which individuals live, and provides room to question the rigid categorization of masculinities and femininities, which often erase crucial narratives along the way (Scanlon and Muddell, 2009; de Almagro and Schulz, 2022). Another core problematic framing is the essentialized separation between war and conflict versus the everyday. As Parashar states:

> "*From a feminist point of view that takes gender into account, it becomes all the more relevant to see political violence as an everyday presence than merely an event with a specific time line and without entry and exit points."* (Parashar, 2022, p. 391)

It is clear that violence cannot be divorced from gender, nor can the process of transformative justice, and neither can be separated into a theorized sphere of conflict which is separate from the sphere of normal, everyday life. Justice which does not acknowledge the aforementioned continuum of violence and peace, and which does not acknowledge the inherently gendered nature of violence, is unlikely to result in true transformation of the structures which underly it. Thus, Enloe's notion of a "feminist curiosity" should be applied in contexts of development and conflict, to explore hidden violence as well as to envision a picture of holistic, transformative justice (Enloe, 2004; Beck, 2017; Parashar, 2022). As Prügl and Tickner (2018, p. 85) would put it: *"We cannot have a complete understanding of war and violence without asking about their gendered foundations."*

With this in mind, the proposed theoretical framework takes a gender lens as leading, viewing the process of transformational justice as a gendered one which aims to disrupt both visible and invisible violence(s) and similarly framed sources of *unfreedoms*. Therefore, in this case study it is essential to understand how transformative justice and violence are constructed by civil society workers on the ground in the context of GSF's IRM project in the Northeast.

5. Methodology

The following section outlines the methodological approach, including the aims of the research, the ontological and epistemological foundations, the methods of enquiry and research design, sampling and data analysis methods. In addition, the section also addresses important ethical considerations which were made and limitations of the research. Reflection on my positionality and efforts to decolonize this research are also provided.

5.1. Research Aim

Initially, this research started out as an exploration of GBV and justice, particularly for women in northeastern Nigeria. Over time, this evolved into a case study of GSF's Nigerian IRM project. This exploratory process and its evolution into the conducted study was informed not only by the literature and theory, but also by the professional and practical knowledge which I obtained when working in the field of maternal health and sexual and reproductive health in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria.

As described, this case study is aimed at exploring the GSF IRM project, a survivor-centric initiative which is designed to provide both individual and collective interim reparatory measures to survivors of conflict related sexual violence. As evident from the theoretical framework and literature review, space for enquiry was evident particularly in relation to the understanding of reparations, gender, violence(s), and the overarching construction of justice for survivors of CRSV in northeastern Nigeria. With this in mind, the following research question and sub-questions were leading in the enquiry:

1. ***How is justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence constructed by civil society project staff in northeastern Nigeria?***
    a) ***How does gender shape and underlie the process(es) of justice?***
    b) ***How are structures of violence and power characterized in this context?***

5.2. Philosophical Foundations

The foundation of this case study is bounded in the ontological frame of constructionism. Whilst other forms of ontology may deem reality as an objective phenomenon made up of truths or fact which manifest themselves as reality for individual observers, constructionist ontology flips this notion on its head, insisting that reality is a social phenomenon which is constantly and simultaneously created and interpreted (Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2016). When decolonizing research, a constructivist approach is valuable, as it aims to do greater justice to the understanding of reality as constructed by individuals participating in a study, rather than the researcher imposing one's own reality, which is often informed by historical, social, economic, and cultural influences (Creswell, 2014; Moon and Blackman, 2014).

Epistemologically, this research is situated in a feminist interpretivist understanding of knowledge. Interpretivism, also known as social constructivism, is a perspective in which the individual's interpretations of their subjective experiences are seen as the form of knowledge creation (Creswell, 2014; Moon and Blackman, 2014). In research which takes this lens, Creswell (2014) highlights the importance of relying significantly on the research participants' descriptions of and constructions of their knowledge. Additionally, this research takes a feminist approach to the standard epistemological understanding of interpretivism. This is crucial, and as Ackerly and True emphasize:

> *"A feminist epistemology includes the belief that knowledge (truth) is produced, not simply found, and that the conditions of its production should be studied, critiqued if necessary, and certainly made explicit and exposed."* (Ackerly and True, 2020, p. 22)

Both the ontological and epistemological foundations of this research are highly important for understanding the choice of research methodology, particularly with regards to ethics and decoloniality. While the study originally aimed to describe how justice is perceived by survivors of CRSV in the Northeast, it became clear that this would not be a possible framing as survivors themselves did not form part of the interview participants. Moreover, as the terms explored in the research pertain to broader, normative concepts which are often produced and reinforced at a global level, often by Western societies and academia, the selected ontology and epistemology provide space for contextual understandings and constructions of reality, rather than using the lens of hegemonic discourse on the theoretical concepts to frame the constructions of interview participants. Therefore, a constructionist ontology and feminist, interpretive epistemology are imperative to the framing of the case study, as it pertains to participants constructions of the concepts of transformative justice and the role of reparations for survivors of CRSV.

5.3. Methods of Enquiry

With the foundations of the research in mind, it was designed as a qualitative case study using virtual interviews with GSF IRM project staff, who represent GSF's partner CSOs in the Northeast. At a broader level, qualitative research can be understood as a method of making sense, or meaning, of the various phenomena observed and recorded by a researcher (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). In this case study, the aim was to make sense of the constructions of justice described by the project staff. This choice of qualitative methodology was made with multiple considerations in mind: firstly, the interpretivist epistemological roots of the study call for contextual interpretations of knowledge, and thus a qualitative study provides the space for this. Moreover, linking to a feminist perspective, especially with regards to decolonizing research, interviews, particularly related to the local staff's construction of justice, were seen as an important methodological tool to sufficiently explore the topic at hand.

5.4. Data Collection and Sampling Methods

In this case study, as acknowledged, semi-structured, exploratory virtual interviews were utilized as the primary form of data collection. Initially, an interview guide was drafted on three broad themes related to the case: perceptions of justice and reparations, the particular role of education as a reparation in the case context, and the role of gender in the project. This guide was adjusted after an initial pilot interview, in which areas were highlighted and adjusted where the lines of questioning brought about discussion on things which were not necessarily expected based on the preliminary review of literature. For an overview of the finalized interview guide see Appendix 1.

The semi-structured virtual interviews were conducted primarily with staff of GSF's partner CSOs on the ground in Nigeria. As GSF projects work with local partners in the carrying out of many project activities, the majority of the staff already active in the project were employed either by Youth Initiative Against Terrorism or Center for Girls Education in Yobe and Adamawa. Purposive-sampling was used, and staff interviewed were either state level coordinators, steering committee members, or members of the data collection team (also referred to as *enumerators*) who conducted the identification interviews with survivors in various LGAs in Yobe and Adamawa. Finally, one key informant interview was also conducted with the project head of the Nigeria IRM project, who oversees the implementation of the project and designs the strategy together with other GSF staff. In total, twelve virtual interviews were held which lasted just under 30 minutes on average, but which varied from around 25-40 minutes. The recorded interview durations did not include the introduction period where informed consent was obtained, nor was the time for a brief closing recorded. A complete interview overview can be found in Table I. Regarding gender, five of the twelve respondents were male (42%), and the remaining seven were female (58%). For the sake of greater confidentiality, the gender of respondents is not included at the individual level.

Interview Number	Informant Category	Duration of Interview
1	State Coordinator	27:43
2	State Coordinator	25:41
3	Enumerator	28:52
4	Enumerator	39:24
5	Enumerator	28:14
6	Steering Committee Member	22:26
7	Steering Committee Member	29:45
8	Enumerator	25:26
9	Enumerator	25:51
10	Enumerator	31:07
11	Steering Committee Member	25:32
12	Head of Project	39:50

Table I. Informant Overview

5.5. Data Analysis

The wealth of the data which was collected in this case study was analyzed primarily through use of the NVivo software tool. The interview documents and audio were transcribed and subsequently coded using code themes which were established both based on the theory, as well as emergent themes which arose throughout the research. Initially, codes were established based on discussion points or topics which were prevalently discussed throughout the course of the research. Afterwards, and similarly to the approaches proposed by Creswell and Bryman (2014; 2016), these codes were categorized into a core set of coding themes which linked more closely with the theoretical framework, but which grouped the codes into four relevant sections for focused analysis. The final coded themes were: Constructions of Justice, Gender Matters, Power and Violence, and Challenges. These codes were also categorized as such to ensure that the research question and sub-questions could be sufficiently analyzed and answered with the data provided from the interviews.

5.6. Ethical Considerations

Due to the sensitivity of the research topic, as well as the fragile security context in which the research was conducted, there were many ethical considerations which informed the research process, and which must also be acknowledged. First and foremost, I initially set out in this research to explore CRSV survivors' perceptions of justice and role in peacebuilding in the Northeast. Nonetheless, considering the "do no harm" principle of ethics in research, I determined that this would likely be too difficult to successfully do no harm

in the course of such a study. At the same time, it is important to note that with the aim of doing justice to decolonizing research, the research was carefully framed so as not to take away voice or agency from survivors whilst still exploring constructions of justice in northeastern Nigeria. Furthermore, due to the security situation in Nigeria and the sensitivity of the topic researched, confidentiality and informed consent were ensured throughout the research process and taken extremely seriously. Appendix 2 outlines the informed consent process, which was obtained verbally, and which followed the considerations provided by Patton (2015) and Flick (2022). The data related to interviews was pre-anonymized before being uploaded to any digital platforms as an additional measure.

It is imperative to acknowledge the positionality of the researcher in this case study, as doing so is an important part of the reflexivity of social science research practice, and is important in understanding my relation to the research context (Hammett, Twyman and Graham, 2015; Massoud, 2022) From this reflexive lens, I, the researcher, am a Western, white, heteronormative male, and with this comes significant power in the research context. In the process of the research, I also observed situations in which my identity, both "hidden" and "ascribed" clearly had an influence (Hammett, Twyman and Graham, 2015). For example, I perceived an influence in my position as a Westerner, with some interview participants initially assuming I had some form of a leading role in the GSF IRM project. Additionally, I also noticed that my gender may have influenced certain conversations, particularly when speaking to male participants about their constructions of justice.

One way I set out to do justice to decoloniality and to my position as a Western researcher was by initiating dialogue with Nigerian academics and other local experts from the scoping phase of the research onwards, so as to better understand the context in which the subjects live and work. This helped me to confront the potential Western bias(es) that may have accompanied my initial viewpoints or perceptions, as well as navigate the framing of the research question around the construction of justice in the local context. Another substantial consideration is the coloniality of knowledge (Smith, 2021). Although this paper aims to contribute new knowledge and understanding to the Western academic body of knowledge, this research would not have been possible without the participants' ample sharing of their own personal experiences and knowledge of the explored topics. As such, I also aim to distribute the knowledge generated from this research in collaboration with the local partners of the GSF project in Nigeria in formats which are relevant and appropriate to the communities in Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa. Whilst my position as a researcher is inescapable, ample effort was made to continuously reflect on and acknowledge this position, as well as to acknowledge that no research is without some form of influence due to the author's positionality.

5.7. Limitations

As the interviews were conducted primarily with project staff affiliated with the GSF IRM project, there is a slight limitation in to what extent it can be assumed that the information is provided with complete transparency regarding the critiques of aspects of the IRM project which were potentially not seen in a positive light. However, this limitation was mitigated as best as possible by talking also to steering committee members, many of whom represented other local CSOs and thus were not as likely to present a positive view of the project merely for the sake of pleasing the interviewer or GSF. Confidentiality was also highly emphasized with participants so as to ensure that they were aware of their ability to be fully transparent regarding their views of the project.

Additionally, as a case study based on a single organization's project, this research may face some limitations in its overall generalizability (Queirós, Faria and Almeida, 2017). While the case provides a significant depth of insight into the context of northeastern Nigeria, conflict is also highly contextual, as are the nature of the violations which occur, especially CRSV. As such, it is important to note that whilst the case can give insight into challenges faced in other situations where reparations are urgently needed for survivors of CRSV, it is by no means comprehensive in its contributions. This is not to say, however, that deep explorations of contexts such as this case study are not important in contributing to the body of knowledge of transformative justice.

One other limitation of this research is the lack of other quantitative sources of data, particularly that of documents. A thorough review of GSF project documentation related to the IRM project, government policy documents, and documents from other CSOs regarding may have provided additional valuable insights into the constructions of justice from other actors, as well as the push to build ownership at the government level. As the IRM project has not gone beyond its initial phase, however, there is also a potential that such documents would not yet prove useful to analysis.

6. Analysis

In this section, I outline how the aforementioned processes of violence and justice are characterized, and how they manifest themselves in the context of the case study. Alongside this, an understanding is given to the inherently gendered nature of these processes, and how a gendered hierarchy shapes, underlies, and is influenced or reinforced by these processes. To add depth to the analysis, discussion is present on the gendered nature of violence(s) in the case, and to what extent the process of justice in this context is perceived to create so-called "transformations" in the existing and future structures in northeastern Nigeria.

6.1. Use of language

As many feminist scholars note, language plays a key role in reinforcing and shaping patriarchal structures of power (Confortini, 2006; Cameron, 2020). In this case, language also plays a significant role in the perceptions about and constructions of individuals who have been subjected to conflict-related sexual violence. In addition to the below discussion on terminologies, it is important for one to recognize that language is closely tied to power and gender in many ways in this context, and shows up throughout the analysis.

6.1.1. Victims, or Survivors?

The most crucial use of language which must be understood in this case is how the subjects of violence are described. In the language of GSF and its IRM project in Nigeria, these subjects are consistently referred to – and defined as – *survivors* of CRSV. Despite this, some of the twelve participants occasionally referred to the subjects as *victims*, which was used to describe their situation beyond the mere impact of the sexual violence. Although the participants in some instances described the subjects as victims, it was observed that the language of the GSF organization was heavily imbedded in the language used by participants, as the overwhelming majority consistently and frequently described those subjected to CRSV as *survivors*.

This distinction of language is important in two ways. Firstly, it shows that the terminology GSF utilizes with regards to subjects of CRSV has been accepted as the way to characterize them in the case's context. Secondly, and arguably more significant, is the fact that the use of the term survivor has an entirely different connotation for what it means to have been subjected to CRSV, as opposed to the term victim. As Banwell (2020) notes, this is also linked to a hegemonic and gendered view of conflict, in which victimization itself is seen as akin to weakness and vulnerability, which is in turn equated with women, or an idealized femininity. Thus, the use of language and terminology for subjects of CRSV is very important, and is also acknowledged as influencing individuals' identities (Setia and An, 2022). The *victim* label centralizes sexual violence as the core of a person's being and is associated with passivity and a need for help, whereas the *survivor* label is seen as implying greater power and agency (ibid.). Whilst not necessarily instilling greater

power per se, the acknowledgement and defining of women as *survivors* in this context must be recognized as an attempt to shift perceptions about persons who have been subjected to CRSV and provide them with greater agency and self-worth whilst also shifting communities' perception of their identity. More on this is addressed in the section on the stigmatization of survivorship. In the following sections, subjects of CRSV are henceforth referred to as *survivors* of CRSV.

6.1.2. Reparations: A Return to "Normalcy?"

Within this study, interview participants were asked a number of questions related to justice and their constructions of the concept. One interesting notion of language which emerged from this questioning was the idea of reparations as a return to so-called "normalcy." For example, one participant framed it as such:

> *"If they can get this reparation, they can cover for themself and* ***they can come back to normality*** *where they can also provide for their children (for those that lost their husband) […] For those that also have not married yet, [whose] life have been shuttered away due to their vulnerability of rape and they have a child[ren] before marriage, they have not get married, due to [those] act. Some of them they are looking at it that if they can get the reparation, their life can come back,* ***their life can be restored to normality*** *where their livelihood would be up, their standard of living would be high, also they would go back to school to join other students, they would feel amongst those that belong to the community."* (Interview 3)

In this case, and similarly to other participants, this described *normality* referred to the social and economic stability which was present for many survivors prior to CRSV and any displacement, as well as any stigma attached to them as a result of their experience (Interview 7, 9).

This is representative of the pervasiveness of Western normative characterizations of reparations as a *restorative* tool, rather than a *transformative* one. Whilst the GSF project is informed and led by its self-styled transformative agenda, it became evident through the language used by project staff that both their construction, and perceptions of how survivors construct reparations, were formed by the primary understanding of reparations as serving a restorative function. Upon this revelation, further questioning was established to also explore the construction of transformations.

It is clear that the examples above illustrate how language played and continues to play an important role in understanding how concepts of justice, violence, and gender are constructed in the context of the case study. The following section outlines in greater detail how power, various visible and invisible structures, and both direct and structural violence are constructed.

6.2. Power, Structures, Violence(s)

6.2.1. The Local community as a Locus of Power

It became evident through the discussions with interview participants that most survivors, despite being displaced from the geographical locus of the majority of the direct violence associated with the conflict, are now situated in new loci of power. *"A majority of these survivors are still not in their [communities of origin]. Some of them are still IDPs, although not mostly in the IDP camps, but in the host communities*" (Interview 1). Informants highlighted that survivors primarily live in internally displaced person (IDP) camps or in host communities, where they often depend on the communities for support, to some extent. While IDP camps slightly differ in terms of their organization, there is often a similar power structure, with IDP camp leaders and community elders leading their respective communities. In both circumstances, participants were clear in outlining that survivors mostly are perceived as being at the bottom of the social hierarchy, both in IDP camps and communities. This stems from a perceived dependence of the survivors on the community, often due to loss of familial support structures and sources of livelihood.

As a result, this has led to challenges in delivering aid in the Northeast, as community leaders often act as gatekeepers at the top of local power hierarchies. Participants outlined the challenges of working at the community level to deliver reparatory measures to survivors.

> *"we've come to understand also that there is the influence of host communities that are feeling like we cannot just basically give everything to the survivors without getting some percentage off of it."* (Interview 2)

> *"There is one place that we went that time, the district head of that place is even asking on whether if we will let our team to know that they, the community, the residents there need to have at least some percentage before the conduct of these [reparatory] activities."* (Interview 4)

> *"most of the community leaders, if non-governmental organizations do visit a community and they give them some relief materials, be it food, be it money or something related to that, the community leaders do hijack it, they don't use to give to the people that has affected with that particular problem. So that is why there's a problem between them and the victims, or survivors."* (Interview 8)

These examples highlight the new power hierarchies which survivors find themselves in and the clear instances of structural violence which continue to subjugate survivors. Due to survivors' dependence on the communities for support and lack of power, survivorship itself is accompanied by a significant stigma. This then also reinforces narratives of the feminized "survivor" being vulnerable, weak, and in need of support. These narratives are utilized by community leaders to present themselves as benevolent intermediaries who

act on behalf of survivors as well as the community. However, as one respondent poignantly expressed, *"you see that the community members are looking out for themselves more than they are for the survivors."* (Interview 2). This structural violence manifests itself in other forms, most notably in that of stigmatization of survivorship. Stigma as a form of structural violence is elaborated on below.

6.2.2. Stigma as Structural Violence

Within the previously discussed community power hierarchies in the Northeast, participants also outlined how identity and stigma play a major role in enabling potent forms of structural violence. The informants noted that being a survivor of the conflict was not attached with stigma beyond displacement, per se. Where stigma is being weaponized, however, was clear. Stigmatization of survivors of CRSV was frequently described as a source of ongoing structural violence, especially in its relation to the survivorship of women.

> *"For some of them, the biggest issue is about the fact that something has happened to them that was not their fault, but somehow they get blamed for it."* (Interview 12)

> *"We have come to understand that in the course of the conflict issue, or their being survivors of sexual violence, is something that had made them feel very low of themselves. They have felt relegated to the background, abandoned"* (Interview 2)

> *"Maybe any adult, you've been abducted and the community will come to know about it, it become a hell for you as a survivor."* (Interview 3)

The shame associated with survivorship is not only perpetuated by the communities, but as illustrated in the insights above, is also something deeply imbedded in survivors' perceptions of themselves. A few core ramifications of this stigmatization were identified by respondents. Firstly, some described the inability of survivors to resume economic activities after displacement, as obtaining customers is difficult (Interview 10). In addition to economic challenges, the impact on educational attainment was also described. For survivors, many of whom have missed anywhere from a few to ten years of schooling on average, returning to school with pupils of much younger ages can often lead to bullying and shame (Interview 7). For the children of survivors, the stigma can be even greater, with children (some of whom have been borne out of forced marriages and rape) often being seen as affiliated with Boko Haram, and thus ostracized by the communities. A social aspect, which was also construed as one of the most pressing impacts of stigmatization, was women's inability to get a husband. One informant spoke very elaborately on this issue, highlighting the particular stigma attached to CRSV:

> *"For the northern Nigerian woman, marriage is a big deal. To be in a husband's house is a big deal. And what has happened is preventing other men from either being attracted to them or being,*

like the whole stigma and the history and the conversations that surround what has happened to them is not even allowing them to get suitors. […] But moving on it's been difficult, especially compared to the people who didn't suffer any kind of CRSV before. For those ones, it was easier to get husbands. It was easier to get married. It was even if they had children prior to when the insurgency happened or they lost their husbands. For people who didn't suffer CRSV they could move on with their lives and get new husbands and get new jobs." (Interview 12)

The stigma of survivorship of CRSV was extensively discussed by the informants, as well the social and economic impacts on women and their children. It is evident that the gendered discourse and feminization of survivorship manifests itself for female survivors particularly strongly through marginalization in the community. As the attached stigma of CRSV is often inescapable for female survivors, it becomes a central aspect of their identity in the eyes of society. This structural violence is palpable, and the weakness, vulnerability, and dependence associated with the feminized "victim" thus becomes intertwined with the perceived identity of female survivors, and results in greater ramifications on their social, economic, and psychological well-being. Interestingly, however, this gendered discourse does not manifest itself nearly the same way for male survivors, who are able to dissociate themselves from the "survivor of CRSV" label.

6.2.3. The Stigmatization of Male Survivors

Throughout the course of the research, the topic of male survivors recurred in a way that it became relevant itself as a line of questioning. Many authors note that male survivors of CRSV often face much greater challenges identifying as survivors, in many cases due to the perceived loss of masculinity or masculine identity (Njoku and Dery, 2021; Touquet and Schulz, 2021). This case study was much in line with such studies, and informants described a number of issues related to the stigma and issues of gendered identity which male survivors face.

"You know, men, just like women they face those challenges, deep down. They are violated in many ways. They face the SGBV, but it's hard for them to always come to the surface and acknowledge, or let me say mention that they are affected." (Interview 1)

"Some of them [male survivors] feel, I don't know the word to give it. But some of them, they feel they will be insulted in the community and that muscular [masculine] personality that they try to protect, they try to keep […] the challenge there is that they are ashamed of stigmatization in the community." (Interview 3)

"for male survivors, [stigmatization] is on a different level […] Your personality and your identity as a male is worse off if you're identified as a male survivor." (Interview 12)

The enormous gap in the gendered manifestations of stigma for male and female survivors of CRSV was visible in the GSF project. Presently, only **one** male survivor has come forward to participate in the IRM project, despite spanning three populous states in the Northeast. Another issue of male stigmatization which was identified is exceptionally important to note: the lack of acceptance of male survivorship by female survivors of CRSV in the Northeast.

The specific nature of many of the CRSV violations in the Northeast was seen by the informants as explanatory for this phenomenon. In many cases, male survivors may not fit only to the categorization of *survivors*, but also that of *perpetrators*:

> *"the Boko Haram perpetrators will call the male survivors. They will ask them to at least have some sexual intercourse with some [female] survivors without their willingness. And if not, they will ask them that if they didn't do that, they will kill them. So they were forced to do it. Not willingly."* (Interview 8)

As illustrated by this example and the observations made by participants, the dichotomization of a binary survivor/perpetrator narrative emerges, and is heavily gendered. The space for males to identify as survivors is not only marred by societal stigma associated with masculine gender roles and hierarchies of the local context, but is further restricted by the outspoken remonstrance of female survivors to accept male "survivorship," as the nature of many of the sexual violations allows the male survivors, many of whom were also minors at the time of their experiences, to be categorized as *perpetrators.* According to informants, female survivors clearly stated their inability to see male survivors as anything other than perpetrators. This rigidly binary context thus erases the immense complexity of the CRSV males experience, and they are essentially unable to identify as a *survivor* whilst also having the identity of *perpetrator* of CRSV. The impact of this environment on men's ability to self-identify was illustrated:

> *"it's much easier for the male to melt, to integrate back into the society even if people know that he was a perpetrator"* (Interview 12).

This point highlights one of the key challenges to transformational gender justice in this context. As the gendered stigma around survivorship is so closely tied with femininity, emasculation, and weakness, it is even preferable for male survivors who have suffered CRSV to either identify as perpetrators (where appropriate), or not to identify themselves at all, rather than to tarnish their masculine identity and be perceived as a survivor of CRSV. This presents hurdles in the process of delivering justice, as reparatory measures can only be delivered to survivors who identify themselves as such.

The head of the Nigerian project team was aware of and outlined this as a dilemma in GSF's work, however

also acknowledged that the survivor-centric approach of the organization limited them in their ability to support survivors who don't self-identify despite meeting all relevant criteria. She even acknowledged that both the "hostile environment" created by female survivors combined with "traditional hegemonic patriarchal norms" create an untenable environment for male survivors to come forward to seek reparations (Interview 12). However, the project head also ended by discussing the need to develop a secondary methodology to conduct sensitization and identification specifically for male survivors in Nigeria.

Having laid out the construction of how gendered forms of power, gendered hierarchies, and structural forms of violence impact survivors, it is also important to understand how the project was seen to disrupt and transform these structures, if it all.

6.3. The Role(s) of Gender

From the analytical lens of the theoretical framework, one can observe a tangible influence and presence of gendered stratifications of power throughout the case. The following section describes in greater detail how the described return to normalcy, gendered power hierarchies, and gender roles all shape the project staff's construction of violence and justice.

6.3.1. Constructions of Gender

As previously discussed, the victim/perpetrator dichotomization, whilst arguably problematic, is indicative of the rigid, patriarchal hierarchy in northeastern Nigeria, and in which the IRM project takes place. Where the feminized "victim" is defined as helpless, weak, pure, and in need of benevolence, the opposingly masculinized "perpetrator" is seen as vile, powerful, in need of punishment. What I observed throughout the course of the research was that these binaries link to and also relatedly explain the equally rigid perceived gender roles ascribed to man and woman. These gender roles, particularly as they were constructed in relation to female survivors of CRSV, must be explored.

The preceding discussion on the so-called return to "normalcy" provided by GSF's IRM project can be seen as the first point of departure in understanding the influence of gender roles, norms, and expectations. This normative understanding of the status-quo is context specific, and thus informed by local culture, society, and religion in northeastern Nigeria. The hegemonic notion of female identity for Nigerian women is strictly defined and reinforced, with the default understanding ascribing women a highly feminized, over-idealized role of mother, wife, caretaker, etc. This was evident in how informants constructed the impact of reparations on the survivors, describing normalcy as the ability for female survivors to get a husband, have children, and thereafter be capable of participating normally in society once again.

Particularly, one of the most prevalently reoccurring gendered themes along these lines was the constructed role of females as caretakers in society. As one informant put it:

> *"as the wise are saying, if you educate a female child, it's like you educate the whole community. Because she will take care of herself and she will know how to take care of her children and beyond."* (Interview 4)

In a similar vein, this feminized, prescribed role of women as caretakers was not only projected by staff onto their construction of survivors, but was also characterized as a motivation for certain forms of reparations. Education as a reparation, in particular, was described by staff as being seen by female survivors as a tool with they could significantly increase their effectiveness as caretakers:

> *"to her, the education will help her more because if she is educated she will be more wiser. She will know how to rebuild her life. She will know how to help herself, to be up on her feet and help her society, help her family, and so on."* (Interview 5)

> *"And they hardly to take good care of them [children] as they have no husbands. So at least if they have something doing, they will be able to feed their offsprings and also cater for their education and other sorts of things like that."* (Interview 10)

> *"For elderly [women], they need to do business to take care of their younger ones."* (Interview 9)

It is important to note that the project allows survivors to utilize their reparatory value in any way they see fit, so long as it is solely used to benefit the survivors and not someone else (Interview 12). Nonetheless, one exception exists, which is the case in which survivors would like to use reparatory value for their children's education. This, in combination with the perceived role of women as caretakers, was seen as a transformative facet of the IRM project, as the education of children was seen as a tool to transform outcomes for women, their children, and also the society as a whole.

Whilst constructed as a transformative element of the project, one could also question whether or not this aspect of the reparatory measures reinforces the societal notion of women being obliged to take on the role of caretaker and wife, and whether it places additional burden on female survivors to be responsible for ensuring the education of children on top of their own well-being. On the other hand, the project does not impose any requirements that survivors use IRM money specifically for education for themselves or their children. Therefore, one could also argue that it does not reinforce such gender roles, rather it exists uncommittedly within the rigid gender hierarchy of the local context without breaking these structures down.

In addition to the navigation of gender roles and hierarchies, the informants detailed their constructions of justice and transformation for survivors of CRSV who are able to access the IRM project, as well as the communities impacted by the conflict. The following section outlines how the project's reparatory measures

contribute to perceived justice in light of the aforementioned structures of power and gender, as well as the forms of direct and structural violence which continue to affect survivors.

6.4. The Process(es) of Transformative Justice

As delineated in the theoretical framework, the phenomena of violence and peace must be seen as a continuum, rather than two binary states. Thus, the process of *transformative justice* is explained to be understood as an agent-centric process in which the continuum of violence and peace is impacted in a way which results in the long-term attenuation of direct, structural, and cultural violence. It is imperative to understand how the IRM project is perceived as contributing to justice, and how this *transformative* process of justice is constructed. In the following section, the concept of reparations, particularly livelihood support and education, understandings and knowledge of (in)justice and rights, and constructions of agency and transformation are examined in greater detail.

6.4.1. (In)justice

Having outlined structures and gendered hierarchies of power, one must turn to understand the conceptualization of justice as well as the construction of injustices. When asked about injustices in the current context, informants primarily spoke about aspects unrelated to the direct violence of the conflict and CRSV experienced by survivors. What they did address, however, was the formerly described gatekeeping at the community level as well as perceived structural failures of duty-bearers. As a result of such injustices, many enumerators of the project outlined significant challenges in building trust to carry out key informant interviews with survivors as part of their work, as *"from the survivors point, it [the project] feel like promises."* (Interview 11).

Despite survivors' dependency relationship with communities, which is exacerbated by the "hijacking" of benefits by community leaders, stigma, and displacement, when talking about the violence of injustice, the involvement (or lack thereof) of the state as the principal duty-bearer was frequently cited.

> *"Because, they feel the government have not given them justice. […] actually as we speak right now, they [the government] are even thinking of shutting down the camp, not minding where those IDPs, where those survivors will go."* (Interview 3)

> *"some of them, with their little knowledge in some of the services, they will tell you, yes, I, they think the government is supposed to offer them these [reparatory] services."* (Interview 5)

> *"the survivors too, they see it [justice] as a right, but due to the negligence of the government, they now find it too difficult to hack into."* (Interview 8)

To understand how the construction of justice in relation to these perceived forms of injustice, the IRM project head outlined that the aim of the Nigerian project, similar to other GSF projects elsewhere, is designed to provide justice in the interim period whilst simultaneously building government ownership:

> *"We are not a humanitarian organization. We say this at the beginning of the project and we work based on this […] We're not set up or wired to remain in the country forever […] so the whole agenda is to be able to do the project, show to the government that it is possible, and then help the government to take over this reparations. It doesn't have to be the way we have done it, but also just take up their duty as the duty bearers."* (Interview 12).

6.4.2. The Role of Reparations

The central aspect of the GSF's project in Nigeria, as previously stated, are the so-defined *interim reparatory measures.* It is important to note once again the role of language in this case, as GSF is clear about one distinction. Whilst reparations themself are solely the responsibility of a duty bearer (in this case the Nigerian State) to provide, interim reparatory measures, on the other hand, are a form of temporary reparations which are provided provisionally until duty bearer ownership can be sufficiently built. However, generally project staff did not distinguish between reparations or reparatory measures. Hence, the construction of reparations as they are understood in relation to justice must be identified.

Unequivocally, reparations purposely intended for survivors of CRSV in the Northeast were perceived as unique and beneficial in comparison to previous aid delivered in the region which often target basic humanitarian needs related to the conflict. When questioned about the wishes of survivors, informants outlined three core realms of focus in which survivors had requested their reparatory value be applied: economic and livelihoods support, shelter (where applicable), and education as a reparation. Regarding their construction, informants often equated reparations with forms of support needed by the survivors to achieve the aforementioned return to normalcy in society. In areas where displacement had severely impacted housing and livelihoods, relevant individual and collective reparations had been requested. Respectively, areas where kidnapping and other conflict-related impacts resulted in loss of schooling, education as a reparation was requested. These reparation requests were highly overlapping, but the livelihoods support and education stood out as the most prominently discussed and requested forms of reparation, according to the informants.

Interestingly, however, is the fact that the term "justice" itself was often referred to as a separate, but equally important piece of the overall picture of providing reparatory support for survivors. Justice, as often constructed, was seen as the process(es) of bringing perpetrators to some form of punishment through legal avenues, official guarantees of non-replication, and other legalistic interpretations of what is often referred

to in the Northeast as bringing the perpetrators "to book." One informant critically questioned the ability of the project to truly deliver comprehensive justice through the IRM project, if it was not possible to deliver on this legal aspect of justice:

> *"what if the survivor actually wants access to [legal] justice? Who provides this, and justice to whom? Because the perpetrators of these violence. We do not see them. They are mostly the non-state armed groups, right? […] We do not have any contact with them [...] We don't know them. So what if these survivors will want access to justice? How do we go about that? How do we even proceed in getting access to justice? […] Yes, it's good to use the survivors centered approach, but we should tell ourselves the truth, that for reparations, when it comes to access to justice, we have limitations actually."* (Interview 11)

This thought-provoking critique of the project's approach to justice is important to be noted, as it is clear that, as stated, the project is limited in its ability to provide holistic justice for survivors of CRSV. Despite this construction of the mechanisms of legal justice, the overarching process of justice was constructed in a broader light, and this legal limitation was acknowledged. Where many informants praised the contributions of reparations in providing justice for survivors, they also were clear in constructing it as one cog in the metaphorical machinery of justice as a process. Intriguingly, this aligns with global theorizations of transitional and transformative justice, which call for comprehensive approaches which include reparations, but also other mechanisms of justice delivery. Beyond this, however, it is imperative to explore the role of agency and its characterization, especially as reparations are often described as the most agent-centric tool in the transformative justice repertoire.

6.4.3. Agency and Participation in the IRM Project

As discussed previously, the role of agency for subjects of violence is paramount to "justice as freedom," and understanding whether or not the process of justice is truly transforming the continuum of violence and peace. As this IRM project is steered by its survivor-centric approach, the respondents spoke about the role of agency and participation of survivors in the process of justice.

Unsurprisingly, the aforementioned power hierarchies often leave female survivors of CRSV relegated to the periphery of communities, at risk of continuous marginalization. The substantial participatory and decision-making power allocated to survivors in the IRM project was applauded by all of the interview informants. Not only was the project described as unique in the local context for its specific focus on survivors of CRSV, but also due to the amount of influence and ownership given to survivors in the process of designing the interim reparatory measures at the individual and collective levels.

Participation was described in multiple forms, but as previously mentioned, survivors have been particularly locked out of decision-making with regards to any forms of aid, and have also been ostracized from participating in the community economically as well as in schools due to stigma. The IRM project was seen as greatly contributing to survivors' ability to participate in all of the above:

> *"[reparations] will help them even in the society, the society too would benefit from it because the way these people will participate in their communities, in the society, will also help transform it."* (Interview 5)

> *"they gave example of saying that that individual reparation [will] give them advantage of taking charge of ownership of that [which] was given to them as an individual"* (Interview 4)

> "*with the steering committee in place, the survivors will not have to suffer that [lack of representation] because they are also part of the steering committee representing the Survivors Network in government seatings. And we have government. We have political bodies too, and chieftaincy titled people that are also part of this seating. So whatever is conveyed now, it's going to reach both the government and the survivors."* (Interview 2)

Likewise, the IRM project's focus on putting survivors in the driver's seat of the reparations and final survivor identification process through its steering committees was also perceived as a substantial contribution to the reduction of stigmatization of survivorship. By putting survivors on a level playing field and in the same rooms as stakeholders with significant social, governmental, religious, and economic power, survivors are not only able to be considered in a new light, but are also able to directly confront some of the structures of violence which continue to affect their lives. This can be seen as a transformative aspect of the IRM project.

When talking about survivors, despite being a largely heterogenous group made up of many ages, ethnic groups, regional differences, etc., many of the project staff reduced survivors to a generalized understanding of a default, homogenized group of women and young girls. Similar to the existing literature on gender and conflict, the case showed how easily the complexity of identity can become reduced to generalized or essentialized images of a victim of the conflict, and may even be reproduced by those working with affected populations. Nevertheless, one informant went into detail outlining the various identities and challenges faced by survivors who may not fit into this homogenized "default" group of able-bodied women and men who have been impacted by CRSV. She outlined the double-stigma burdening survivors of CRSV who are also persons with disabilities. When it comes to agency, she emphasized how the IRM project's inclusion of these non-default survivors in the steering committees would contribute to the reduction of stigma, especially for groups such as people with disability:

"this project would consider persons with a disability, therefore, it will help, it will go a long way to remove the discrimination or the stigmatization amongst [against] person with disability" (Interview 6)

6.4.4. Transformational Justice

Generally, transformation itself was not described explicitly. However, when talking about justice with informants, in a few cases some explicitly expressed their feeling that reparations would contribute to transformation(s) in northeastern Nigeria.

"the reparation[s] also will transform the society because these people [survivors] are part of the society. They constitute to what forms the society. (Interview 5)

When questioned about the GSF's so-called "transformative agenda," the project head also clarified that the vision of the GSF is to provide survivor-centric, bottom-up transformations which contribute over time to a broader transformation in society.

"When the transformative agenda of the project is finally delivered, survivors will be in a in a place within their communities, within their societies, or within their villages where they will be respected, where they would be able to stand on their own, have economic livelihoods that can support not just themselves but also their communities, their other extended families at large […] that with the transformative agenda of the project they would have attained a position in the society where they will no longer be disrespected in the form that they were before, or that they now have such positions in the community that they become integral to the running of the community itself." (Interview 12)

This focus on the heterogeneity and individual wishes and needs of each survivor is also strongly linked to the previously discussed push to provide survivors with greater ownership. In the approach of the IRM project, individual transformation is the ultimate goal. In the words of the project leader, this is also the central form of evaluation for whether the GSF project in Nigeria will contribute to transformation:

"there's one [survivor] who said she wanted to go back to school, to study mass communication, that's what she always wanted. And she doesn't want the insurgency to stop her from achieving her dream. So, for us, if we can get her to study mass communication, then we have won in a way. And she has won because that's what she wants. It's not even about the money for her, it's more about the fact that she doesn't want the insurgency to prevent her from achieving what she wanted to achieve before the insurgency started." (Interview 12)

Interestingly, education as a reparation was even described as a "victory" in the face of the direct and lasting structural impacts of the insurgency. This can arguably be seen as the kind of described disruption to the violence continuum which would constitute transformation, one which goes beyond the status quo of the mere return to normalcy discussed in preceding sections. By having the opportunity for themselves or their children to return to schools, survivors may be able to equip themselves with something which no insurgency or imbedded power structures would be able to take away from them, thus cutting at the underlying structural violence of restriction of access to education. Other informants also outlined many additional instances in which transformation was described, though not necessarily explicitly deemed as such. The primary subject of focus when describing transformative constructions of reparations was that of education as a reparation, both for the survivors themselves as well as their children. Where other forms of reparation such as livelihood support and shelter were much more frequently discussed in terms of the return to normalcy, educational reparations were often constructed as impactful in a longer term, not only for the individuals educated, but for the broader society:

> *"they feel that, somehow, if they are able to get education, they are going to be seen as heroes. They are going to have a voice. They are going to be heard. And they are also going to help others who are facing the same challenge[s]."* (Interview 2)

> *"If these people [survivors] are being educated as maybe a form of reparation like it will, it will help them even in the society, the society too would benefit from it, because the way these people will participate in their communities, in the society, will also help transform it."* (Interview 5)

> *"So education plays a vital role in reparation, and in ensuring that these children, that these people were able to do to achieve their dreams and what they have planned to be in the future."* (Interview 7)

As evident from the excerpts above, education was constructed often not only as a form of justice which goes beyond the restoration of survivors back to the situations they found themselves in before the conflict impacted their lives. Transformation was constructed as something with broader, future impacts which were seen as something beneficial for society, as well as for the perception of survivors in communities. Alongside the benefits of allowing survivors to achieve their individual dreams and beyond, it was explicitly mentioned multiple times by informants that education would provide survivors with a newfound power and agency with which they could participate more actively in host communities, with the perceived implication being that they would therefore contribute to the reduction of stigma around survivorship in the communities in which they participate. The characterization of this apparent ripple effect, though not described as such, could potentially be amplified by the projects' focus on survivor ownership. Having

greater resources with which to participate is significant in disrupting the continuum of violence which leaves many female survivors marginalized, but also having the mandate to take impactful decisions at the community level undermines the power structures which reinforce that marginalization.

Thus, when attempting to understand how reparations contribute to justice beyond their restorative purposes, one can therefore begin to see that transformation is constructed and understood as the process of providing greater agency, disrupting existing structural forms of power and violence at an individual level, and is a heterogenous process, rather than a comprehensive, homogenized, or universal image of large-scale transformation. While framed thusly by informants in the context of the case study, questions arise as to what extent transformation can be achieved more systemically when compared with the parallel theoretical perspectives of transformation as a large scale, systemic disruption of the observed hierarchies and power structures which reproduce violence, especially the gendered binaries which erase the complexities of conflict and survivorship. Moreover, in strongly gendered, patriarchal contexts such as northeastern Nigeria, one should also critically reflect on whether or not the bottom-up approach which focuses on individual transformations first can reproduce scalable transformation which is able to become implemented and embedded at the institutional level and within patriarchal hierarchies.

7. Conclusion

This case study demonstrates clearly how the various dimensions of violence cannot be divorced from their gendered nature. The constructions of justice, transformation, and reparations' perceived contribution to both of these is heavily shaped by the rigid sociocultural norms, gender hierarchy, and patriarchal power structures present in northeastern Nigeria. Both female and male survivors or CRSV face major challenges of stigma, displacement, and risk of further exploitation, however these challenges often manifest themselves in significantly different ways, due to the society's constructions of gender roles and identities. These systemic, structural forces underly and shape the violence which survivors continue to face. One particular challenge which also continues to stand out in this case, is the tricky question of survivorship itself, as the rigid gender roles, hegemonic identities, and female remonstrance of male survivors to be identified as survivors leaves essentially less than no space for males to identify as such, and thus partake in their own processes of justice. This is expanded upon in the call for further research.

The IRM project was constructed as something which will not just restore survivors to a state of normalcy, but would contribute to transformation which disrupts these embedded structures of stigma, gender hierarchies, and power relations in local communities. Firstly, education as a reparation was perceived as a future-oriented tool of empowerment that will provide survivors with a stronger academic and economic foundation with which to rebuild, recover, and provide care for their families. Secondly, GSF's survivor-centric approach of providing survivors with significant agency and decision-making power in the IRM project was constructed as a major shift in the loci of power, and was also seen as a tool to shed greater light on the heterogeneity of more marginalized survivor groups, such as those living with disability. Thirdly, the GSF's approach of transformation at the individual level as well as the collective, was constructed as an approach which focuses on starting with small transformation, which is desired to lead to a sort of ripple effect in the way survivors engage with and are perceived by their communities, whilst doing justice to their complex needs. Lastly, the aforementioned points together were seen as something which will play a significant role in reducing the stigmatization of survivorship, and transforming community perceptions of what that survivorship actually means and doesn't mean. While the majority of the project's constructed transformations were targeted at the individual, bottom-up level, the intention to build government ownership of their role as the duty-bearers in this case must be acknowledged. Questions still remain with regards as to whether this will be achieved, and to what extent it would result in transformational justice.

In summary, this research provides valuable insights into how the concept of reparations, and justice, are constructed in the local context. Reflecting on the existing literature, reparations were constructed as an important piece, but not the only mechanism needed to provide holistic justice to survivors of CRSV.

Through the language used and constructions of justice, it became clear that the process of transformative justice is not only gendered, but is an inherent act of development in the lens of "development as freedom."

7.1. Further Research

First and foremost, I believe that the case study and the insights from Confortini and Ní Aoláin highlight the value and necessity of putting gender at the center of analysis in future studies on transformative justice. I therefore suggest that further research be conducted on how justice is constructed at local levels, to go beyond the universalistic understandings prominent in TJ theory. Furthermore, I believe that participatory approaches in collaboration with survivors of CRSV could go a long way in providing new insights and potentially new understandings of justice and transformation at the individual and collective levels. Crucially, the understanding of male identity and the structural violence of oppressive, patriarchal gender roles and the way they manifest for male survivors of CRSV in post-conflict and transitioning contexts must be explored. While many males in the case, and in other contexts, meet all international criteria of being survivors of CRSV, the inability for males to identify themselves as survivors presents an essential dilemma for any projects aiming to deliver justice for all survivors. Thus, the extent to which new methodologies of survivor self-identification and justice distribution mechanisms can be created in such restrictive contexts must be thoroughly researched.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Interview Guide: Transformative Justice, Reparations, and Gender

General Interview Structure and potential follow up questions. Please note that the lines of questioning may vary slightly in terms of the type of informant interviewed and the direction of conversation.

- Introduction and informed consent
  - In this section, I introduce myself, the purpose of the study, and allow the participant to briefly introduce themselves. Informed consent is discussed and interview commences once (if) consent has been given.
- Theme one: Justice and Reparations
  - How is justice perceived by survivors in this context?
  - To what extent are survivors aware that they have a right to reparations?
  - What reparations are survivors asking for, and what is their motivation for them?
    - Is there a difference in the collective vs. individual reparations desired?
- Theme two: The role of education
  - How do you see the role of education in this project?
    - (If defined as important): Why is education so important in this context?
  - How does education relate to the conflict and survivors of CRSV?
- Theme three: The role of gender
  - (How) Do you see gender playing a role in this project?
  - Do you notice any differences between male and female survivors?
    - If so, what are they, and why?
    - Are there particular difficulties in identifying survivors?
  - How do you perceive the role of the steering committee in this project?
- Questions for additional exploration
  - What motivated you to join this project/How did you become involved in this project?
  - What particular challenges, if any, have you encountered so far in carrying out your work?

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Outline

Topics to consider:

"What is the purpose of collecting the information? Who is the information for? How will it be used? What will be asked in the interview? How will responses be handled, including confidentiality? What risks and/or benefits are involved for the person being interviewed" (Patton, 2015).

***"'The term informed consent implies that subjects know and understand the risks and benefits of participation in the research. They must also understand their participation is completely voluntary'"* (Flynn and Goldsmith 2013: 10)" cited by: (Flick, 2022, p. 5).**

Informed Consent Outline :

Dear Participant,

Before we begin, I would like to kindly give you a bit of information about our discussion. Thank you for being so kind as to generously allow me to speak with you for a while regarding my research for my Master's Thesis. My name is Grayden Prince, I am studying a Master's at Lund University on the topic of International Development. For my research, I am exploring the role of GSF's project in NE Nigeria and the role of Interim Reparatory Measures and how this relates to transformative justice for survivors of CRSV in the Boko Haram conflict.

The purpose of this study is to bring broader light to the challenges faced by survivors of conflict related sexual violence, highlight the work of GSF, and also gain more insight on the concept of reparations and justice with a social lens. The insights you share with me today will be used to frame my research and understand these topics in the case of Nigeria.

I will be asking you primarily about a few things, namely, your experience and insights in the project, about justice and reparations in your work, about education and its role in this project, about gender, and about your perspectives and the perspectives of the survivors engaging with this project.

Where possible, I would also like to use this research to support you, your work, and survivors in the Northeast of Nigeria. If you have any suggestions as to how I can do this I would be extremely glad to hear your ideas.

Thank you for your understanding. Regarding our discussion today, I would like to kindly ask whether you consent to participating in this research and if I may record our conversation? Please note that anything you share is completely confidential and will used solely for my research. Moreover, you are always able to stop this interview at any time, and are not obliged to answer questions should you not feel comfortable to do so. You may also retract this consent at any time. I greatly appreciate you taking your time to share your knowledge with me today and I hope to do justice to this knowledge.