
'I Fall Down, I Get Up': Stories of Survival and
Resistance Following Civil War in Sierra Leone

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ABSTRACT

The academic study of how people respond to adverse life experiences has been dominated by Western conceptualisations of distress, resilience and growth. The current literature base regarding responses to adversity has been criticised for focusing on one response trajectory (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; PTSD). This criticism stems from the privileging of Western understandings of the self and for negating to consider sufficiently the role of context (the available social, cultural and political discourses). The significance of this void in the literature is that it has led to the development of models and theories which could be considered culturally insensitive, if applied outside of the context from which they have derived.

This research addresses the highlighted gap in the literature by exploring how the context of Sierra Leone influences how people respond to the experience of Civil War and continuing adversity. Nine in-depth interviews were carried out within two 'mental health' organisations in Sierra Leone. The participants were nine individuals and one group, consisting of both 'patients' and staff members. The qualitative methodology of Narrative Analysis was used to analyse both the stories people told and the stories which may have remained unexpressed. A focus was placed during analysis on the role of *context* and the *dialogic process*.

The main findings of the research indicated that the cultural resources within Sierra Leone both influenced and constrained the narratives which individuals were able to tell. 'Stories of Survival' seemed to be told through two dominant social narratives of '*Bear it, and Forget*' and '*Because of Almighty God, we Forgive*'. 'Stories of Resistance' however, demonstrate what was implied but often left unsaid, this is characterised by two main unexpressed stories; '*We Cannot Forget*' and '*Why God?*'. Furthermore, findings suggest that it is the relationship *between* the dominant social narratives and individual meaning-making which influences the trajectory of stories told.

The implications of this research request a commitment to valuing the role of social context in conceptualisations of distress, resilience and growth following adversity. Finally, the need to establish ways of offering support to individuals and communities,

which fully considers the role of social context, is emphasised. This paper concludes by exploring the relevance of social content for the planning of services, training programmes and continuing clinical practice.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

'When the music changes, so does the dance' African proverb

The African proverb, *'When the music changes, so does the dance'*, invites us to remember how social context and personal response are interconnected. This concept suggests that one only knows how to dance, how to respond, as a result of the music that surrounds us; the discourses which are imbedded within our context.

This research project focuses on how context influences the ways in which people are able to respond to adversity; on the stories which are available to tell. For the purpose of this research project 'context' will be understood to mean the influence of historical, political, cultural and social discourses upon individuals and communities.

The following discussion will critically consider the current literature available on how people respond to adversity and reflect upon how the sociohistorical context of Clinical Psychology has shaped current knowledge. Through this discussion the suggested dominant narrative of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; Brewin, 2003) and the recently researched phenomenon of Post Traumatic Growth (PTG; Joseph & Linley, 2008) will be deconstructed.

This introduction will conclude that there is a deficit in the literature regarding how context influences how people are able to respond to adversity. Consequently the rationale for research into this area will be highlighted and the clinical relevance of this work will be outlined.

1.1.1. Literature Search Strategy

The literature search followed a systematic approach designed to research the terms pertinent to the project over a 24 month period. I inputted key terms relevant to the focus of the research project such as trauma, adversity, Post Traumatic Growth, Growth Following Adversity, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, religion, spirituality and trauma, and Sierra Leone in the relevant databases. Databases included Google

Scholar, Psycinfo, PsyArticles, PubMed, Web of Science and Medline. Relevant abstracts and references were listed and initially scanned for relevance. Highly relevant references were then downloaded and read. Any important references from the collected articles were also followed up. With regard to searching for literature relevant to the context of Sierra Leone, the website <http://www.sierra-leone.org> was also utilised as it provides a biography of important texts written about the country.

1.1.2. Positioning the Writer

Throughout this report I have chosen to write in the first person. The style of writing has been adopted in order to make it clear that I do not intend to convey objectivity or 'truth' through my discussions. Rather I wish to acknowledge that the work is a co-construction between myself and the people who told their stories to me. Secondly, by using 'I' to describe my personal journey with the research, my reactions and experience, I aim to enable the reader to connect with the discussion at both an academic and experiential level.

1.1.3. Concepts and Language

'Trauma' is a term which is often employed in Western cultures to define and describe the distressing experiences that people encounter throughout life and their subsequent effects. The word 'trauma' is often used to describe both the event (e.g. war) and the effects or response (e.g. stress). The American Psychological Association (2009) states that trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV-TR; 2000) describes trauma experiences as:

'The person has experienced, witnessed, or been confronted with an event or events that involve actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of oneself or others. The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.'

Young (1995) locates the origins of the trauma discourse in the late 19th Century when the word trauma, previously understood as bodily damage, was extended to cover the psychogenic sequelae of distressing experiences. Weathers and Keane (2007) state

that the usefulness of the idea as outlined in the DSM-IV-TR (2000), that an event is only considered 'traumatic' if it is life threatening, should be questioned. The experience of trauma around the world is diverse, and what may be considered traumatic to one person in one culture (for example the loss of a house) may be considered a daily occurrence to another person in another culture. As the word 'trauma' has strong associations with the DSM-IV-TR (2000) criteria, for the purposes of this research study, the term *adversity* has been chosen to describe any experience which a person would consider to be significantly distressing. This definition has been chosen in order to value both individual and societal differences in the construction of what is considered traumatic or adverse.

Another important concept used throughout this work is that of the '*response*' to adversity. This term is used to conceptualise how people cope and manage following adversity. The word '*response*' has been chosen over other concepts, for example '*effects*', in order to honour the idea that regardless of how people experience their lives after adversity – they will always *respond* in some way (Yuen, 2009). As White (2006) describes, people always take steps in endeavouring to prevent or modify the trauma they are subject to or the effects it has on their lives. I feel that the concept of '*response*' values the different ways people manage. It also avoids potential judgements about what is a "right" or a "wrong" reaction following adversity.

1.2. How Do People Respond to Adversity?

People respond to adversity in different ways. There is considerable interest from both clinicians and researchers about what mediates these different response trajectories. A continuum of experience can be observed, ranging from what may be considered 'normal' struggling, through to 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder', or 'Post Traumatic Growth'.

1.2.1. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Currently the most publicly well-known distress response to adversity in Western society is PTSD (Brewin, 2003). PTSD was first given full recognition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual — Version Three (DSM-III; 1980) of the American Psychiatric

Association in 1980 (APA, 1980). According to the DSM-III a diagnosis of PTSD is made if a person exhibits a certain combination of symptoms; if a person tells a certain story about their responses. These responses (called symptoms) fall into three groups:

1) Symptoms of intrusion; such as recurrent thoughts about the trauma, nightmares, flashbacks and exaggerated reactions upon exposure to reminders of the trauma;

2) Symptoms of constriction and avoidance, such as efforts to avoid thoughts about the trauma, efforts to avoid places or activities which remind of the trauma and evidence of more general withdrawal from the world;

3) Symptoms of increased arousal, such as irritability, insomnia, poor concentration and hypervigilance (APA, 1980).

As with many psychiatric constructs there are both 'Saviours' and 'Sceptics' of the PTSD phenomenon (Brewin, 2003). 'Saviours' are those people who view the diagnosis as helpful and 'true' whereas the 'Sceptics' are those who view PTSD reactions as a normal response that dissipates over time. The main sceptical arguments are, firstly, that the concept of PTSD is socially and politically constructed (Bracken, 1998; Summerfield, 2001). The second argument is that PTSD is a product of the individualist and 'cognitive' culture in Western society. In which the influences of intrapsychic processes are privileged over and above the social context.

1.2.2. Current Knowledge Base: PTSD

From the 'Saviour' position, there is a wide range of research which supports the claim that PTSD is an identifiable phenomenon. Some also suggest that the construct of PTSD is universal (Jobson & O'Kearney, 2009) and consistent across the few cultures which have been studied systematically (Brewin, 2003). However, Bracken *et al* (1995) highlight the fact that whilst symptoms and signs may be identified in different settings there is no guarantee that they mean the same thing. Despite criticism, the current Western model of PTSD prevails in the academic literature as reflecting one kind of universal trauma response (Brewin, 2003). Consequently, various theories and models have been suggested to explain this phenomenon. Janoff-Bulman (1992) proposed a model which stated that adversity/trauma shatters assumptions, for example '*of the world as a safe place*', which underpin the development and

maintenance of PTSD. If the assumption '*the world as a safe space*' is understood as a dominant Western belief, then an experience which threatens this understanding would place a person as an outsider to this cultural narrative.

'The confrontation with real or potential injury or death breaks the barrier of complacency and resistance in our assumptive worlds, and a profound psychological crisis is induced' (Janoff-Bulman, 1992, p. 61)

However, a belief in the '*world as safe*' may not be a universal and dominant belief in other countries where life threatening incidents happen as part of daily life.

Brewin and Holmes (2003) suggest that there are three current theories of PTSD: *Emotional Processing Theory* (Foa & Rithbaum, 1998), *Dual Representation Theory* (Brewin, Dalgesish & Joseph, 1996) and *The Cognitive Theory of PTSD* (Ehlers & Clark, 2000).

Foa and Rithbaum's (1998) Emotional Processing Theory proposes that individuals with more rigid pre-trauma views would be more vulnerable to PTSD: for example, rigid views about the self as being extremely competent and rigid views about the world as being extremely safe. Building on these ideas, Ehlers and Clark (2000) propose that PTSD sufferers develop excessively negative appraisals about external threat, viewing the world as a dangerous place, and viewing themselves as incapable. They suggest that this leads to the misinterpretation of situations, recall-biases and avoidance behaviours. In this theory it is suggested that individuals process traumatic information in a way that produces a sense of current and continued threat. In this model it is suggested that 'negative appraisals' maintain the trauma memory and experience of PTSD (Brewin & Holmes, 2003). Furthermore, Brewin *et al* (1996) highlighted the important factor of different types of memory processing, these being verbally accessible memories (VAMs) and situationally accessible memories (SAMs). In this framework they argue that successful emotional processing is largely a conscious process that depends on exposure to SAMs in order to aid cognitive readjustment.

1.2.3. A Social Critique

The theories briefly outlined are cited as the most important recent theoretical models of PTSD (Brewin & Holmes, 2003). As highlighted previously, the criticism of these models is that they all are based in a 'cognitivist' philosophy. This is the belief in the existence of underlying structures involved in human thought which are based on the biological organisation of the brain. Furthermore, these theories are based on the assumption of an independent understanding of the self. However, as Holdstock (2000) highlights,

'Many non-western cultures have thus far been documented as portraying the self as constituted by social context rather than by an individuated psychological core' (p. 103)

The cognitive orientation towards 'the self' and its assumptions about the meaning of reality, are Western constructs (Bracken, 1998). Therefore, as Brewin (2003) tentatively suggests, the concept of PTSD may be useful in Western situations but perhaps not elsewhere. Bracken (1998) critically evaluates the current theories of PTSD and cites how different philosophers (for example, Wittgenstein and Heidegger) have questioned the idea that meaning is something generated 'cognitively' within individual minds. Instead, it is suggested that meaning is actually located in a public and social realm of language. This shifts attention away from the contents of individual minds and back to the social context. As Brewin (2003) points out, trauma does not only affect a person's beliefs, it also affects their socially constructed identity. Identity is contrasted against individual beliefs in that identity involves locating a person within his or her social world, not simply within their own mind.

Some more socially orientated theories have been put forward, for example the effect of negative aspects of support such as indifference or criticism (Brewin & Holmes, 2003), and narrative approaches to working with people experiencing the impact of multiple traumas (White, 2006). Yet the currently cited dominant theories about PTSD have side-lined the social dimension of suffering. Consequently, a more in depth consideration of the role of context in how people respond to adversity is needed. As Brewin (2003) summarises:

'Why negative thoughts and emotions persist is not fully clear, but there are numerous important clues that what is happening is not just at the level of thoughts and emotions although those are often the most accessible, but involves wider notions of identity and a person's sense of belonging in a social world' (p. 85)

1.2.4. Alternative Responses

This critical review is not, as Bracken (1998) states, an attempt to deny the suffering that PTSD attempts to define. Rather it proposes that the construct of PTSD is only one particular way of understanding such experiences. Bracken (1998) simply questions the ethics of using this construct to make sense of experiences *without* critical reflection. Summerfield (2001) suggests that the discourse of 'the medicalised victim' in PTSD has become the most available story within Western society, meaning that other trajectories or responses may be more difficult to access. In support of this view the Positive Psychology Movement (Joseph & Linley, 2008) within Clinical Psychology has criticised the profession's focus on pathology. This view advocates that placing an emphasis on pathologising people's experiences negates the opportunity to learn from individuals and groups who seem to be more resilient to life's challenges (Joseph & Linley, 2008).

The dominance of the concept of PTSD can be understood as historically situated within the context of societal recovery from war. Bracken (1998) highlights that the dominance of the PTSD model has cut off our view of other response trajectories. Consequently there is a danger that the global mental health movement may only draw from a limited conceptualisation of the effects of trauma. Recently the discipline of Clinical Psychology has been widening its focus to examine the different possible trajectories following adversity. Morland, Bultler and Leskin (2008) identify positive trajectories such as when a person either maintains, returns to, or exceeds their pre-trauma levels of functioning. Whereas, they view negative trajectories as presentations that involve disturbance, decline and permanent disability. 'The Feisty Survivor' is one positive trajectory which Summerfield (2001) believes has become subjugated in today's Western 'illness focused' society. Resilience has been defined as the ability to maintain a relatively stable, healthy level of psychological functioning in

the face of highly adverse events (Bonanno, 2004). Building on this idea, Lepore and Revenson (2006) highlighted different aspects of resilience by delineating the ideas of recovery, resistance and reconfiguration. In this conception, *Recovery* refers to a response when a person may be initially challenged by a stressor but is ultimately able to return to their original state following adversity. *Resistance* refers to a response when a stressor does not appreciably affect a person. Alternatively, their concept of *Reconfiguration* refers to a response when a person makes a permanent adaptation, or alteration as a consequence of adversity. In this framework it is the construct of *Reconfiguration* which seems to be aligned most closely with what has been most commonly referred to as Post Traumatic Growth (PTG; Joseph & Linley, 2008). The difference between 'resilience' and 'growth' has been described as the idea that 'growth' represents a response that goes *beyond* a person's previous level of functioning (Joseph, 2008).

1.2.5. *Post Traumatic Growth*

The phenomenon of Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) has acquired numerous terms as the literature has developed, including: growth following adversity, perceived benefits, positive aspects, transformation of trauma, construing benefits, stress-related growth and flourishing (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004a). Terms have been used interchangeably and there is not a single agreed collective term for this field of study (Linley & Joseph, 2004); however, it appears from the literature that Post Traumatic Growth is the most widely used. For the purpose of this research the term 'growth' is conceptualised as any movement towards what a person or community conceptualises as consistent with their preferred reality.

The idea that growth can follow suffering is an old concept and evident in many world religions including Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism (Splevins *et al* 2010). Tedeschi, Park and Calhoun (1998) conceptualised Growth Following Adversity as a significant beneficial change in cognitive and emotional life, which has behavioural implications. Further, they state that Growth Following Adversity involves fundamental changes or insights about living and is not merely another coping mechanism. Linley & Joseph (2004) conceptualise growth as not simply the absence

of post-traumatic stress, but rather an independent dimension of experience. Although the study of Growth Following Adversity has largely developed separately from the study of PTSD, a number of researchers have highlighted that these two concepts are interconnected and can be understood within an integrative psychosocial framework (Joseph & Linley, 2008; Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2004a).

1.2.6. Current Knowledge Base: Post Traumatic Growth

Studies have reported growth following a range of adverse events, for example, bereavement, accidents and disasters, cancer, HIV and AIDS, sexual abuse, rape, illness and war and conflict (Linley & Joseph, 2004). However, Spelvin *et al* (2010) highlight that, although studies have been carried out in a number of different countries, this multicultural evidence is based largely on quantitative data. It is also collected almost exclusively from one assessment tool: the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). Spelvin, Cohen, Bowley and Joseph (2010) make the argument that all the current measurement scales that aim to capture the phenomenon of Post Traumatic Growth, are based on a Western, individualistic understanding. For example, items measuring changes in personal strength (e.g. changes in a feeling of self-reliance) incorporate an implicit assumption of the self as a distinct and separate entity. This may be strikingly different to belief systems held within collectivist cultures (Spelvin *et al*, 2010). Three broad categories of growth are reflected in the currently available measurement tools: changes within relationships, view of self, and life philosophy (Joseph & Linley, 2006). However, Pals and McAdams (2004) highlight that people might experience growth in an area which does not fit into these pre-defined categories. One of the few qualitative studies completed within this area used participants of Australian nationality and results showed differences in the construction of growth from the commonly used PTGI. A more expansive compassion dimension and the absence of a spirituality/religiosity dimension was reported in this study (Shakespeare-Finch & Copping, 2007). Interestingly, Tedeschi & Calhoun (2004b) comment that they have not seen research which indicates that other types of growth are reported other than those represented on the PTGI; however, lack of evidence cannot in itself provide evidence for validity.

As Bracken (1995) identifies, while procedural norms based on Western epistemological and reductionist approaches toward science may be appropriate and meaningful for the populations within which they were developed, they may lead to culturally insensitive practices when applied to other cultures and communities. Such methodological issues highlight the need to consider how information is constructed. As Mishler (1991) demonstrates, survey questionnaires (such as the PTGI) can only measure what is being asked rather than take account of idiosyncratic narratives of the person being interviewed.

1.2.7. Current Theories of Post Traumatic Growth

Splevins *et al* (2010) state that the two most prominent theories explaining the phenomenon described as Post Traumatic Growth are the *Functional Descriptive Model* (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2004a) and the *Organismic Valuing Process Theory of Growth* (OVP, Joseph & Linley, 2006). Like the current measurement tools, both of these models have been conceptualised and developed within Western culture. Both of these theories postulate that adversity can challenge an individual's assumptive world. This creates dissonance between pre- and post-trauma worldviews which cause significant psychological distress (Splevins *et al*, 2010). This is the same conceptualisation that underlies the current models of PTSD. These theories suggest that the process which leads to 'growth' lies in an individual's ability to integrate new information into their existing belief systems. However, these conceptualisations about how people respond to adversity fail to consider how a person's *cultural context* shapes their assumptive world and, therefore, how this *cultural context* mediates the process and possibility of integration (Splevins *et al*, 2010).

In order to understand the dominance of the individualistic model discussed it may be useful to consider the sociohistorical context of Clinical Psychology.

1.3. Clinical Psychology in Context

Clinical Psychology began to emerge as a distinct discipline after the Second World War. The development of Clinical Psychology as a profession also coincided with, and

was shaped by, the National Health Service (NHS; Pilgrim, 2010). Surrounded by a medical context, the task of psychologists was to use science to understand why people 'malfunctioned' and return them to 'normal'. Fundamental assumptions about the importance of reason, finding a path to true knowledge and certainty through science has dominated Western cultures since the time of the European Enlightenment and Clinical Psychology is a product of this culture (Bracken, 1998).

Empiricism has historically been the most accepted epistemological stance within Clinical Psychology, highlighted by the adoption of the scientist practitioner model by the profession in 1949 (Albee, 2000). However, Albee (2000) criticised the scientist practitioner model's heavy reliance on the medical-model to the exclusion of other more socially rooted conceptions. The development of postmodern ideas in the early twentieth century started to question the modernist and empirical approaches to knowing, querying the view that knowledge is only valid if it can be observed and evaluated. Postmodernism advocated a diversity of views, known as epistemological pluralism, and multiple ways of knowing (Burr, 2003). Postmodernism, therefore, rejects the idea that there can be one truth which is discoverable through scientific understanding.

1.3.1. Clinical Psychology in the NHS

Despite the postmodern movement, the dominant discourses existing within the current NHS and mainstream Clinical Psychology remain informed by the assumptions underpinning empiricism. Perhaps, as Afuape (2011) suggests, in a free market economic society, it may be necessary to make judgements about what is the 'right' way of understanding a problem and therefore the most cost effective model of therapy. This is the cultural context that saw the emergence of and focus on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Due to the social and historical context discussed, it seems that Clinical Psychology often emphasises the individual experience over and above the social context. It should be noted that there are theoretical approaches that do place an emphasis on social context when understanding the impact of trauma, for example community

psychology (Walker, 2012) narrative approaches (White, 2006) and systemic practices (Woodcock, 2000). However, these approaches remain oppressed by political agendas which privilege individualism (Lacerda, 2009).

Whilst PTSD may have been conceptualised within the Western context of pathology, secular reason and individual goals, other cultural contexts place value on faith and collective sharing. Clearly all social contexts will draw from unique cultural resources to make sense of adversity. *They will have different music from which the dance unfolds.* Consequently, PTSD or Post Traumatic Growth may not be applicable outside the contexts in which they are conceived. As Jackson (2004a) states,

"...We live our lives based on selected fictions. Our view of reality is conditioned by our position in space and time not by our personalities as we like to think. Thus every interpretation of reality is based upon a unique position. Two paces east or west and the whole picture is changed..." (p. 193)

1.4. Unravelling the Importance of Context

Martin-Baro (1996) reflects,

'...There is no person without family, no learning without culture, no madness without social order; and therefore neither can there be an I without a We, a knowing without a symbolic system, a disorder that does not have reference to moral and social norms...' (Afuape, 2011; p. 41)

Various approaches to the definition of context and culture have been attempted and widely debated; Kazarian and Evans (1998) state that there is no universal definition of culture. However, as Holdstock (2000) states it is certain that each person is embedded within a variety of sociocultural contexts or cultures (e.g. country or region of origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, family, birth cohort, profession). Each of these cultural contexts makes some claim on the person and are associated with a set of ideas and practices (i.e. a cultural framework or schema) (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). Furthermore, as Holdstock (2000) reflects, the concept of culture is a dynamic rather than a static entity. Geertz (1973) uses a metaphorical concept of the relationship between individuals and culture,

'Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning' (Geertz, 1973; p. 89)

If a person's 'web of significance' contains their beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and values, the processes they go through, while trying to make sense of adverse events, will be entirely dependent on their cultural context. For example, although their reach and impact have varied over centuries, religion and spirituality continue to be a significant force across most cultures in the world (Smith, 2004). Belief in a religion and/or spirituality, whether explicitly present or absent, will impact on a person's fundamental assumptions about life. The dominant models of Post Traumatic Growth and PTSD claim that trauma or adversity shatters an individual's assumptions about the world, which leads to the restructuring of the person's world view (Tedesci & Calhoun, 2004). However, as McMillen (2004) points out, people's fundamental assumptions, their ability to modify these assumptions, and the type of social support they receive are all factors that may be affected by culture. For example, Yang (2003) has noted that collectivist cultures preferred qualities like altruism, kindness and conscientiousness, may be achieved via self criticism, self correction and self examination. It is likely that this process would be markedly different in individualist cultures.

Ultimately, different cultures may not only have different conceptualisation of what constitutes the 'self' (a continuum from independence to interdependence) but may also have different discourses about what is 'normal' and acceptable ways to 'cope'.

1.4.1. Context and Coping

Underpinning constructs such as 'psychology', 'mental health' and 'PTSD' are cultural beliefs about how much or what kind of adversity a person can face and still be 'normal' (Summerfield, 2001). Cultural beliefs about what is 'normal' will include ideas about acceptable behaviour and beliefs about what to expect from life. What may be considered acceptable at a certain point in time within a culture may later be identified as a 'problem'. Currently in the UK, withdrawal and avoidance is thought to

be one of the key indicators of PTSD. Yet British values have traditionally reflected notions of stoicism and understatement; famous British quotes reflect this tendency for example, *'stiff upper lip'* and *'keep calm and carry on'*. Summerfield, (2001) also suggests that currently there seems to be more social utility attached to expressions of 'victimhood' than to 'survivorhood'. Having a diagnosis of PTSD in the UK can bring financial benefits, whereas in African countries any indication of a 'mental health problem' is most commonly understood as a problem with the devil; an idea which often brings stigma, shame and rejection from society (Conteh, 2011).

Given the current context of multi-cultural communities and globalisation in the UK, Clinical Psychology must critically consider the underlying assumptions which inform the dominant psychological models from which we draw (Bracken, 1998). We must consider the context of narratives.

1.4.2. Context and Narrative

As Murray (2003) states, narratives are not just ways of seeing the world but we actively construct the world through narratives; we live through the stories told by others and by ourselves. In other words, we create our culture through the stories we tell and our culture creates us through the stories we hear. The relationship is interdependent. In this view, if people experience 'negative appraisals' as a result of trauma it is because society has named certain experience as such, rather than 'negative appraisals' being an independent truth.

Ricoeur (1984) argues that since we live in a temporal world, we need to create narratives to bring order and meaning to the constantly changing flux of our lives. When faced with adversity, we draw upon more established social narratives to explain an event or to complete a particular story (Murray, 2003). Considering these perspectives, although it may not always be a conscious process, it seems clear that the way we make sense of experiences of adversity cannot be separated from the available narratives which are held within our culture. Howard (1991) summarises this point by stating that the cultural tales and mythic stories of societies, both ancient and modern, provide a trove of narrative resources that members of cultures draw on to

find meaning and direction in times of adversity. Issues of context in terms of social, political and cultural reality should be seen as central to the experience of and response to adversity (Bracken, 1998).

1.5. Addressing the Contextual Gap: Rationale for the Current Study

The search for universal or 'etic' psychological experiences (such as PTSD or Post Traumatic Growth) has been criticised on ideological grounds as a form of cultural imperialism (Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992). In order to further inform the academic understanding of the psychological impact of adversity, there is a call within the literature to address the absence of understanding regarding the influence of context. According to Smedslund (1984) culture constitutes the 'invisible obvious' in psychology. Furthermore, Voestermans (1992) described the failure to consider the extent to which mental processes may be affected by culture as the Achilles' Heel of much of psychological research.

In relation to the construct of Post Traumatic Growth, Splevins *et al* (2010) state that the first step to ensuring that a meaningful construct is being explored is to adopt a bottom up approach. In this approach researchers would be open to fully exploring conceptions as understood by diverse cultures, rather than pre-determined by the conceptual boundaries of their current worldview. This argument could equally have been made about the concept of PTSD. Moreover, the qualitative method of narrative analysis has been highlighted by a number of researchers as the next step in developing culturally sensitive understandings of people's responses to adversity (Pals & McAdams, 2004).

The rationale for this study is based on relativism, which states that the differences between cultures and the impact of context, should be acknowledged, understood and integrated into theory and practice.

1.6. Aim of the Research Study

The aim of this research study was to explore how social context influences personal response following adversity.

1.6.1. An Explorative Approach

Research into the influence of social context on personal responses following adversity could have been carried out in any setting. However the context of Sierra Leone in West Africa was chosen. Before giving a brief introduction to the context of Sierra Leone the main factors for choosing this country shall be outlined.

The majority of the research which informs dominant theories and clinical practice has been carried out within Western populations. Therefore I felt it was important to bring other non-Western discourses into the discussion and literature. Gaining a range of contextual experiences within the literature is particularly important when considering both the global mental health movement and the diversity of the populations Clinical Psychologists aim to work with in the UK. To elaborate upon this point, most of the current literature on response following adversity has been carried out in settings which have an individualistic conceptualisation of the self. Considering the gap in the literature which has been highlighted, I considered it valuable to conduct this research within a context that was likely to hold alternative conceptions of the self. Initial research indicated that Sierra Leone was a context which historically holds a more collectivist understanding of the self. This was an important factor in my decision to conduct the research in Sierra Leone. Secondly, preliminary research also suggested that the culture in Sierra Leone involved a high degree of religiosity. As this project intended to focus on the influence of context upon individual response I felt that conducting the research in a country where a high value was placed on religion could provide an insightful addition to the more secular trauma literature. Thirdly, the research question focuses on how social context influences personal response. As the Civil War in Sierra Leone happened 10 years previous to the data collection I believed that it would be possible to elicit first hand narratives of how people has coped and managed overtime. This would be in comparison to choosing a country where the 'trauma' had happened more recently and therefore a story 'overtime' may not exist. The final factor which made Sierra Leone the best place to conduct the research was that one of my supervisors had contacts in Sierra Leone, which meant that I would have links for recruitment and also personal support whilst I was in the country.

1.6.2. Introducing Sierra Leone

The context of Sierra Leone will be described briefly here in order to prepare the reader for the following sections. However, more in-depth discussion can be found in Section 3.2. As stated, Sierra Leone experienced a brutal eleven-year Civil War between the years of 1991 and 2002, which left it one of the poorest countries in the world. At the time this research study was carried out the war had been officially over for 10 years. Within Sierra Leone there are seventeen ethnic groups and three major religions: the Sierra Leone Indigenous Religion (SLIR), Christianity and Islam (Conteh, 2011). The religiosity in Sierra Leone is evident everywhere and it is integral to the way of life of communities and individuals. In regard to social relationships, Conteh (2011) states that the African is a communal being, and that the extended family system is one of the aspects of African culture that has remained largely unaltered by the impact of Westernisation.

This brief description about Sierra Leone highlights some of the factors which stand out regarding how the social context may affect personal response following adversity.

1.6.3. Research Questions

Having considered the available literature, and the research context, the main question for the project was as follows:

How has the context of Sierra Leone influenced how people have responded over time to their experiences of Civil War?

In order to answer this question, the following more specific research questions were considered:

- What are the common, or opposing, thematic, structural and performance elements of the accounts?
- What are the main response storylines within people's accounts?
- What response trajectories can be identified within and between the accounts?
- How have both the narrative context and dialogic processes influenced the stories people told

METHODOLOGY

2.1. Epistemological Position

*What is knowledge? How is it acquired?
And to what extent is it possible to know?*

The following discussion will outline my epistemological position on these questions. It will orientate the reader to why certain methodological approaches have been selected to collect data, analyse and make sense of results.

The philosophical debate between positivism and postmodernism which was referred to briefly within the introduction section is particularly important within research. For example, when carrying out a research project does one believe that employing the 'correct' procedure will lead to a discovery of the 'truth'. Or is it possible that there are multiple ways of knowing and whatever 'truth' one finds will only be one of many?

The positions of constructivism and social constructionism can be found under the umbrella term of postmodernism (Burr, 2010). These epistemological standpoints hold that there is no universal truth to be found, yet place different emphasis on the importance of the individual and the social in the construction of meaning.

Constructivism refers to a family of theories that share the assertion that knowledge is a compilation of human-made constructions, not the neutral discovery of an objective truth (Raskin, 2002). Neimeyer and Raskin (2000) describe how each individual creates personal representations of self and their world. In contrast, Gergen (1985) points out that social process is the foundation of reality; that much of our knowledge of the world and our understanding of it are derived from social interaction. This is known as social constructionism. Indeed, Gergen and Hosking (2006) explain how 'reality' becomes meaningful to us primarily as a result of our relationships with others, and from this position all claims to knowledge are culturally and historically situated. Neimeyer and Raskin (2000) state that social constructionists differ from

constructivists in their emphasis on the social as opposed to the individual origins of meaning. Furthermore, they differ in their concentration on discursive practices as opposed to individual cognitions as the object of study, critique, and transformation.

My epistemological stance throughout this project is primarily one of social constructionism. It is my personal belief that there is no ultimate truth to be 'discovered' through research, only the personally constructed truths of individuals. These truths are constructed through relationships with others and through the discourses we have available to us within our past, current and future imagined social environment. What we 'know' is constructed knowledge which is culturally bound. It is this belief and viewpoint that leads me to question the ethics of research that makes claims about universal truths. I believe we have a collective and universal responsibility to both celebrate common humanity and learn from each other's different realities; this is a tricky tension but an imperative commitment to ethical practice.

My epistemological position as described has been a dynamic development over time, due to the influence of both the context I grew up in and the dominant narratives during my education. I used to hold more of a 'positivist' stance on reality and knowledge, I formally believed that science could explain phenomena and help me understand the meaning in life. However, through my personal exploration of other cultures, particularly of Buddhist philosophy and the experience of clinical training, my epistemological position has fundamentally changed.

2.1.1. My Connection to the Research

Since the researcher is the primary "instrument" of data collection and analysis, reflexivity is deemed essential in qualitative research (Watt, 2007). In order to be transparent about my personal connection to both my epistemological position and the topic area of my research, I shall share a personal narrative. As Porter (1993) reflects, trying to understand the effects of one's experiences rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate them, is the essence of reflexivity. Russell and Kelly (2007)

contend that through reflection, researchers may become aware of what allows them to see, as well as what may inhibit their seeing.

Before I was fully aware of the philosophical field of social constructionism I already had a developing interest and connection to these ideas from Buddhist philosophy. As Gergen and Hosking (2006) identify, social constructionism and Buddhism have parallels in their emphasis on the relational interconnectedness of life and the deconstruction of dominant beliefs. Before I started my training in Clinical Psychology, I lived in a monastery in Nepal for a period of time. During this time I was fortunate to receive teachings about Buddhist philosophy and spend time with people who were living as refugees, following the Chinese invasion of Tibet. During this trip I was struck by the Buddhist teaching that suffering is part of the human nature and is fuelled by an attempt to hold onto a stable concept of an individual self. These ideas were strikingly different to the dominant discourses I had experienced within my own culture, which seemed focused on grasping towards a stable 'self' and the elimination, rather than acceptance, of suffering. During my time in Nepal, I was humbled by the stories of acceptance and compassion that I heard from the Tibetan refugees in relation to how they had responded to their exile. Again, I noticed a striking difference in such response styles compared to the stories of injustice, anger and despair that I was more familiar with in my own cultural context. It was here that my interest in how the cultural context influenced the way that people made sense of, and therefore, responded to adversity began. On reflection, I believe these experiences contributed by sparking my interest in the topic area and building my affiliation with a constructionist methodology.

2.1.2. Current Research

A review of the literature on the psychological impact of adversity indicated that an increase in knowledge about the influence of context was important for the ethical foundations of the developing profession. As White (2013) notes, an inductive, bottom-up approach to research which emphasises the importance of local conceptualisations of mental health is required. To address this gap in the literature a qualitative research methodology was adopted.

1.2. Rationale for Adopting the Methodology of Narrative Analysis

Qualitative research is concerned with meaning (Willig, 2008) and is interested in the 'thick' descriptions of how people make sense of their experiences. In contrast to quantitative approaches, qualitative methodology is not concerned with cause and effect, or indeed finding universal truths, but rather with exploring unique human experience. There are numerous qualitative research approaches and the researcher's epistemological position will inform the approach and methodology selected (Willig, 2008). Narrative Analysis and Discourse Analysis are both methodologies which fit a social constructionist epistemology. In contrast, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith 2009) is a qualitative methodology fitting with an epistemological position which emphasises individual meaning-making over social process.

Although there is an overlap between Narrative Analysis and Discourse Analysis, the methodology chosen for this research was Narrative Analysis. The reason for making this choice was because the focus of Discourse Analysis is on the specifics of language used in telling stories. Narrative Analysis however, affords more opportunity to consider the influence of broader cultural narratives upon our individual stories. Furthermore, it was felt that an approach which focused on the specifics of language would not be appropriate for analysing stories told where English was not the person's first language. Moreover, Narrative Analysis is an approach which can consider the development of storytelling across time (Wells, 2011), rather than an approach for specific events. Therefore, Narrative Analysis offers the opportunity to position identity as co-constructed, changeable and contextual. Considering the points highlighted, I felt that Narrative Analysis provided the best framework from which to address the central focus of this research enquiry. As Wells (2011) puts it, how has *this* person in *this* context come to give the story they do?

1.2.1. What type of Narrative Analysis?

Narrative Analysis is a broad methodology which can encompass many different focal points. Over time a number of different and perhaps opposing ways of 'doing' narrative analysis have been written about and these different approaches are

informed by different beliefs about 'truth' and 'reality' (Mishler, 1991). Before outlining my approach to Narrative Analysis, I shall review the main narrative positions.

1.2.2. Faith vs. Suspicion

Broadly, some researchers may hold the viewpoint that the spoken words of a story are a representation of the person's reality. This means that during analysis one might make some claim to a truth for that person; this has been referred to as the hermeneutic of faith (Josselson, 2004) or the *analysis of content* (Wells, 2011). Others may cite narratives hidden in what is NOT said, in the silences; this has been referred to as the hermeneutic of suspicion (Josselson, 2004).

1.2.3. Experience vs. Event Focused Narrative Analysis

An element which brings further debate to the field of Narrative Analysis is discussion over what a narrative actually is. Some researchers present the view that a narrative is a section of 'bounded' talk (Labov, 1997) seeing narrative as attached to certain event descriptions. Alternatively, others conceptualise narrative as the production of sequential and meaningful stories of personal experience (Squire, 2008).

For researchers who view narrative as 'bounded talk', the focus of analysis is on the organisation of such event descriptions in order to gain insight into the meaning of a telling (Labov, 1997). This approach is often referred to as *the analysis of narrative structure* (Wells, 2011) or *event focused analysis* (Squire, 2008). In contrast, for researchers who view narrative more generally as stories of experience over time, the analysis is more focused on the sequencing, transformation and progression of themes. An example of this is the experience of living through a trauma and its consequences (Squire, 2008). This approach has been referred to as *experience-centred narrative research* (Squire, 2008).

1.2.4. Person Centred vs. Culturally Orientated Narrative Analysis

A further distinction is made between person-centred narrative approaches and culturally orientated approaches. Person-centred approaches promote the concept of a singular, unified subject who is an agentic storyteller. In contrast, culturally orientated approaches position narratives as embedded in their broader socio-cultural context (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2008). Mishler (1995) refers to this approach as the *narrative analysis of context*.

Within the culturally orientated approaches there is a focus on how narrative is co-constructed and 'performed' between people (Frank, 2012; Mishler, 1995). The focus is on how the interviewer and interviewee's assumptions or interests may shape the structure of the interview as it is created. This approach is often referred to as *the analysis of narrative performance* (Wells, 2011) or *dialogical narrative analysis* (Frank, 2012).

1.3. My Approach

In line with my research focus, I have taken an 'experience centred' approach to my analysis with a focus on the contextual, dialogic and performance elements of the narratives. Through taking this stance, I have also considered what was not explicitly said in the interviews. Further details on the interpretive framework which I used within my analysis are expanded upon in Section 2.7.2 and Appendix A.

2.4 Ethics

Ethical approval was gained from the University of Hertfordshire Research Ethics Board on 27 February 2012; reference number PSY/02/12/RB (see Appendix B).

2.4.1 Informed Consent

Information sheets detailing the aims of the research study and details of confidentiality were provided to participants prior to interview (see Appendix C). Participants were asked to sign the consent form to identify that they understood this

information (Appendix F). Care was taken to insure that participants had the capacity to give informed consent. Capacity was assessed by exploring whether a potential participant was able to retain the information given, consider the benefits and risks of taking part and then use this information to express their decision the following day.

2.4.2 Confidentiality

Participants' identities were kept anonymous throughout the research procedure through the use of pseudonyms. It is the pseudonyms which have been used to refer to participants throughout this report and analysis. Transcripts were downloaded from the Dictaphone and stored electronically in a password protected file.

2.4.3 Emotional Impact

As the topic of this research concerns potentially distressing experiences, careful consideration was given to how to protect participants' wellbeing throughout the research process. Firstly, I briefly interviewed participants, before engaging in the full interview, in order to gain an idea of their current level of distress. If I felt that taking part in the research would have been an unhelpful experience for the person, the interview was sensitively ended. This happened in one instance. Secondly, participants were also given the opportunity to discuss and 'debrief' after the interview had ended (see Appendix D). Thirdly, if needed, it was organised that participants could access further support within their relevant organisations, this safety measure was not needed. Finally, a debrief sheet reiterating the purpose of the study and highlighting the safety measures outlined above was given to every participant (see Appendix D). Participants were informed in the initial information sheet that they could stop the interview at any time, and request that their details were not used (see Appendix C). If the interviewee's wellbeing seemed to be compromised at any point during the interview, I was prepared to terminate or reschedule an interview. This ethical protocol was not required.

I considered my own emotional wellbeing throughout the research process. This meant that I utilised both supervision and peer support before, during and after

travelling to Sierra Leone. I was also fortunate to travel with other mental health professionals from the UK, from whom I was also able to access support and guidance. Furthermore, I completed a reflective diary to process my immediate reactions and to reflect on the process of the research.

2.4.4 Power

As Squire (2008) states, ethical approval should involve considering the ethics of interpretation within the frame of the researchers' and research participants' different powers over the data. Although it was not possible for me to feedback an initial draft of my results and interpretation to the participants, it is planned that I shall return to Sierra Leone to discuss the findings with the organisations and individuals who participated. I will give this feedback sensitively and carefully with respect to the different power dynamics involved between me as the researcher and the participants.

There was also an ethical dilemma around power and the provision of incentives to take part in the research. In order to negotiate this challenge I explained to participants at recruitment that a significant financial reward was not part of the research process. However, during the data collection process I choose to provide a drink or some food or a small amount of money to the individuals who took part. I also gave a radio and a football to one of the organisations to thank them for their help.

2.5 Design

Semi-structured qualitative individual interviews were carried out with eight people (staff and 'patients'). One group interview was carried out with three individuals together, all of whom were 'patients'. All participants identified themselves as having been significantly impacted by the Civil War in Sierra Leone. This refers to the degree of distress identified and remembered at the time of the event, rather than the extent of current distress. A strict definition of what kind of experience constituted 'significantly impacted' was not employed as an inclusion criterion. This was because I felt that using a Western definition of adversity or distress would be culturally insensitive. Information was provided to organisations (Appendix E) to guide the

identification of potential participants. Careful questioning prior to commencing interviews was then used to establish whether a person considered themselves to have been significantly impacted by any events during the Civil War.

The interviews involved both 'patients' (people with 'mental health needs', as identified within the culture) and staff members from two dominant mental health organisations in Sierra Leone. I felt that analysing the stories of people who are presumed to be currently in distress ('patients') together with those experiencing less distress (the staff members) would potentially allow *different* response trajectories to be heard and considered.

The rationale for interviewing both individuals and a group lies in the idea that cultural or 'master' narratives are created and transmitted 'between' people. Therefore, I hypothesised that the collection of group accounts would provide a valuable microcosm for analysing how stories are told in a public setting as compared to the more private setting of an individual interview. Due to practical limitations of the context, it was only possible to arrange one group interview; all participants of which were 'patients'.

2.5.1 Emergent Design

Emergent design involves data collection and analysis procedures that can evolve over the course of a research project in response to what is learned in the earlier parts of the study (Given, 2008). I employed an emergent design in the selection of interview questions and the process of analysis. For example, after the first two interviews, I included further questions about the participants' lives before the war in order to encourage narrative elaboration. Furthermore, after the first two interviews I started including questions in the interview schedule which referenced possible cultural resources and 'big stories'. The points of change within the interview schedule are referenced in my reflective diary which can be seen in Appendix G.

2.5.2. Sampling

Participants were recruited from two 'mental health' organisations in Sierra Leone. The names of these organisations have not been cited in order to protect the anonymity of participants. However, to provide some information for understanding the context of interviews, what will be referred to from now on as 'Place A', was a medical based, mainly in-patient organisation; and 'Place B', was a 'faith healing', mainly in-patient organisation.

Prior to travelling to Sierra Leone, I contacted the organisations identified to provide information about the research study and establish some further information regarding recruitment potential. Once I arrived in Sierra Leone I met with staff members in order to explain fully the purpose of the study and organise the logistics of interviews. Due to transportation limitations, the first interviews were carried out at 'Place A'. I personally spoke to staff members initially about the research and gave interested parties the information sheet. Given the inclusion and exclusion criteria stated below, the staff members then suggested 'patients' who might be appropriate. I then spoke with these identified 'patients' and gave interested parties the information sheet. I returned the following day and gathered a list of individuals who agreed to take part in the research. Interview times were arranged, although these often had to be changed due to the changeable nature of the context. At 'Place B', I explained the research study to a senior staff member, who then identified staff members and service users who met the criteria. A day was set aside for me to return and complete the interviews. Consequentially, the participants were purposively selected from interested respondents.

2.5.3. Participants

The demographics and pseudonyms of the participants can be seen in Table 1.

| Participant | Organisation | Position | Age | Gender |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|
| Isatu | Place A | Staff | 58 | Male |
| Selina | Place A | Staff | 53 | Female |
| Nasratha | Place A | Patient | 40 | Female |
| Abdou | Place A | Staff | 44 | Male |
| Group (Ishmael, Sadiu, Gabriel) | Place B | Patients | 34,44,57 | 3x Male |
| Tamba | Place B | Staff | 42 | Male |
| Fodey | Place B | Patient | 42 | Male |
| Gladi | Place B | Staff | 48 | Female |
| Gabriel | Place B | Patient | 34 | Male |

Table 1. *Demographics of Participants*

As shown, ten people were interviewed over nine interview periods. There were eight individual interviews and one group interview; one of the individual participants was also a group member. Three of the participants were female and seven were male. Four participants were from 'Place A' and six were from 'Place B'. In total five staff members and five 'patients' were interviewed. I have not presented information about the participants' diagnosis because I feel that categorising people's responses in this way does not fit with the epistemological position of this research. More detailed information about each participant is now described.

Isatu

Isatu was 58 years old when the interview took place. When the war started he was 37 and when the war finished he was 48. Isatu was a nursing assistant at 'Place A'. Isatu identified himself as a Christian.

Isatu came to take part in the research after I visited all the wards to discuss my research. When I returned the following day he expressed his interest in being interviewed.

The interview took place in a separate building in a quiet room. There were some interruptions during the interview when another staff member entered the room.

Selina

Selina was 53 on the day the interview took place (30 March 2012), which means she was 31 when the war started and 43 when the war ended. Selina was a nursing assistant at 'Place A' and she described herself as a Christian. Selina came to take part in the research through the same process as Isatu, but the interview was carried out in a side room, which was affected by its close proximity to the noisy ward.

Nasratha

Nasratha was 40 years old at the time of interview (April 2012). Therefore, she was 20 when the war started and 30 when it finished in 2002. Nasratha had been a patient at 'Place A' for one year at the time of interview. Nasratha identified herself as a Christian. Nasratha came to take part in the research through the same process as Isatu.

Abdou

Abdou was a nursing assistant and 'team leader' at 'Place A'. He stated that he had also taken part in previous 'counselling' training. He came to take part in the interview because another member of staff who had agreed to take part was not able to attend. Abdou volunteered to take his place. The interview took place on 5th April 2012. At the time of interview Abdou was 44. When the war started he was 22 and when it ended in 2002 he was 33. Abdou identified himself as a Muslim and from the Freetown area.

Gladi

Gladi identified herself as a 'counsellor' at 'Place B'; she had also previously been a patient for one month following social rejection from her community in response to her experience of 'hearing voices' which told her to kill herself. She took part in the interview on invitation from the organisation's manager. Gladi was 48 when the

interview took place (10 April 2012), she was 27 when the war started and 38 when it finished. Gladi identified herself as a Christian.

Fodey

Fodey was a patient at 'Place B', and had been for two years and seven months. He came to take part in the interviews after he had spoken to others whom I had interviewed; he then requested to take part. Fodey was 42 when the interview took place (10 April 2012), he was 21 when the war started and 32 when it finished. Fodey identified himself as being born into a Muslim family.

Tamba

Tamba identified himself as a 'counsellor' at 'Place B', and had been for over two years. Tamba took part in the interview at the invitation of the organisation's manager. Tamba was 42 when the interview took place (10 April 2012), he was 21 when the war started and 32 when it finished. Tamba identified himself as being born into a Muslim family, but then he attended a Christian school.

Gabriel

Gabriel was a patient at 'Place B'. He took part in the group interview and I interviewed him individually the next day (11 April 2012). Gabriel was 34 at interview, he was 13 when the war started and 24 when it finished. Gabriel was the youngest person to be interviewed.

Group members

The group interview involved three individuals (Saidu, Gabriel and Ishmael) who were staying at 'Place B' as 'patients'. Saidu was 44 on the date of interview (10 April 2012), 23 when the war started and 34 at the end. Ishmael was 57 at interview, 36 when the war started, and 47 when it finished. Gabriel's demographics are outlined above.

2.5.4. Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria

The only exclusion criterion was for individuals who were currently experiencing significant distress or who were likely to experience a negative impact on their wellbeing if they took part in the interview. As discussed, I assessed the level of

current distress during pre-interview meetings. The central inclusion criterion was that participants appraised themselves as having experienced significant distress during the war, alongside the ability to communicate in English. I recognised that the criterion of being able to speak English meant that individuals from less educated backgrounds may have been excluded from the sample. This factor is addressed in the conclusion (Section 4.3).

2.6 Procedure

I began the recorded interviews by reiterating the information about the study. Participants were then asked to sign the consent form (Appendix F). Initial questions (Appendix H) were carefully developed in order to facilitate narrative production (Gubrium and Holstein, 1995) and questions were asked flexibly depending on individual cases and the situational context (see Appendix H). To facilitate the reflexive and reflective process, I made initial notes in a diary after each interview. By engaging in reflective dialogue through journal writing, researchers may be able to better determine what they know and how they think they came to know it (Watt, 2007).

2.7. Transcription and Analysis

2.7.1 *Transcription*

As Poland (2002) states, the research interview is always a co-authored conversation, in a context. A transcribed written account, therefore, cannot attempt to fully represent the complex and dynamic interaction of a conversation. However, it is vitally important to ensure a transcription is a 'best attempt' at depicting the interview data. Consequently, the process of transcription was enacted with the following ideas held closely in mind. The interviews were transcribed with all utterances from both the interviewee and the researcher included and, given the language barrier, extended effort was made to transcribe the interviews to include as much of the hard to hear sections as possible.

I transcribed two of the interviews myself and sent the other seven interviews to a transcription service (Dictate2us). A written confidentiality agreement was signed

between myself and Discate2us (Appendix I). As analysis cannot easily be distinguished from transcription (Riessman, 2003) there is an inevitable overlap between these 'stages'. I managed this immersion in the data through keeping notes about my thoughts and experiences in my reflective diary.

When the transcripts were returned to me from the transcription service I read the written record while listening to the audio file. Unfortunately, for a number of the interviews I did not feel an accurate enough transcription had been made by the organisation. I therefore began a process of going through each transcript to 'correct' inaccuracies and fill in gaps that had been marked as 'inaudible'. I was able to employ the help of an Assistant Psychologist who had experience in Sierra Leone and the local dialect to help me with this process. I was also able to refer to a 'Cultural Consultant', a colleague who was born in Sierra Leone. A confidentiality agreement was signed by the Assistant Psychologist (see Appendix I). Whilst I made the best attempt I could to fill in any gaps in the transcription, some sections did remain 'inaudible' either due to a fast pace of speech, strong accent or background noise. However, in these instances I was able to benefit from the Cultural Consultant's local knowledge to make sure that at least the 'gist' of what the participant was saying had been recorded.

2.7.2. Analysis

The analysis unfolded through a reflexive process which I shall now detail.

My methodological rigour included taking a reflexive and reflective position, and so I am aware of the impact of my assumptions on the analytic process. Therefore, by keeping a reflective diary, I aimed to 'bracket' my own assumptions as much as I could (Crotty, 1996), so as not to impose my constructions on the interviewees. However, it is my perspective that this is only ever possible to a degree. As Ahern (1999) highlights, the ability to put aside personal feelings and preconceptions is more a function of how reflective one is rather than how objective one is. Reflexivity is the realisation that researchers are part of the social world that they study (Frank, 2012). Therefore, my stance was one where I wished to remain reflexive about the impact of my assumptions, and thus viewed this as essential information for the analysis.

In line with the process of emergent design (Given, 2008) each stage of analysis was dependent on the outcome of the preceding experience. Therefore, some of my initial plans for the analysis process were changed as part of this reflexive stance.

Firstly, once I was happy with the quality of transcription I had attained, I listened through each interview with the transcript in front of me. At this point I did not make notes but rather aimed to make myself available to the development of what was said over time. Next, I listened through each interview and made notes on the thematic content of the stories (see Appendix J). Once I believed I had a feel for the emerging storylines within the interview, I started to develop these ideas on a summary sheet (see Appendix K).

After a focus on the thematic content of the stories, I then listened and read through the transcripts a further three or four times and focused on listening for the organisation of the narrative, the performance and dialogic elements.

How can we know the dancer from the dance? Yeats (1964, p. 127)

An important part of the context of a story is the person to whom the story is being told, in other words, the audience. As Reissman (2008) highlights, the researcher does not find narratives but instead participates in their creation. Indeed, Mishler (1995) discusses how two active participants jointly construct narrative meaning, as opposed to the alternative positivist concept of a facilitating interviewer who asks questions and a vessel-like respondent who gives answers. In Mischler's construct, both the interviewer and the interviewee shape the interview and the meaning that is created. A focus on this co-created reality helps stories to be seen in context. This stage of the analysis considered how the narrative was jointly constructed, for example which responses I may have privileged during turn taking compared with those I moved away from. In order to guide my reflections, I developed the prompts/questions below from the relevant literature on Narrative Analysis.

a) What are the main themes (storylines), 'the feel of life', and the narrative arc (across time)?

- b) What does the way the story was told say about meaning (for narrator, for me?)*
- c) For whom was this story constructed and for what purpose?*
- d) How has context (social, political, cultural discourses) influenced what has been said (or not said)?*
- e) What cultural resources does the story draw on/take for granted?*
- f) How have I (as a researcher) influenced what has been said?*
- g) During turn taking which stories are advanced and how?*
- h) Are there gaps and inconsistencies which might suggest preferred, alternative or counter narratives?*

As I listened to each interview I held these questions in mind and made notes of anything that struck me in a column next to the transcript (Appendix J). These notes were then transferred to the summary page (Appendix K). This stage was not the only point at which I considered the impact of the organisation and co-construction of the narratives; this was an on-going reflective process. However, it was the stage where I focused on these aspects of analysis.

Next, I reflected on which 'master' or 'dominant' narratives stood out across the interviews (Bamberg, 2004). The concept of master narratives are defined in Section 3.2.1, but from now on the terms 'master narrative', 'dominant discourse' and 'cultural resource' are used interchangeably to account for the 'big stories' available in the context.

At this stage, I also read through my reflective diary and considered my observations, discussions with my Cultural Consultant and other informal conversations whilst in Sierra Leone. I also turned to anthropological and fictional material relevant to the context (Jackson, 2004a, 2004b; Forna, 2010; Ferme, 2001; Conteh, 2011, Miller, 2011; Shaw, 2009). Once I had developed some ideas around the cultural resources which seemed to inform and frame the stories, I then turned to the individual and group narratives and re-read the accounts with these 'master narratives' in mind. At this point I started to draw out relevant quotes and made notes about the differences between accounts.

The final stage of the analysis involved a focus on what was implicit or what was only alluded to within the narratives. This process involved me reviewing my notes from

the individual analysis with a focus on what was mentioned but not elaborated. I then re-read the accounts, focussing on storylines that may have been closed down through my follow up questions. Finally, I considered how these observations might also have been impacted on by the context in which the interviews took place.

The stages I have described above represent the process I went through with most of the narrative accounts. However, it was not always possible to be this structured and at times I found it a struggle to 'stay with' the narratives. On these occasions I took the position that my reaction to the narrative and its organisation was an important part of the analysis. Therefore, whilst keeping reflective notes, I built in some flexibility in the process of analysis. The impact of this was that in these situations, I simply immersed myself in the narrative; I listened to the narratives many times and made notes about whatever struck me as salient. I found that slowly through this less structured process I was able to answer the questions within my interpretive frame without dishonouring the chaos that was inherent in the performance. As Emerson and Frosh (2004) suggest,

'Analysis can be applied to the complexity of a person's speech, deriving from it not a specious 'order' or 'coherence' but a sense of the struggle amongst mixed intentions, understandings and feelings' (p. 79).

2.7.3. Inclusion and Exclusion

Different storylines and themes could be discussed as emerging from the research interviews, but since the focus of this research project is on the stories people were able to tell about how they *responded* following the Civil War, this discussion will focus on the emerging *response storylines* from each narrative. A storyline has been described as the way in which a story develops overtime, sometimes also referred to as a plot or plotline. Therefore, a *response* storyline can simply be understood as the developing story of response throughout a narrative, the stories about what individuals and/or communities did to cope and manage. As Jackson (2004b) states,

'It is difficult to do justice to what people suffered in the Sierra Leone conflict but one may perhaps venture to describe how people responded to their suffering' (p. 44).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

'I ask question I ask the rebel man "God sent you for killing me, with my daughter?" (ahhh) "God sent you for killing me with my daughter?" I say "you can try, if god told me say me I die by gun no problem maybe you god send I don't know so what your plan carry on" I look the rebel man look at me and he say "no you come from the line"' (Isatu p. 12)¹

3.1. Overview of Results and Discussion

The presentation of the results from this research, the stories told, can be found in Section 3.3. The preceding sections (3.1 *Overview of the Results and Discussion* and 3.2 *Contextualising of the Results*) outline how the results have been structured and provide a contextual frame through which to situate the results. Whilst I could have discussed the findings separately from the discussion, the framework I have chosen is consistent with my research aim, which is to understand experience *in context*.

3.1.1. "We" not "I": An Isomorphic Conflict

When planning the results and discussion, I experienced a conflict about whether to present the individual response storylines first and then consider the influence of context, or whether to make the cultural context the foreground. When considering this dilemma, it struck me that the struggle between the 'we' versus the 'I' also seemed to be present in a number of the narratives. Yet as Holdstock (2000) reflects, the sense of relatedness is indeed at the very root of individualism. With this in mind, the approach I choose was first to present the collective stories, *the master narratives*, followed by a detailed consideration of the individual variation within the collective. I made this decision because my research question was '*how has the context of Sierra Leone influenced the stories told*'. Moreover, with consideration of the historically collective orientation within Sierra Leone (Conteh, 2011), it felt appropriate to place

¹ This quote represents the essence of the results and discussion; it is a *Story of Survival and Resistance*. Isatu was the first person I interviewed, and therefore his story will have influenced how I heard all the following narratives. Consequently I felt it was important to include his voice from the beginning of this discussion.

the 'collective' stories in the foreground in order to honour this cultural frame of reference.

3.1.2. Mapping the Results and Discussion

Throughout the discussion, quotes are used from the interviews. In order to reference the section of the interview from which the quotes were extracted, the page number of the interview transcript is given at the end of each quote.

As can be seen in Column A of Table 2 below, the discussion shall first highlight and discuss two perceived and interlinked master narratives which stood out to me during the analysis; *1. Because of Almighty God, We Forgive and 2. Bear it, and Forget.*

I have titled these master narratives '*Stories of Survival*' and this conceptualisation will be explained in Section 3.2.6. Within my discussion of the highlighted master narratives, I will then consider how the response storylines of '*God as Saviour*' and '*God as Strength*' unfold between and within the narratives. Then, as depicted in Column B of Table 2, the discussion will explore '*The Underneath*' of the master narratives; i.e. how the individual response storylines may contest the dominant discourses, through what was implied, yet left unsaid (Bamberg, 2004). I have termed this section of the discussion '*Stories of Resistance*' and use the metaphor of '*The Underneath*' to conceptualise the interaction between the master narratives and the counter narratives.

| | | Master Narratives | Response Storylines |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| A “The shown face of the mask” | Stories of Survival | Because of Almighty God, We Forgive | <i>God as Saviour</i> |
| | | | <i>God as Strength</i> |
| | | Bear it, and Forget | <i>We Bear it</i> |
| | | | <i>I Bear it</i> |
| B “The Underneath” | Stories of Resistance | We can’t forget | |
| | | Why God? | |

Table 2. Overview of Results and Discussion

It is important to note that I do not assume that the master narratives I highlighted are the only influential narratives in the context. However, these cultural resources stood out to me and are cited within the anthropological literature (Conteh, 2011; Ferme, 2001; Forna, 2010; Jackson, 2004a, 2004b; Miller, 2011; Shaw, 2009). In the book *Country of My Skull*, Antjie Krog (1998), talks about the process she went through to construct her personal narrative, selecting from ‘layers’ of stories, in order to create the narrative she wished to tell, which she refers to as ‘my truth’.

“The resultant tapestry is comprised of a multi-generic patchwork of narrative fragments, testimony, poetry, philosophy, dialogue and interviews” (Krog, 1998, p. 170)

In the same way, the stories I present within my results and discussion are ‘my truth’ of the stories told to me, and therefore, they are partial and situated in context (Krog, 1998). Throughout the discussion, I will focus on how the dialogic process between myself and the participants will have influenced and constrained the stories told. This is an important aspect of thinking about the influence of context, since as Riesmann (2000) noted, informants negotiate how they want to be known by the stories they develop collaboratively with their audiences.

3.2. Contextualising the Results

I shall now consider in depth the social, political and historical context within which the narratives were constructed.

3.2.1. *The Music: Hearing the Master Narratives*

The primary resources for telling a new story are the stories that are already circulating in the setting (Frank, 2012). At the beginning of this paper the African proverb *'When the music changes so does the dance'*, was used to conceptualise the interdependent relationship between social context and personal response. In this conceptualisation, master narratives can be understood as sections, or phrases, of the 'music', as delineated by a particular listener. A master narrative is a story about a story, encompassing and framing other small stories. The concept of master narratives has been criticised on the grounds that too much focus on meta theories may dismiss the naturally existing chaos and disorder of the universe. Further, Foucault (1982) explains that this focus reinforces power structures which try to represent a 'truth' and can, therefore, become oppressive. Hence, it is critically important to consider the stories that fall outside of, or remain constrained by, the dominant discourses. As Bamberg (2004) notes,

'If it is possible to delineate more clearly where and how discourses that run counter to hegemonic discourses emerge, and if it is possible to describe the fabric of these counter discourses we should be able to make headway in designing alternative strategies to public, institutionalised power relations' (p. 353)

The intention of this discussion is not to present any 'truth' but rather to deconstruct the influence of the suggested master narratives and to address the question, *'How does the context of Sierra Leone influence the stories told?'* When faced with adversity Murray (2003) considers how we draw upon more established social narratives to explain an event or to complete a particular story. Frank (2012) also talks about how selfhood always trades in borrowed goods,

'We humans are able to express ourselves only because stories already exist for us to adapt, and these stories shape whatever sense we have of ourselves' (Frank, 2012 p. 36)

The discussion proceeds from the notion that 'countering' and 'complicating' response storylines are adaptations of the socially available dominant discourses (Bamberg, 2004). Through this process I investigate how narratives are silenced, contested or accepted (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2008). As Frank (2012) questions,

'how is the story both subjective and external; how is the story an authentic expression of how the storyteller grasps his or her world, yet equally, how is it an external condition that limits what the storyteller can know of his or her world?' (p. 46)

Therefore, the aim of the following discussion is to unravel and explore the complex interplay between the dominant and counter narratives within the stories told so that the possibility of alternative conceptions and knowledge can be liberated (Bamberg, 2004).

3.2.2. *Being in Sierra Leone*

To carry out the interviews I spent four weeks in Sierra Leone. During this time I lived with local people and tried to immerse myself, as much as I could, in the culture. As time passed, I began to notice some common discourses which stood out, both within the interviews and more informal conversations within the community.

'There is a sense also that perhaps people haven't thought too much about why what happened, happened - because they place all their sense making in God's hand?' (Reflective diary, 2 April 2012)

'Dominant discourses?...again the "get on with it" (Reflective Diary 5 April 2012)

As Smith (2005) remarks, what remains remarkably consistent are not storytellers but rather narrative resources. I was struck by the sense of a dominant, yet fragile grand narrative within Sierra Leonean society.

'Things were 'okay' before the war, then it was hard and people had to rebuild their lives but thanks to God everything is okay now, people are managing

and everyone has forgiven each other and forgotten what happened’.
(*Reflective Diary, April 2012*)

As discussed, through the process of reflection and analysis two interlinked master narratives started to emerge: *‘Because of Almighty God, We forgive’* and *‘Bear it, and Forget’*. Before considering how the stories told in the interviews may have been affected and/or constrained by these discourses, I shall turn to the relevant anthropological literature that pertains to these master narratives. The aim of the following section is to set the context for the way I shall present and discuss the findings from this research study (see Section 3.3).

3.2.3. Because of Almighty God, We Forgive

‘Wherever the African is he/she is with his/her religion’ (Conteh, 2011, p. 85)

Postcolonial Civil Wars in Africa, like previous Civil Wars and anti-colonial resistance, have been known to have strong religious elements (Conteh, 2011). During a conversation with some local young people in the rural town of Lungi, where I stayed for one week, I was curiously questioned about my religion. When I explained that I would not define myself as following a religion this position was incomprehensible to my companions; in Sierra Leone, everyone has a religion. Unlike conceptions of God in the West, in Sierra Leone God is ‘the ultimate source of all power’ (Sawyer, 1970, as cited in Conteh, 2011). God is considered the ultimate cause of a person’s fortune or misfortune in life and death, with the ultimate responsibility for everything. However, this does not mean that God is held responsible for the perpetration of evil or unfortunate happenings; the belief simply means that God has allowed these situations to occur (Conteh, 2011).

‘If you don’t believe in God you are seen as an outcast, or that you have money’ (*Reflective Diary, 21 April, 2002*)

Alongside being intrinsic to everyday life and meaning-making, Conteh (2011) cites that religion has been discussed as both a contributing factor to the Civil War and as a major factor in the peace process. However, it is also noted that in public discourses religion is portrayed solely as influencing reconciliation. In 1997, the Inter-Religious

Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) set the objective to equip and mobilise co-operation efforts among religious communities (Conteh, 2011). Further, the council took concrete steps towards restoring stability, reconciliation and renewal (Kganu, 2001, as cited in Coneth, 2011). The IRCSL succeeded not only in bringing together the head of state, rebel leaders and all those who had a part in the conflict, but was also able to persuade the warring factions to agree to talk and find a peaceful resolution (Conteh, 2011). In 2000 the IRCSL created a working proposal, to be implemented by both Muslims and Christians, for reconstruction and renewal in Sierra Leone. This included a national campaign for Confession, Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Renewal. Furthermore, as Conteh (2011) highlights, Article 7(2) of the Truth and Reconciliation Act refers to the assistance from traditional and religious leaders in facilitating reconciliation. Religion played a major part in establishing peace in Sierra Leone. In one story, a Muslim woman describes what the Imam had said to her about forgiveness,

'He is telling us everything is finished. Whatever they did to you, your person, your father, your mother, your husband, you need to bear it and leave everything to God almighty' (Miller, 2011, p. 189)

The religious references and focus on forgiveness within the personal narratives collected for this research appear en masse and are often used as powerful meaning-making tools. In the following discussion of individual and community response storylines the 'personal' meaning-making *within* these master narratives, is considered. The observation of narrative tensions between the different ways that the cultural resource of religion is storied is discussed. Sometimes God is presented as the powerful and controlling 'Saviour', and at points God is described as a source of Strength for the pursuit of individual or collective goals. This tension will be discussed in the section entitled '*Stories of Survival: God as Saviour vs. Strength*' (Section 3.4).

3.2.4. Bear it, and Forget

'You call it a disorder my friend, we call it life' (Forna, 2010; p. 319).

In Sierra Leonean culture, pain is seen as an unavoidable part of life and a person is expected to bear it (Jackson, 2004a). Sierra Leoneans are pragmatists and a focus on one's own inner feelings and thoughts is far less pronounced in Africa (Jackson, 2004a). The focus is instead on survival and the meeting of practical needs. In fact, it stood out in the interview with Nasratha, that if her practical needs were met, then there was no problem,

'For say I'm stressed or thinking of what to eat or what to drink or what to wear. No, I don't have that problem' (Nasratha p. 4)

The focus on 'practical first' and simply getting on with life has a social and historical context in Sierra Leone. As I began to reflect on my observations, I discussed my thoughts with my Cultural Consultant.

'we also chatted about where this discourse might come from....[The Cultural Consultant] suggested that it may be about the history and culture...about how difficult basic life is for everyone...like people expect difficulties...and are not surprised or feel like they have been 'wronged' when something does occur' (Reflective Diary, 4 April 2012)

Shaw (2009) also talks about how different regions and localities have their own memory practices and their own techniques of social recovery, developed during the course of their own history. Shaw (2009) suggests that most people in Sierra Leone prefer the 'forgive and forget' approach than 'truth and reconciliation'. This is again different to the model of 'revealing is healing' in the West. The preference for social recovery through a 'forgive and forget' strategy rather than a 'talk' strategy can be understood in a context where fear of retaliation and government reprisal are ever present. Social forgetting is seen as the refusal to reproduce violence by talking about it publicly (Shaw, 2009).

'Have you never noticed? How nobody ever talks about anything, what happened here? The War. Before the War. It's like a secret' (Forna, 2010, p. 321).

When I discussed this with my Cultural Consultant, she reflected to me that, when she returned to Sierra Leone during the war, people were always talking about what happened, but as the years went by, people stopped talking and got on with their

lives. This reflection is similar to the description Shaw (2009) gives, that people had been talking about violence when the violence was present but, once it stopped, healing took place through practices of social forgetting.

Unlike in the West, it is suggested that in Sierra Leone people do not expect life to exist without hardship. They expect to have to 'bear life', and therefore if you can move on from experiences, this can help you to 'bear it'. The struggle which stood out within and across the stories told during this research was about whether life is managed by the community or on one's own. Whether '**We** Bear it' (together) or '**I** bear it' (alone). This will be discussed in the section titled '*Stories of Survival: We Bear it vs. I Bear it*' (Section 3.3).

3.2.5. *The Dance: Stories of Survival and Resistance*

Why is this research titled '*Stories of Survival and Resistance?*'

Within my analysis I was interested both in what was explicitly said and what was implicit, or not said in the stories told. In order to make sense of my results, I have termed the explicit narratives '*Stories of Survival*' and the alternative or counter narratives '*Stories of Resistance*'. Of course, these concepts are unavoidably interlinked; as resistance is an integral part of survival. As Bamberg (2004) noted, complicity and countering go hand in hand. However, in order to provide the reader with a context for this terminology, the conception of the words 'Survival' and 'Resistance' will now be explained.

3.2.6. *Survival*

*'So everyday, (Pause) um, I'm coping with managing (Pause) to survive'.
(Fodey, p. 22)*

During the analysis I noticed how the participants spoke about their responses to the Civil War in very practical terms. Understandably, their main concern was about survival and physical safety rather than a focus on emotional states.

'And if you survive, it's not easy. Things, rice is expensive. Everything was expensive at that time. So to survive at that time, it is not easy'. (Gabriel, p. 8)

This focus is also exemplified in a quote from the novel *'In the Memory of Love'* (Forna, 2010), which depicts a conversation between the one psychiatrist Attila, in Sierra Leone and a Western psychologist, Adrian working in the hospital,

'People here don't need therapy so much as hope. But the hope has to be real- Attila's warning to Adrian. I fall down, I get up. Adrian had met fatalism but perhaps this is the way people have found to survive.' (Forna, 2010, p. 320)

There is always a 'difference' between people. Whilst carrying out these interviews I was always strikingly aware of my difference and of my privilege which was extremely uncomfortable.

'I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group' (McIntosh, 1990).

As a 'white Western English-speaking British female' I was very mindful of the history of Sierra Leone being a former British colony from 1807 until 1961. During my stay I became aware that 'White' people in Sierra Leone are automatically assumed to be from Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) or attached to a charity and with that, a certain amount of wealth is assumed. In this way, it may be that my characteristics positioned people to tell a certain type of story in order to engender practical aid and support. In a number of interviews people explicitly asked me to support their family. I noticed that several people told stories about their practical responses after the Civil War, over and above their emotional responses, often highlighting the practical help they still needed to survive. I wondered whether there was an understandable expectation, or hope, that telling me their story may be a way to get support. Therefore, a 'practical' telling of the stories was constructed between us. Alternatively, perhaps the simple reality in Sierra Leone is that survival is more prominent than emotional needs.

I use the term *'Stories of Survival'* to discuss the stories told, as I feel this honours the essence of the underlying message of the narratives: survival first.

3.2.7. *Resistance*

Dominant discourses always co-exist with alternative narratives that challenge; these are the stories of resistance (Afuape, 2011; White & Epton, 1990). As Afuape (2011) considers, whenever a person experiences abuse, oppression or violence they resist their experiences in some way. Hence, power and resistance can be viewed as two sides of the same coin. If the '*Stories of Survival*' are framed by the powerful and dominant cultural stories, the '*Stories of Resistance*' represent '*The Underneath*' of power. These Stories of Resistance are my hypotheses about the subjugated narratives which sit outside the most powerful discourses within society. They are the hard to hear 'non-stories' (Frank, 1995). If the '*Stories of Survival*' were on the outside of a mask, the '*Stories of Resistance*' would be on the inside. Ferme (2001) uses the title '*The Underneath of Things*' for her anthropology book on Sierra Leone, and also to describe a suggested culture of secrecy and myth, which she perceives.

The preceding discussion has aimed to set the context for the way I shall now present and discuss the findings from this research study. In order to demonstrate the dynamic between the stories of 'Survival' and 'Resistance' I shall discuss a section from the group interview at 'Place B'. As Bamberg (2004) highlights, countering master narratives is not necessarily an easy accomplishment.

3.2.8. *A Dynamic Demonstration: The Group*

As I transcribed and listened to the tape of the group interview I was struck by the dominance of Gabriel's story; it was even difficult to hear what the other two participants were saying. I recognise that a factor in this observation was likely to be that Gabriel had clearer English, and as the interview was being carried out in English, this perhaps placed him in a more powerful position. However, Gabriel also utilised other narrative tools which positioned his story as more dominant, for example by speaking first, by speaking the loudest, and by reiterating his points. Gabriel also attempted to summarise or speak for the other participants.

RJB: Okay so that was before

Saidu: During the war, do I use the same question for it?

RJB: Well..maybe..

Gabriel: The question is, before the war, the life that we are experience, before the war.

*Saidu: That's the one.
(Group, p.2)*

Through these processes, the dynamic of the dominant and counter narratives seemed to play out in this microcosm of the social and public arena. The following sections of the interview exemplify this process.

Within the interview, in answer to a question about what had helped people to cope after the war, Gabriel introduced the idea of Almighty God as responsible for peace and forgiveness

RJB: ...What do you think has helped people?

*Gabriel: Okay, let me contribute there. After the war, because our own crisis here, erm we have peace by the grace of the Almighty God makes us to have peace'
(Group, p.11)*

Gabriel goes on to speak about how faith is the vehicle through which people are now able to live together again after the atrocities which were committed. The emotive language and turn taking style Gabriel used is a tool which gave power to his words in the group context. No room was left for the other participants to speak. Gabriel then moved further in his story about how faith helped people to cope by introducing the idea that people tried to forget about the past.

Gabriel: It's not easy. But we try to forget about the past and focus on what have to happen today.

RJB: And how do you do that? How...how?

*Gabriel: It's all about faith. We try to control our mind. Right? Allow God to speak in our mind like "don't revenge. Leave this individual for me to judge this individual"
(Group, p.12)*

Gabriel spoke for a number of minutes elaborating on this storyline and gave what seem to be persuasive descriptions. When I tried to summarise what he said to check my understanding, he responded by saying:

*Gabriel: We try to allow God to speak in our minds so we can able to forgive.
(Group, p.13)*

Gabriel presented this narrative resolution, that the community coped using faith to forgive the atrocities committed during the war, as a collective viewpoint. Ishmael, who at this point in the interview had only spoken briefly, interjected and challenged Gabriel's resolution.

Ishmael: I just want to clarify a point. Do you think the war is ended?

RJB: ummmm

Gabriel: Yeah, the war has ended...

*RJB: That's, I guess, not being from here, that's, you know, that's what I've been told but I'd be interested in (Overlapping Conversation)...
(Group, p.13)*

As can be seen, as soon as Ishmael asked the question, Gabriel re-affirmed the dominant view – his view – that the war is over. Then instead of following up what Ishmael was trying to question, the interview moved on. Through this dynamic, Ishmael's story that '*the war is not over*', that all is not forgotten, was silenced and remains untold.

In the following section of the interview I tried to bring in Ishmael's and Saidu's voices, but again Gabriel interjected and answered for the other two participants, again re-affirming his story.

RJB: Is your experience similar that people have, you know, people have relied on having, you know, God speak to them and help them to have faith and not to seek revenge and that's something that's helped your community? Do you...what do you both think?

Saidu: You're saying what?

RJB: I'm asking if your experience is the same.

Gabriel: She's trying to say is now, because, you know, the war is in Sierra Leone...even many people lost their arms, they're amputees now, right? And those who did that to them, they are in the street now passing upon, the rebels.....Not so. So because we allow God to speak in our mind to forgive, that's why we are living as a community now.....

RJB: Okay. So I was asking whether you agreed (overlapping conversation)

*Gabriel: Yeah, we agree on that.
(Group, p.14)*

It can be seen in this passage that even when I tried to elicit views from Saidu and Ishmael, Gabriel spoke for them saying 'we' agree. Gabriel's use of small, measured sentences point to a desire for control; with words like 'right' and 'not so' it seemed that he restricted counter opinions. The dominant narrative silenced the other participants' voices.

Whilst limited, this dynamic may provide some insight into how the war is talked about, or not talked about, in everyday 'public' conversation. Also, perhaps this is a glimpse at how difficult it is to hold onto a different viewpoint other than '*Because of Almighty God, We Forgive*'. This is a context where faith is conceptualised as the main framework for healing. This section gives a brief demonstration of *how the music impacts on the dance*. It is also a demonstration of how dominant narratives may suppress other viewpoints and experiences. As the audience, I was more drawn to Gabriel's more 'coherent' storytelling, over other types of stories, which were difficult to hear. It seems that even in this microcosm of society, I became part of a system which progressed the dominant story, and left other more challenging 'chaotic' trajectories untold.

3.2.9. Trajectories

Trajectories are the direction of travel within a narrative, or how the narrative moves over time. Of course, what constitutes the direction will depend on cultural and personal understandings of desirable outcomes.

In relation to illness narratives, Frank (1995) forwards the idea of three alternative narrative trajectories: Restitution, Chaos and Quest trajectories. The Restitution narrative's plot is that someone gets sick, is treated, the treatment is eventually successful and the person is at least restored to a reasonable approximation of their pre-illness life. In contrast, the plot of the Chaos narrative is a teller who has multiple problems, one bad thing has led to another and life is collapsing around this person. The plot has no resolution and is therefore chaotic. Finally, the Quest narratives are romances, in which a character encounters a sequence of obstacles and gains wisdom and stature through the process of overcoming them (Frye, 1957, as cited in Frank, 1995). Of course these narrative structures may not be mutually incompatible; people may shift between them or hold them in tension.

These trajectories will be used to consider the types of 'response' stories that the participants told. As Frank (1995) summarises, what is interesting about the idea of narrative trajectories is the link between the different narrative resources available and what constrains people's ability to use these different resources.

I shall now present the results of this research and accompanying discussion.

3.3. Stories of Survival: We Bear it vs. I Bear it

The usual greeting in Krio (the Creole language of Sierra Leone) is "How de body?" One traditional reply is the title of this essay: "We de fol don an git ap" ("We fall down and get up").

3.3.1. We Bear it

There is a historical African philosophical principle meaning 'humanity to others', often explained within the phrase "Ubuntu – I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1975). In his book '*In Sierra Leone*' Jackson (2004a) talks about how the Kuranko tend to construct experience as intersubjective rather than intrapsychic and how, historically in Africa, more emphasis has been placed on society rather than on the self. As Selina summarises,

'All of us are managing...It's something in your community. It means you're also strong. When you're strong, you will do something. Well, we are managing.' (Selina, p. 12)

This way of viewing the self in relation to society is different to the generalised characteristic of individualistic Western thinking styles.

Across Selina's narrative it stands out that there does not seem to be an overt sense of an individual emotional struggle to make sense of her experiences. Selina used a simple, yet striking, physical description of how she coped,

'You just sit down'. (Selina p.7)

Like Selina, Gladi developed a significant storyline within her narrative regarding how her community came together to support each other.

RJB: ...what's life been like for people since the end of the war?

Gladi: ...Oh, the end of...Uhh, in...during the...the end of the war, in my community, I mean, we will...we all came together and formed a group so that we'll be helping each other (Okay. Uhh huh) We created home share. We used to go to...it's (Pause) five, uhh, man committee. We used to visit...uhh, they used to visit me. (Pause) They will come to my place, (Pause) and pray with me, (Pause) having share...if I have food, we share together. Then the other day we go to other person. When anyone of us is sick, that's our concern. We pay a visit to the individual, yes. We have concern for each other. (p. 18)

At the end of the war, Gladi spoke about how people responded to the experience of Civil War by coming together, sharing what they had, and helping each other. When I asked whether people looked after each other like this before the war, Gladi replied,

'Not...not nearly so. Well, after the war now, we took that responsibility to be visiting friends. Uhh, and they, your friend will (Pause) explain his or her problem to you. Advise the individual so that the stress will more...will go out from the individual' (Gladi, p.18)

Here Gladi spoke of how the stress, the problem, would leave the individual as a result of the community support. In this way, stress is a problem which the community provides an answer for. When I enquired whether this was the case after the war in all

communities, Gladi told me that some communities did not come together and care for each other.

RJB: Do you think that's true for all communities? Or is that just your community?

Gladi: No, it is only my own community (ah) Because there are some community, they don't care for themselves. They create problems for them—themselves. They—they have no concern for each other. But in my own community, that is what we...we plant, and it's what we are doing. (p. 19)

As a researcher, I was very interested in the storyline of 'We Bear it' because it was similar to what some people had said in previous interviews (Gladi was the eighth person I interviewed out of nine), but Gladi spoke with much passion and gave a significant amount of detail. This may have been because I had started asking more focused questions on this point.

RJB: What...what do you think, umm, made it possible for your community to do that and others not to?

Galdi: Umm, it's because of the concern we have for each other, you see. Some people are selfish. They only want to get, and not next man to—to get anything. And God do not allow such people to prosper. What you have, give it to somebody who doesn't; the more God will bless you (p. 20)

The first person I interviewed for this project was Isatu and he told a similar story to Gladi, but only briefly, and at the end of the narrative when I asked the question 'as a community what has helped people to look to the future?' he replied,

'small commune {we can gather in the?} first Sunday every each person ten thousand every each person give ten thousand some body something gone from that home we looking from this community pooled money help (ahhhh) yep we can help to the people because everybody look for get you see (Isatu, p. 15)'

One can see that the story of community support was present in Isatu's narrative but it was not so prominent or elaborated in his account as in Galdi or Selina's version.

3.3.2. The 'I' within the 'We'

Interestingly, within Selina's narrative she shared a story about receiving help from Action Aid, where she referred to help being offered to 'the community, not I' (p. 6), and she also made reference to how 'everyone, not one, because everyone was a

victim' (p. 7). Selina developed a 'We Bear it' response storyline. However, she then almost contradicted this in her following phrase,

'Everyone is on his own (Everyone..?) Doing things (Everyone) by herself or himself, or his family anyway. So I just have to say so...because everyone is doing good although things are hard...' (Selina, p.7)

It seemed that within Selina's story a tension was present between the dominant and cultural resource of 'I am because we are, therefore we bear it', compared to perhaps the alternative counter narrative of 'I Bear it'. Interestingly, this counter narrative was still voiced through the framework of 'we' as indicated in the phrase '**everyone** is on his own' as opposed to 'I am on my own'. It is difficult to differentiate between community and solitude, perhaps because both represent the different, yet important, aspects of Selina's experience.

Within Abdou's narrative, he explained exactly how hard it was to forget the atrocities committed and therefore, how people lost confidence in each other,

'And before the war, everyone had confidence in each other, you see. You don't mind what people would say or what people would do, we just accept, you know...People started losing confidence from each other. You are a rebel or you are really the rebel collaborator. You see...Or you are a member of your family or even extended family they are rebel, [inaudible 00:04:26] these are because he's a rebel. You see, when there are atrocity people will go for you if you are making a nuisance. It's not working, you see. And by then the war was tense' (Abdou, p. 4)

Abdou clearly spoke of a different community response storyline to Isatu, Selina and Gladi. It came across in Abdou's narrative that the reality of *survival* during and after the war was that people did not trust each other. Despite the values in society that may have been present before the war, the basic day-to-day need to survive meant that people had to learn to cope alone, and this has not been forgotten.

This is similar to the story that Gabriel told in his individual narrative. Gabriel shared a powerful story about how, after the war, people '*don't like each other*'. Yet he also contradicted this within his narrative when he talked about how God enabled communities to come together and live in peace. Through his storytelling Gabriel demonstrates the difficulty of integrating his personal meaning-making (that everyone

is on his own), with the more dominant cultural narrative that it is *God* who has enabled everyone to be able to cope with life *together*.

'Yeah, before the war, we love ourselves. I can leave here and go to my friend's house. I can stay there for even one week, two weeks.....He will say, "Hey mister, there's a food here. Let's go and eat." Okay. We go together. We eat. Take money from the pocket. We share. There's nothing like differences. But now, Freetown is hard in the way...we don't even like ourselves anymore' (Gabriel, p. 16)

In this storyline Gabriel spoke clearly of his view that society changed from a place where everyone shared what they had and loved each other, into a hard place where no one likes the other; *'I bear it'*. In fact Gabriel went on to describe this striking change by using the example of how people now respect money and material things more than human life.

'Even if I found somebody who want to go and throw fire in your house, that person gives me \$500, I will tell you "It's not my business. In fact, this people, they are not my relative." You see? They are human beings, you know. You have to care about human life. Now, we don't care about that. Only we care about, material things. We respect material modern life. (Gabriel, p. 17)

He seemed to speak about the practical nature of survival and how this changed from surviving *'together'* to surviving on your own, where material things became more important than caring for each other. The way Gabriel told his story, with emotive examples, repetition and elaboration gives some indication of the underlying pain and conflict he felt around the change in society. He seemed to be taking a position against the changes he observed, yet he used the words *'we don't care about that'*. As Locke (1998; in Holdstock, 2000) discusses, rational self interest encompasses the values necessary for human survival. Furthermore, Cushman (1991; in Holdstock, 2000) conceptualised the *'self-change'* over time, not because of some essential inner nature, but in order to comply with the political and economic requirements of specific eras. It seems that this is the essence of what Gabriel was describing; he positioned himself morally against the observed changes in society, yet his experience was that they occurred out of the necessity to survive.

RJB: And in your life now, how do you...how are you coping with everything that happened to you?

Gabriel: ...I now have to go and go find something to do, continue my course as a mechanic or I'll go to the garage and start to do anything for my tomorrow, you know. But it's not easy. As you see, the country is not easy. Nobody helps nobody. Nobody cares about nobody...Everybody has to creep on your own knee to find something (p. 16)

For Gabriel, the only way to move forward was to '*creep on your own knee*'. Alongside Selina's phrase '*you just sit down*', Gabriel's expression seems to be a graphic physical metaphor of the highlighted response storyline '*I bear it*'.

Yambasu (2002) discusses the African belief that every individual has a role to play in the universe, 'everything in relation'. People must strive to maintain a balance between personal identity as a unique individual and a communal identity. It stands out that the stories told in the interviews demonstrated the individual attempts to negotiate a balance between the '*We*' and the '*I*'.

From these highlighted stories, it seems that those people who told the more dominant cultural story, (that '*We Bear it*'), had a more restitutive trajectory across their narrative. That is, their narratives depict difficulty from which they ultimately recover and so the direction of travel within their story stayed the same. However, if the interviewee's personal experience within society was out of sync with the dominant discourse, then the direction of travel remained stuck.

This leads to an interesting question regarding what would be necessary for a 'quest' trajectory to be told. The literature suggests that there would need to be a re-configuration or integration between the previously held beliefs and the new beliefs. From a social constructionist point of view this new understanding would need to be created *between* people, yet it is hard to create new meaning between people who are already isolated. The way that some participants negotiated this challenge of acceptance and integration is reflected upon as the discussion unfolds.

3.4. Stories of Survival: God as Saviour vs. Strength

The presence of God in the individual narratives is significant. All but one of the tellers used the character of God as a conduit for making sense of their experiences. Given the discussed religiosity of Sierra Leone this is not altogether surprising. In fact as Holdstock (2000) reflects, in many cultures the fluidity of the self-other boundary does not only pertain to the individual, family and society but also between the individual and the physical universe and meta-physical reality.

God is highly visible everywhere in Sierra Leone and religious leaders played a large part in the peace agenda (Conteh, 2011).

*'It is almost inconceivable how people would have coped without religion'
(Reflective Diary, April 21 2012)*

Alongside the existing and historical culture of social forgetting, religious leaders preached far and wide the message of forgiveness (Shaw, 2009). However, as with the master narrative *'Bear it, and Forget'*, there is a tension within and between the narratives which utilised the cultural resources *'Because of Almighty God, We Forgive'*. For some, God is storied as the ultimate 'Saviour', whereas for others he is positioned as a 'Source of Strength', to make a *self-determined* change. For some people, both of these resources are employed within their narratives.

As discussed, in Sierra Leone God is seen as all powerful. For some, God was spoken about as a main character throughout the narrative. Whereas for other people, religion was only utilised as a meaning-making tool; perhaps when there was no other way to make sense of their lives. For example, within Selina's narrative, God only became a character in the plot when I pushed for her sense about how she had coped.

RJB: What's allowed you to be able to do that?

Selina: I don't know. It's God. It's God, It's a miracle because I don't know' (p. 9)

Alternatively, Nasratha presented the character of God within her response storyline as both a Saviour and a Source of Strength. Over time, her story told how her belief in

God developed and she used it to support her to move towards her preferred sense of identity. In this way there was more of an essence of a 'quest' trajectory to the narrative (Frank, 1995).

'Well, it's the strength from God (Mmm-hmm) If you have the will of God [inaudible 00:12:54]. (Mmm-hmm) Nothing will be forgot for you. (Mmm-hmm). As long as you are coming to service with him, he always answers for you (mmm hmmm). That's what happens to people who trust Jesus Christ of Nazareth (p. 14)'

To begin with God was positioned as the ultimate. However, within her story there was an identifiable stage in her response storyline where she spoke about a personal emotional change. She spoke of how she '*started to think wisely*' and how '*things began to change for me*'.

'I don't feel boring. I don't feel like taking my life. I don't feel sad. I don't feel devastated anymore' (Nasratha, p.15)

This passage indicates a change in her emotional state over time; however this was still spoken about as a result of God's will.

'In the past, I was feeling a little bit devastated but later on, with the prayers of the different churches...(Mmm-hmm)...the body of Christ was praying for me regularly then things began to change for me (Nasratha, p.15)'

The phrase '*a little bit devastated*' seems to minimise Nasratha's previous emotional struggle. Across the stories told it seemed that there was an underlying, yet unelaborated, theme of emotion. It is likely that descriptions of emotions may not feature explicitly in the stories told because of cultural values about expressed emotion being seen as negative. As Ferme (2001) notes, ambivalence is prized in Sierra Leone and a person who communicates directly what she or he desires or thinks is considered an idiot or not better than a child.

Perhaps Nasratha storied her emotional journey from 'devastated' to 'saved', through the cultural resource of religion and her relationship with God. As the plot of 'God as Saviour' developed throughout Nasratha's narrative, there seemed to be a sense of change in the way that God emerged as a Source for Strength, rather than simply the ultimate controller. It seems that in this way she was able to integrate her own

personal meaning-making and, therefore, adapt how she utilised the cultural resource of religion.

The following passage was Nasratha's response after I asked how her experience compared to that of other people. In this section her meaning-making stands out as she constructed her identity as someone who '*started to do things my own way*'.

'They were encouraging me and telling me all sorts of important...So I started to think wisely. (Mmm-hmm). And I started to put things in place. (Okay). So I started to buy my own things for myself (Mmm-hmm). I started to do things my own way. (Nasratha, p. 18)'

By the end of the interview Nasratha has positioned God as someone who helped her to understand her experience and respond, rather than God simply being accountable for all that cannot be understood.

Abdou told a similar story to Nasratha, as he outlined the significant struggle he went through which led to a position where '*I had no alternative but to adapt*'. Through this response storyline, God is again positioned as both Saviour and as a Source of Strength. The struggle inherent in Abdou's attempt to make sense of his experiences is clear in the way that he organised and performed his narrative, in the way that he moved into chaos and then out again, often as a result of my questions. There are elements of both a 'chaos' and 'quest' trajectory (Frank, 1995) within Abdou's telling. This perhaps exemplifies the influence of the dialogic process on the movement of the narrative.

'Well, I must say, after the war, first of all, {??} I rehabilitated myself I see that the only hope I have is God, the almighty God, you see, and I pray to him so that he can give me strength to begin' (Abdou, p.7)'

Here, Abdou straight away introduced the theme of religion and God as the only hope, an unfailing belief. This came *alongside* the idea that he rehabilitated himself, indicating that God is positioned as both Saviour and a Source of Strength.

The majority of Abdou's narrative felt chaotic, yet he introduced into the storyline his decision about a significant moment of change, '*I had no choice but to adapt*'.

'And so, that I did become frustrated. (mmm) Yes, I become frustrated I was not drinking alcohol, I did, (pause) honest, I was not smoking cigarette., I did, Yes. That's why. But after a while I decided to adapt' (Abdou, p. 10)

Abdou then again moved from the 'adapt' storyline back into the 'struggle' storyline about his housing situation. Only after I specifically asked about what had helped him to keep going did he revert to the 'adapt' storyline again. It is evident that the influence of me privileging the 'adapt' story line ultimately resulted in the co-construction of a coping story, where God was described as the strength from which a preferred identity was constructed.

The conscious decision which Abdou spoke about, *'to adapt'* suggests a sense of self determination, where God *becomes* the strength to change, *'the solid foundation from which to spring up'* rather than the ultimate Saviour. There is a sense of resignation about God as Saviour, *'only God'*, but also a real sense of reconciliation that these two positions (Strength and Saviour) can coexist.

RJB: Do you think that that's something that's helped you cope?

Abdou: Yes. I can still [?? Refer back again??]. It's my faith.

RJB: Your faith.

Abdou: Yes. I have a very strong faith in the almighty God, (hmm) believe that He is the major provider of everything. So, I pray to Him to make provision. Then I believe that is....the job I'm in. You see because if without that where can I get a start? That my solid foundation from which I spring up (mmm) I decided to adapt because the mere fact that at the end of the month, things were so hard after the war, nothing is there. (p.21)

Abdou spoke of turning towards himself, but through the strength of God. This again is an example of how Abdou seemed to have been able to integrate personal meaning-making within the cultural narrative. It is perhaps an indication of why at certain points during the interview there was the feel of a quest trajectory (Frank, 1995).

Although I was drawn to stories which used a transformation plotline, it is interesting that I found Abdou's narrative difficult to listen to. Perhaps this is because his narrative was told in a chaotic manner. The story of change was brought forward by my questions and, therefore, may not have been part of his narrative if different

questions had been asked. It may be that my difficulty in hearing Abdou's story was because the privileged 'coping' story was a struggle to elicit.

My interview questions had a clear focus on how people had coped and managed, perhaps therefore inviting more of a growth narrative. Whilst I did ask about what had been difficult, it can be seen how I may have privileged the stories about coping and positive trajectories. This might have moved the co-constructed narrative away from the stories of struggle and chaos, perhaps because these were more difficult for me to hear. Embracing the chaos may have risked raising my own existential anxiety. Frank (1995) talks about how, while studying oral histories of the Holocaust, Lawrence Langer observed how interviewers undercut the stories that surviving witnesses were telling, subtly directing witnesses toward another narrative that exhibited the resilience of the human spirit.

In contrast to the stories discussed so far, Tamba's story appeared to utilise both the plotlines of 'God as Saviour' and 'God as Strength' at the same time, rather than one developing into the other. Tamba spoke about how, after the war, life was difficult and how he initially condemned himself because of a facial injury that he received during the war. However, he told me that he is now a counsellor who gives advice to other people in need.

Tamba:...but after the war when I got this damage ah I start to condemn myself I discourage...I got effects in my eye so I decide to change (ahhh)...(p. 6)

In the following section, Tamba speaks of his personal decision to change because of the help he received from God. He then described how ultimately everything is 'done by God'

'I see the work the good that God do for me when I got this problem {?} some people died and I escaped I say why I go closer to God I change after war I change after the war I change my planning to continue serving God, stopping all this dancing, disco smoking going to ghetto so I stop all this life (mm) to take another step so I find my money just to spend on family or my friends (uhmmm) yah (okay) so I change my, after the war I totally change' (Tamba, p. 7)

I wish you understand me like I have problem now. I expect nothing from my family and then somebody just help me I just say oh this is done by God (Tamba, p. 12)

It seems he was able to draw from both the master narrative of 'God as Saviour' and the counter narrative of 'God as Strength'. Furthermore, the way his narrative was organised and performed, with its pace and steady delivery, suggested to me that he utilised these different options rather than struggling with a tension. Bamberg (2004) considers how narrators manoeuvre simultaneously between being complicit with and countering the established narratives that give guidance but at the same time constrain their own sense of agency.

RJB: ...tell me if this is wrong, but you've drawn more from yourself and your faith in God (yes) and that more self determination (yes, yes) is that right?

Tamba: yes, really really right it like that self determination then you have ah..ah..ah..hope, the hope is you know..is..the hope is based in faith because when you have faith then then somebody will do it happen only by God grace by the grace you know that you cannot expect that...my only hope was on God, only God can do it. (p. 12)

Within my question, I picked out the words 'faith' and 'self-determination'. Perhaps Tamba would not have used these words if I had not introduced them, but interestingly the word he then goes on to utilise is 'hope', hope in relation to faith. It seemed that there was a sense of implied 'doubt'. A hope that God could do it, rather than the certainty that he would.

Over time, Tamba's story seemed to demonstrate how he was able to draw from both cultural resources (Saviour and Strength) in a way that did not indicate a current struggle. Tamba's story demonstrated how he changed from being a 'disco dancer' to a counsellor. This form of narrative fits with the idea of a 'quest' trajectory (Frank, 1995), where a person is changed and moved because of their experience, rather than returning to a previous level of functioning. Tamba's story is an example of how the more dominant narratives in a context can frame a story (God was a main character throughout the narrative); yet other storylines can develop and progress through the process of individual sense-making. As Bamberg (2004) states, speakers never totally

step outside the dominating framework of the master narrative. There are always aspects of dominant stories that are left intact, while others are reshaped and reconfigured.

During the interview I was drawn to the idea of *courage* which Tamba introduced into his narrative,

RJB: umm I know what that word means to me, but I would be really interested to know if you could tell me a bit more about what courage means to you?

Tamba: courage means to me to forget about whatsoever gone wrong in your life, to have faith that you are not the only one that {?} happen to you, then that's a hope for you.....I know that I am damaged but the courage is (laugh) this thing will not go out of me, it is not my wish, to to to be like this and yet there are people who are damaged more than me and there are people who come all say all this discourage (discourage?) this courage there are things that you have to think of (mmm) who can take this bitterness from you (mmm) that can make you courage example to others so all this can be courage in YOU (mmm) yes (p. 15)

Again, whilst I did not notice this at the time, it now stands out that perhaps the reference Tamba made to 'self-determination' and 'courage' were indications that he questioned his faith; perhaps there was a hint of another counter narrative which has remained unspoken. Also his statement '*courage means to forget*' suggests that forgetting has been a challenge that required courage. Interestingly, in some of the narratives, I asked participants if they had ever questioned their faith, however, I did not ask Tamba. This may have been because the interview took place within a faith healing centre (Place B). Understandably the questioning of faith within this interview context would have been a significant challenge. The possible '*Stories of Resistance*' which Tamba alludes to are discussed further in Section 3.6.

3.4.1. God as Absent

It is interesting how, across the interviews, my focus on 'coping' stories did not always engender a coherent growth narrative. Indeed a number of people told stories of chaos, of 'struggling' without resolution; perhaps this was an indication of the request for this story to be heard. The interviewee who told the most 'chaotic' narrative was also the only participant who did not use God as a significant character in his

narrative, either as a Saviour or as a Strength. Fodey only referred to God twice in his story and both these mentions were in relation to basic survival. God was presented as a force which could decide whether someone lived or died but was not used to make sense of what had happened. The organisation and performance of Fodey's narrative felt quite different to the other participants.

'this is really quite different to the other narratives. Faith features- but only in passing- it is not used as a vehicle or framework to derive meaning from or within...although it is used in respect to the imagined future...God has plans'
(Reflective diary, 16 January 2013)

So far, I have discussed what was told in the narratives, and the tensions, or counter narratives within the explicit storylines. This has provided an initial understanding of how the co-construction and context (social, political and cultural) has influenced the stories told. What has not been discussed in detail so far is what was *not said*, the storylines which did not develop through the interview process or were silenced in some way. Following Ferme's (2001) terminology, I refer to this side of the story as *'The Underneath of Things'*.

3.5. The Underneath of Things

Because meanings cannot be grasped directly and all meanings are essentially indeterminate, interpretation becomes necessary; this is known as the hermeneutic enterprise (Josselson, 2004). The hermeneutic of faith is the restoration of meaning from what has been said. The hermeneutic of suspicion is the demystification of meaning from what has not been said. Narrative research traditions can be understood as either belonging to one of these two forms of hermeneutics or as attempting to maintain a tension between them (Josselson, 2004). Foucault (1982) talked about illegitimate discourses, how the complex power relationships in every aspect of our social, cultural and political lives can lead us to internalise the norms and values that prevail within the social order. Therefore, some discourses remain *'illegitimate'* or silenced, thus presenting place for respectful suspicion.

"From a critical psychology perspective, all psychological work requires constant examination for what it reveals of relations of power and dominance" (Emerson & Frosh, 2004, p.3)

The tension between public narratives and *'The Underneath'* has also been conceptualised through the LUUUTT model within the theory of Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM; Pearce, 1999). LUUUTT is an acronym for 1) stories Lived, 2) Unknown stories, 3) Untold Stories, 4) Unheard stories, 5) stories Told, and 6) story Telling. The LUUUTT model considers *stories lived* as the co-constructed patterns of joint actions that we and others perform, whereas *stories told* are the explanatory narratives that people use to make sense of stories lived (Pearce, 1999). This model provides a useful framework for understanding the tensions discussed between the master narratives *'We Bear it vs. I Bear it'* and *'God as Saviour vs. God as Strength'*.

In considering the richness of communication, the LUUUTT model also focuses on the *unknown stories* which are not currently possible to tell, in contrast to *untold stories* which the participants are capable of telling but have chosen not to. *Unheard stories* are those, which although they have been told, have not been heard. CMM suggests that a spiralling process may unfold, where unheard stories become untold stories, and untold stories become, after a while, unknown stories (Pearce, 1999).

The following discussion is an attempt to consider conceiving stories told as imbued with the *stories unexpressed* (Pearce, 1999). As discussed, the cultural context of a story will dictate what can be said and what is 'illegitimate' (Foucault, 1982). In order to consider the context of potential unexpressed stories, I discuss what has been suggested by Ferme (2001) as a 'culture of concealment' within Sierra Leone. Following this discussion, I later explore proposed examples of the possible stories untold, unknown, and unheard within the participants' narratives.

3.5.1. A Culture of Concealment

In her ethnography of Sierra Leone, Ferme (2001) speaks of how strategies of concealment permeate multiple levels of discourse and practice, from the realm of regional politics to everyday activities. Further, Miller (2001) reflects that the aesthetic of secrecy in the social structures of Sierra Leone centres around the control of knowledge; emotional expression or direct talking is not common. In his ethnography

of Sierra Leone, Jackson (2004a) reflects on the value of secrets in the Kuranko population,

“This control of one’s emotions and of one’s speech, was undoubtedly connected to the value Kuranko place on keeping secrets and promises and of choosing one’s words wisely” (p. 98)

This historical context gives some indication as to the dynamics between the stories ‘told’ and the stories ‘untold’ or ‘unknown’ within both the context of Sierra Leone, and the context of the interviews. As Ferme (2001) states, the point is to understand how the visible world is activated by forces concealed beneath the surface of discourse and how the production of meaning emerges from the tension *between* surface phenomena and that which is concealed beneath. In her introduction to this idea, Ferme (2001) draws reference to Rene Bravmann’s image of the underside of a mask. Ferme (2001) used this cultural image to reflect her impression of the historical culture in Sierra Leone where visible and more accessible practices are presumed to be activated by the meanings ‘underneath them’. Furthermore, the Mende (local tribe in Sierra Leone) word for meaning, ‘*yembu*’, can be understood to translate as ‘*that which is underneath*’. This points explicitly to the importance of the concealed in attempting to understand the visible (Ferme, 2001). An example of which is how God is described as being behind all events that unfold in life.

“..truth is what lies under multiple layers of often conflicting meanings. In this hermeneutic encoding of the real, the shifting order of visibility works less as a transparent surface, through which deep intentions and knowledge become accessible, than as a mirror, which mimetically doubles what is in front without giving away what is beyond reflection” (Ferme, 2001 p.7)

In this way the ‘hermeneutic of suspicion’ (Josselson, 2004) can invite a researcher to look below the surface of what has been said and consider how the organisation and performance of narratives, can paint a different picture.

3.6. Stories of Resistance: We Cannot Forget

*‘M’bara hake to an yer’
(I can forgive but I can’t forget)*

As has been discussed, it seems that the grand narratives *'Because of Almighty God, we Forgive'* and *'Bear it, and Forget'* provide a framework for the stories told. As Parker (2005) reflects, the plot of a narrative is always organised around a format, or a trajectory. For example, the phrase *'we allow God to speak in our mind to forgive, that's why we are living as a community now'* (Gabriel, Group Interview, p. 3) suggests a trajectory where things went wrong, then God intervened, and now everyone is living as a community. Yet the way that some of the stories were told with minimal emotion and chaotic presentations, gives an indication that perhaps it has not been easy to forgive and forget.

'Some forget, some don't forget' (Isatu, p. 14)

There are elements of the performance of the stories which suggest that the teller was almost reliving the experience through the re-telling. A pattern across the narratives seemed to unfold where people would start to tell the 'coherent' faith based story, *'Because of Almighty God, We Forgive'*, yet then perform sections of their narrative in a way that was hard to follow. In fact, Fodey's story had very few moments of 'coherence'; although he did not explicitly use the words 'I cannot forgive or forget', the way the story was told, and my reaction to it, allowed me to glimpse how difficult it was for Fodey to 'forgive and forget'. It seemed that due to the influence of the dominant discourses, and the resultant belief systems about healing, certain types of chaos trajectories, were left untold and unheard (Frank, 1995).

'it feels like there is no resolution to this story. He is still trapped and the war continues to go on in his head' (Reflective Diary, 16 January 2013)

As Frank (1995) highlights, this type of story, or non-story, may be viewed as a heroic attempt to portray Fodey's 'reality', rather than attempt to adopt the master narrative.

'Transcript 7, I am finding this so hard to stick with. It feels like it is all over the place and doesn't really say anything...I just notice that I am not interested in this narrative, I want to move away from it...I wonder if my reaction mirrors, as Brewin talks about, how society wants to move away from incoherent stories, unprocessed stories, stories with no end, no moral because they

*represent the chaos and disorder of war, and of life?’ (Reflective Diary 13
January 2013)*

Bamberg (2004) notes how narrative approaches tend to work from the underlying assumption that ‘a good life’ is a ‘coherent life’. However, as Pearce (1999) suggests, over time unheard stories may become untold stories, and untold stories become unknown stories. The importance of finding a way to hear stories of chaos is clear.

In his book *‘In Sierra Leone’*, Jackson (2004a) makes reference to part of one Sierra Leonean’s story,

“We have been told we have to forgive and forget that we have to look up to the government now, and see what the government can do for us. The government says the war is over, but, for us it is still going on” (Jackson, 2004; p.177)

This quote bears striking resemblance to part of the story told by Ishmael in the group interview,

Ishmael: I just want to clarify a point. Do you think the war is ended?

RJB: ummmm

Gabriel: Yeah, the war has ended...

(Group, p. 13)

The difficulty of forgetting hints to an unexpressed emotional experience across some of the narratives (Gabriel, Abdou, Fodey). As Shaw (2009) reflects, social forgetting is a different process from individual forgetting. Indeed, social forgiveness may be different to individual forgiveness. There was a community drive in Sierra Leone to collectively ‘forgive and forget’, based on the view that speaking of the violence, especially in public, may encourage its return (Shaw, 2009). However, even if people forget in the social domain, they may still have personal memories which are more difficult to suppress. It is understandable that in a context which allows for emotional expression such as the interview room, these personal memories and emotions will become part of the way a story is told; even if the words used are sometimes different. Isatu expressed the emotional struggle he experienced at the time of the

war 'I so torment at this time', yet when he moved on to speak of his current experience, the emotion was no longer expressed in words.

'so this all now we thank god for this APC government come now (mhmm), we look everybody looking forget because we have job now, (uhummm) everybody do work now {?}, everybody working, we thank god and this government do best, work (mmmm) {?} so we look forget now about rebel business' (Isatu, p.5)

Furthermore, in the group interview, the way Gabriel told his story exemplified the challenge of 'forgetting',

'It's all about faith. We try to control our mind. Right? Allow God to speak in our mind like, "Don't revenge. Leave this individual for me to judge this individual." Because errm I, even if I hold that individual, I chop his arm, that will not bring my mum arm back again. Right? Or that will not bring my mum alive again.(mm)But if I leave him God will judge him the way he want him. Right? So that's why I say, because of the work of God, faith, make us to live as a community again. It's not easy. But if you go to the streets you may see many boys there they are mad ...These are the rebels before. Because for you to shed innocent blood, some people go free now but some will not go free. Some go mad. You see? Because you cannot shed innocent blood and go free like...you can go free in this world, but to God the Almighty, you cannot go free' (Group/Gabriel p. 13)

The level of description and emotive examples which Gabriel employed suggested that whilst he had been told to leave revenge and judgement to God, the reality of living this story was challenging. This narrative seemed to demonstrate that there can be a strong emotional consequence of forgetting, particularly if you are outside the social support that 'forgetting' aims to preserve. It stands out in this section of the narrative that when recounting the dominant message about 'forgive and forget', Gabriel spoke of communities living together again. This is in conflict with the previous storylines he told about everyone not liking each other.

Whilst Gabriel often seemed able to draw from the cultural resources of '*Because of Almighty God, we Forgive*', his conflict seemed to lie in the way that communities changed from supporting each other to everyone needing to '*creep on their own knee*'. I wonder whether, for Gabriel, there was a conflict between the two identified

master narratives *i.e.* *If God the Saviour is 'Almighty', then why has Gabriel been left to manage on his own?* Perhaps Gabriel's 'unknown' story is about religious doubt. However, in the context of a faith healing centre, a story of religious doubt remains illegitimate.

A number of people spoke of their experiences during the war, even though I never specifically requested this story. It was highlighted at the beginning of this discussion that many of these stories were told almost as if they were being relived.

'So we just listen to fiery fiery fiery (hmmm) all over the Katbaton they come to Wellington, Kissy so many fiery (hmmm) in that night. So I have a small children with me boys, (Okay) my daughter yeah... So I so torment that time, so I just open the door I peep in the house I (ummm) I see so many people... come in the city (hmmm). From Waterloo, they come from Waterloo in the city now (hmm) they come inside the city. So that time I just taking that daughter, I peeping to myself so I sit down and look what going on now I see so many people...come from Wellington part (hmmm)so...fiery fiery fiery{?} come {?} people daughter crying crying crying cry cry so that time they so many confusion {?} {?} (hmmm){?} what's going on? How these people coming in this town now, who are these people? (Hmmm)' (Isatu, p. 1)

The structures of the 'relived' narratives are far less coherent and ordered than the other accounts where participants drew heavily from their accented cultural stories. In some ways, these relived stories felt unelaborated. The quote from Isatu above illustrates how narratives which do not conform to the structured and established topics of 'moving on' and forgiveness, seem significantly less measured in their retelling. In fact Isatu's account is almost told at a completely sensory level with repeated images and sounds are all spoken in the present tense. Furthermore, this story utilised highly evocative and emotive language, creating a sense that the emotion attached to this memory remained unprocessed.

The preceding discussion suggests that *'The Underneath'* of the stories alludes to unexpressed emotion which manifests in a struggle to forget. The untold or unknown story of struggle, suffering, pain and non-forgetting is often presented through the way stories are *performed*, rather than by the *content* of what is told. This observation could be understood with reference to some of the cognitive theories available in

Western literature. In this view the very act of trying not to think about something, i.e. trying to forget, ironically actually makes re-experiencing more likely (Hayes, 2003).

However, the cycle of unknown and untold stories may be perpetuated by a political and historical drive for social forgetting and a culture of concealment and rejection of emotion (Shaw, 2009; Ferme, 2001).

3.7. Stories of Resistance: WHY God?

God is presented in the majority of the stories as either a Saviour, or as a Source of Strength, or as both; these are the most 'visible' and clear storylines. However, some participants seemed to doubt whether their faith fully explained either the horror and pain that they experienced, or the challenges in society which remains. This was demonstrated in the previous discussions of Tamba, Gabriel and Fodey's stories.

In some of the stories the participants explicitly questioned 'Why?' This storyline is most prominent in Isatu's narrative. Throughout his narrative he questioned why the war happened when he and his people had '*not done anything to nobody*'.

'We don't know what we doing, nothing we no do to nobody (hmmm) but the rebel come {?} anybody they want do bad to they do to, do bad to..' (Isatu, p.5)

Isatu returns to this question over again throughout the narrative. He cycles through a process of 'reliving' through to the resolution 'thank God' and 'forgive and forget'. This is almost always then followed up with the phrase '*but we so suffer*',

'because this just past now we everybody try to forget about war problem (hmmm) now we pray God, new something come {?} having us life Sierra Leone now so encourage me then we forget everything (okay) so this we look now what going on, but we {did still?} suffer hungry we want to go get water for warmth, for drink ah so many problem (hmm) {?} so many suffer in this country (umm)' (Isatu, p. 6)

The structure of this plot organisation gives strong indication that it is hard to accept that this continuous struggle – the ongoing adversity – is God's will. This statement suggests a tension between two contrasting beliefs; that if you live close to God's teachings, then you will be provided for. This is in conflict with the belief that terrible things happened '*so many suffer in this country*'. The underlying emotion of this

section of Isatu's struggle suggests an unexpressed story: *'If good comes to good people', then 'Why God?' did this happen'*,

'we don't understand they come back so {?? look to almighty God what can do for now good okay then can benefit you see because anybody do we won't fight (mm)we receive the benefit if you do bad you get the payment of bad (mmm) you see so {nothing we do them?} because we don't know what we do to them who's bad we do to them come kill innocent people then burning house (mm) give small daughter (mm) all this when them doing nothing (mm)only all mighty God decides' (Isatu, p. 11)

The question of *'Why?'* was actually present in both what Isatu said *and* the way he told his narrative. Isatu swung between strongly stating the importance of forgetting, (thanks to God) and acknowledging the reality of the past and present suffering.

The religious context of Sierra Leone and the focus on amnesty and reintegration are likely to be dominant discourses through which Isatu is attempting to story his experience.

Isatu was the first person I interviewed and he volunteered the counter storyline of *'Why God?'* without any specific question to this effect. However, as I progressed through the interviews, I started to introduce a proposition about whether people had considered the question *'Why did this happen?'* This was the case in the interview with Nastratha.

In Nastratha's narrative, the acceptance of God's will seemed to be her main method of coping. Yet there was also an element of questioning what happened and a personal attempt to create meaning as a result of this struggle,

RJB: Mmm-hmm. How-how do you (Pause)... I guess what I mean is uhm, some people might ask why...why did this...why did all this terrible things happened? (Overlapping Conversation) Yeah.

Nasratha: Well, at times, I feel that way (Mmm-hmm) I always feel...I ask the Lord, I say, "What have I done to you that made my husband die at this age because he was only 42?"...(Mmm-Hmm) ...at the time when he died. I said, "How do you...how.... What have I done wrong?" (Mmm-hmm) " You ask for my time, I pay my time regularly"(Mmm-hmm). "I give my offering in the church". (Mmm-hmm). "How...how come this man, this things to me people will be laughing at me they say that's [she married a dead] one" That's what all I was thinking about. (Mmm-hmm). Initially.

In this co-construction it was almost as though by asking the question *'how do you...?'* I normalised the expression of religious doubt and enabled an unexpressed story to be told and heard. Again, this dynamic seemed to indicate a clinical implication around the value in creating a safe space where counter narratives can find their voice alongside the dominant narrative. In this space the tension can be negotiated, rather than oppressed.

Whilst the less dominant storyline, *'Why God?'* was present in some of the stories, it was not explicitly mentioned in all the narratives. This could be interpreted in one of two ways. Firstly, the absence of *'Why God'* could be because no-one else had asked this question. Or alternatively, another viewpoint is that in the context of Sierra Leone, where religion is interlinked with society, explicit questioning of this discourse could lead to further social rejection. It seems in this context that explicitly questioning God is seen to be associated with, or permitted by *'madness'*. As Emily Dickinson (1998) writes,

*Much Madness is divinest Sense -
To a discerning Eye -
Much Sense - the starkest Madness -
'Tis the Majority
In this, as all, prevail -
Assent - and you are sane -
Demur - you're straightway dangerous -
And handled with a Chain -*

Furthermore, as Vitkus (1994) highlights, Foucault (1967) has demonstrated that by closely examining the discourses that have defined reason against unreason, we can see how the construction of madness has served various social and political functions. Both participants who did raise questions about *'Why'* were interviewed at *'Place A'* the secular hospital, whereas the other interviews were carried out at the faith healing centre (Place B). It seems relevant that in this context, where *'sanity'* is seen to be delivered in the form of a *'healing'* from God, raising any questions about this dominant discourse would be likely to extend your stay. Furthermore for the staff members, it may challenge their identity as *'the ones who have been healed'*. Questioning God may be seen as going against the political drive for peace and

reconciliation. Shuman (2005) argues that the conditions that make a story tell-able or untellable rely on socially accepted categories and unrecognisable or unacceptable categories. However, as Bamberg & Andrews (2004; as cited in Wells, 2011) highlight, suppressed stories may evolve into counter narratives which resist and undermine dominant narratives. However, for this to be achieved, there would need to be a space in which these unexpressed stories could evolve and be heard.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Summary of the Findings

The aim of the study was to consider how the context of Sierra Leone influenced how people were able to respond following Civil War. This was initiated by my observation that the current available psychological theories do not appropriately consider the influence of the sociocultural and political context upon how individuals and communities respond to adversity.

There are two major findings from the research in relation to this question:

- 1) Firstly, this study found that the available dominant discourses within Sierra Leone seemed to both influence *and* constrain the narratives that individuals and communities told following the Civil War. Both those stories that were possible to tell and the stories that remained unexpressed highlighted the influence of social context on personal response. '*When the music changes, so does the dance*'; the results showed how the music influences and constrains the dance which society performs.
- 2) Secondly, the results and discussion have highlighted the important influence of personal meaning-making within the framework of social context. The discussion highlighted the important relationship *between* the dominant narratives, the counter narratives and the unexpressed stories. The narrative trajectories that participants told were mediated by the relationship *between* social context and personal meaning making. This relationship can be conceptualised as the *rhythm* between the music and the dance.

4.1.1. Dancing with Chaos

"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance." Alan Wilson Watts

People respond to adversity in different ways and there is considerable interest from clinicians and researchers about what mediates these different response trajectories. Yet there also seems to be an academic and clinical pull towards narrowing down and categorising experience (BPS, 2013). This is perhaps an observation of the human desire to manage uncertainty. However, life does involve suffering (Hayes, 2003), and the way in which people attempt to cope with their experiences is complex, dynamic and often chaotic.

At points in this research I have felt that my own relationship with the work has paralleled some of the themes and concepts I have been discussing. Whilst considering her relationship to her research, Waters (2011) gives the following description,

'A love affair. It has been passionate and all-consuming. You have challenged my ideas and opened up new ways of being. My life has been altered irrevocably by my relationship with you' (p. 1).

As expected, there have been challenges all the way through the research process, yet I did not consider how challenging it would be to attempt to find conclusions and implications. As I began to consider this, I struggled with the prospect of coming out of the chaos and complexity of our shared experiences. I wondered how I could possibly do justice to the stories told, and the experiences that they represented. However, after a period of reflection, I decided that in order to conclude this particular research, at this particular time, I needed to adjust my relationship with it. I chose to move away from struggling with the chaos in order to accept the inherent complexity and uncertainty of the work.

Husserl (as cited in Baum, 2006) argued that the scientific world is an abstraction from the lived world, or the world we experience. This scientific world is systematic and well organised, unlike the uncertain, ambiguous and idiosyncratic world we know at first hand.

It struck me that my journey *with* the research was similar to an overarching theme that I noticed across the stories. This theme was that the drive towards simplifying complex and chaotic human experience actually serves to maintain distress. For

example in this research, those people who were unable to fully utilise the master narratives remained in the cycle of chaos. Western narrow diagnostic categories could also be viewed in the same way (BPS, 2013).

The main findings are equally relevant for the context of Sierra Leone, the profession of Clinical Psychology in the UK and the global mental health movement. Following my reflection on clinical relevance I shall consider the uniqueness of this research project, critically explore its relative strengths and limitations and conclude with recommendations for future work.

4.2. Clinical Relevance and Implications

As Bracken *et al* (1995) highlight, this research clearly demonstrates why the sociocultural and political context is central in understanding the process of collective and individual meaning making and response. I have discussed the diverging viewpoints of the utility and cultural relevance of the dominant Western model of PTSD and Post Traumatic Growth. In this discussion, a social critique was given to highlight the missing social element in these theories. As discussed, the main findings from the current research supports this social critique, therefore, providing evidence that as a profession we must commit to valuing social context.

Joseph and Linley (2008) suggest a psychosocial framework for understanding experiences following trauma, which this research supports.

4.2.1. Clinical Psychology in the UK

a) A Call for Critical Reflection

A number of authors have highlighted the view that, if unquestioned, the dominant therapeutic approaches in the UK could be experienced as racist because they privilege Western concepts of the self and mental health (Patel, 2000; Sue, Arredondo & McBauis, 1992). Government policies, such as the '*Delivering Race Equality* (DRE) agenda (DofH, 2005), have attempted to address the need for more effective, accessible and acceptable mental health services for ethnically diverse clients. Whilst the DRE agenda is reported to have made positive steps forward (Wilson, 2009), there

has also been concern raised. This concern centres on the observation that since the end of the programme there has been little change in the way that people from certain communities are cared for within mental health services (MIND, 2011). Furthermore, MIND (2011) highlight,

'Despite the magnitude of DRE in both degree of investment and impact, its legacies are hard to find in new health policy. Yet again, service users and charities are drawing attention to the silence on race equality, a familiar and regrettable position' (p. 5)

The main findings from this research suggest that Clinical Psychology must critically consider what the next steps are in developing both culturally sensitive approaches and culturally competent practitioners.

It is striking that there are no specific guidelines around cultural competence published by the British Psychological Society (BPS), aside from a very short mention within their ethical framework (BPS, 2009). Although it has received criticism, the American Psychological Association has provided such guidance (APA, 2009).

This research recommends that Clinical Psychology should go further to meet the need highlighted in the *Delivering Race Equality* agenda (DofH, 2005). This should be done by placing a higher value on the role of social context in both the maintenance of distress and resilience. The value of social context needs to be addressed at a theoretical, intervention, service and training level. As Turpin and Coleman (2010) reflect in their consideration of cultural competence within training,

'The last five years have seen progress in how clinical psychology services consider and address the needs of diverse communities...but we could all do a little better!' (p. 25)

Furthermore, this is not only an issue which should be critically reflected upon in relation to the 'other'; for example, people who are labelled as 'diverse' or as belonging to ethnic minority groups. Rather, if we are to progress our understanding of the psychological impact of trauma, all experience should be viewed in context.

b) An Integrated Psychosocial Framework

Accreditation criteria for clinical psychology doctorate programmes require trainees to incorporate societal and cultural factors in their formulations (BPS, 2010). However as the *Good Practice Guidelines on the use of psychological formulation* (BPS, 2011) highlight, the community/social inequalities/human rights perspective is often poorly integrated into practice. Formulations are guided by the available psychological models. Perhaps a first step towards valuing context, in both formulations and practice, would be to build on Joseph and Linely's (2008) suggestion of an '*Integrated Psychosocial Framework*'. In this framework perhaps the cognitive theories of PTSD and Post Traumatic Growth could be integrated and developed to include a suitable consideration of social context as a mediator for individual psychological processes. For example, as previously cited, Brewin (2003) begins to discuss the potential link between negative appraisals, wider notions of identity and a person's sense of belonging in a social world. If a framework for understanding the impact of trauma *in context* was recognised, it could provide the foundation for cultural competent practice (Turpin & Coleman, 2010) and adherence to the BPS value of '*respect for individual difference*' (BPS, 2010).

c) Learning from Others

It may be helpful to consider what can be learnt and integrated within frameworks from other fields of psychology. Community Psychology, for example, deals with the life of groups of people in context (Burton *et al*, 2012). As Webster and Robertson (2007) comment, a first step, drawing from this approach, could be to ask communities to define their own mental health needs and strengths rather than these being externally imposed. Therefore, a Community Psychology approach can offer the opportunity to provide services which are more congruent with a community's own constructions of mental health problems. This is in line with the main findings of this research which are that social context provides a framework through which people make sense of their experiences. With this in mind, it is clear that the only useful approach to designing services is to place a high value on the role of context.

4.2.2. *Relevance for Sierra Leone*

The main findings of this research are important for considering how psychological interventions may be attempted in a culturally sensitive way within Sierra Leone.

It is important to highlight that I make the following discussion points from a position of an outsider. I acknowledge my role in the co-construction of the stories told, and the discussion is based on my selection and interpretation of what was said. As Ahern (1999) highlights, it is not possible for a qualitative researcher to be totally objective, because total objectivity is not humanly possible. The ideas discussed are not intended to be positioned as the 'truth'.

a) *Practical before Emotional*

As highlighted in the literature review, the current models of both PTSD and Post Traumatic Growth place an emphasis on the cognitive processes involved in adjustment following adversity. However, as Jackson (2004a) highlights, the burning issues for Sierra Leoneans are the material means to sustain life, rather than intrapsychic wounds. Maslow (1943, 1954) also highlighted a *hierarchy of needs*, from basic needs (e.g. physiological, safety, love, and esteem) to growth needs (cognitive, aesthetics and self-actualization). Within Maslow's hierarchy, one must satisfy lower level basic needs before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs.

In the West we take for granted some of Maslow's (1943, 1954) lower levels. However, if we are to offer support to others in a different situation to ourselves then we need to change our focus. This point is also relevant to Clinical Psychology in Western contexts where there are extensive areas of poverty and deprivation. In such areas the meeting of basic needs may take greater priority in individuals' lives than intrapsychic distress. These sections of the community are often the hardest to reach through statutory services (Leon *et al*, 2001).

The main findings of this research highlight that a 'practical' focus should be at the foreground of psychologically informed interventions for situations where poverty is the most pressing issue. Albee (1982) pleads for recognition of the role of poverty,

meaningless work, unemployment, racism and sexism in producing psychopathology. The current research highlights the need for a response to this plea in our service designs and interventions, particularly in international contexts such as Sierra Leone.

b) Social Re-Integration

As discussed, the main findings of the research highlight the importance of the relationship *between* dominant and counter narratives in the maintenance of distress. The historical cultural focus on interdependent understandings of the 'self' and the struggle to make sense of the change in social interactions during and following the war are clear. As Bracken *et al* (1995) discusses, war and organised violence often damage traditional ways of life. This damage can mean that the events of the war are even more traumatic for the individuals who are left without a meaningful framework in which to structure their suffering. These are often the individuals who find themselves in mental health institutions.

A recommendation from this research is that health initiatives should focus on the social re-integration of people in distress back into the community. This is based on the idea that in a context which historically advocates a '*We Bear it*' narrative, social isolation is likely to maintain suffering.

This means that interventions should take place through consultation with local communities regarding how it may be possible for people in distress to be re-accepted. In Sierra Leone there has been a drive for the re-integration of child soldiers. There may be lessons that could be learnt from these processes to support people experiencing other less culturally acceptable forms of distress.

The church and religious leaders have the power to influence social discourse around the conceptualisation of mental distress. It may be useful to work with religious leaders to develop a space where dialogue about alternative ideas regarding expression of distress can take place. As Mbiti (1975) states, African religion is to be found in all aspects of life; African psychology, therefore, has to embrace African religion.

c) A Space for Expression

The findings of this research indicate that the untold, unknown and unheard stories play a perpetuating role in the cycle of 'chaos'. The owners of these stories often become labelled as 'mentally unwell', which often results in social exclusion. Consequently, it is relevant to work with an individual's personal meaning-making processes. This would involve hearing the expression of the less accepted stories, alongside the more socially focussed interventions.

Currently in Sierra Leone, many attempts are being made to support people using predominately Western based understandings of mental health, alongside faith based health systems, for example the faith based healing, 'Place B'. There are likely to be other community-based approaches which I have not encountered. However, the main findings from this research highlight the need to create a space for the witnessing of 'chaotic stories'. Naturally, these spaces would need to fit within the cultural framework of Sierra Leone; therefore, this is not a suggestion for individual therapy based on Western norms. Rather it a recommendation that individuals and communities may benefit from a facilitated opportunity to explore their *personal* meaning-making *within* their cultural context. As previously highlighted, perhaps consultation with the local community could be a first step forward. Through this joint approach, the relationship *between* the dominant narratives and personal counter narratives may be addressed.

2.2.3. Global Mental Health

The clinical implications of this research are of course also important for the rapidly developing field of global mental health. All countries have a social context.

White (2013) has provided a comprehensive review of the ranging concerns regarding the '*Globalisation of Mental Illness*'. These concerns are supported by the findings of this research. As Summerfield (2001) stresses, we must guard against assumptions that indigenous concepts of mental health difficulties are based on ignorance. Instead we should embrace ways of working which privilege local resources and offer the opportunity for facilitation rather than domination. Furthermore, White (2013)

highlights how different disciplines need to come together and engage in constructive dialogue. This conversation should aim to develop cross-cultural understanding about how to meet the 'mental health' needs of people across the globe. As Jackson (2004b) emphasises,

“the situation of the other may be seen, not simply as one we want to save them from, making them more like us, but one we might learn from, even if this means greater acceptance of the suffering in this world, less crusading talk about how we may set the world to rights, and a place for silence” (p. 57).

4.3. Critical Review

4.3.1. Uniqueness

The major strength of this study is that it addresses a clearly highlighted gap in the literature. This gap concerns the link between social context and personal response following adversity. Research into this 'contextual gap' is paramount for ensuring the continuing ethical practice of Clinical Psychologists as we attempt to meet the needs of an ever developing multicultural society. Moreover, this research is unique in the use of narrative analysis as a methodology and the context of Sierra Leone as a focus.

A further strong point of this research is that the narratives of individuals in a one to one 'private' interview setting were considered alongside the narratives of individuals within a group 'public' setting. This enabled the discussion of the influence of context to be situated *within* the research, which provided a unique dimension (Morgan, 1996).

4.3.2. Reliability and Rigour

This research was driven by the epistemological view that reality is constructed between people. Therefore, there was no aim to prove or disprove theories. Instead there was an intention to add to the knowledge base by exploring the experiences of individuals and communities within the context of Sierra Leone. As such, it is not appropriate to uniformly generalise any of the specific results. However, it is suggested that the main findings may have relevance to contexts, beyond those of

Sierra Leone. Furthermore, as many authors (Foucault, 1967, 1982; White & Epton, 1990; Freire, 1872) have historically discussed, the relationship between master and counter narratives is likely to be a dynamic which occurs across contexts; although the dominant and subjugated stories will of course be different.

In order to enable the reader to critical review the work, I have been transparent about the process through which the narratives were obtained and how the analysis was conducted. Critical reflection has also been included throughout the discussion to highlight the co-constructed nature of the research process. I also used reflective writing to aid the research process (Appendix M). This enabled me to transparently make changes to the interview schedule in line with the practice of an emergent design (Given, 2008).

4.3.3. Cultural Sensitivity

This research demonstrated cultural sensitivity throughout. For example, the words *adversity* and *distress* were chosen, rather than *trauma*, in order to privilege local conceptualisations over imported Western understandings. Furthermore, as discussed, I sought consultation throughout the project from local Sierra Leonean advisors. I also reviewed ethnographic research relevant to the local context in order to ensure that discussion points were meaningful beyond my own observations and relative 'frame of reference'.

The interviews were carried out in English, which was the participants' second language. This may have increased the likelihood that less educated participants were excluded from the research process. Furthermore, speaking in a second language may have both constrained the participants' ability to communicate their stories and constrained my ability to fully grasp their meaning. However, extensive measures were taken to try and negotiate this challenge at every point of the research. For example, I discussed the interview schedule with my Cultural Consultant and checked my understanding of words used during the interview. Furthermore, it is important to note that even when people are conversing in the same language, there will inevitably be differing constructions of meaning as this is always the challenge of communication

(Gergen, 1985). However, for future research into this area it would be helpful if the researcher was able to speak the same first language as the participants.

4.4. Recommendations for Further Research

Further research could build on this project by utilising Narrative Analysis to explore the influence of the social context on personal meaning construction in other countries. Other forms of adversity may also be of interest within such qualitative research.

More males than females were interviewed in this research, therefore, further research may wish to place more of an emphasis on the role of gender and context in the construction of response stories. It may also be interesting for further research to take place within community settings, rather than mental health organisations. This could facilitate further understanding of more local conceptualisations of distress and resilience, outside of the influence of existing mental health discourses.

The preceding suggestions for further research would facilitate the emergence of a rich body of evidence concerning the impact of social context and personal response following adversity. This knowledge may provide important evidence to support, build upon or amend the implications and recommendations.

Research into the development of services for individuals and communities following adversity could take a Participatory Action Research (PAR; Baum, 2006) approach. PAR is a methodology where researchers work in partnership with communities in a manner that leads to action for change. A reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by an understanding of history, culture, and local context, which is embedded in social relationships (Baum, 2006). This approach to further research would value the resources that communities inherently possess alongside academic knowledge and frameworks. A PAR approach would address the clinical implications raised from this research which focus on developing existing models of intervention to place a higher value on the relevance of context.

4.5. Final Conclusion

A clear message speaks through this research,

'When the music changes, so does the dance'. Africa Proverb

If we are to move forward in our knowledge regarding the psychological impact of adversity, then we must find a way to suspend personal and societal ideas of 'right' and 'wrong'. *We must make a commitment to valuing context and complexity.*

The philosopher Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi is cited as saying in the 13th Century,

'Out beyond ideas of wrong doing and right doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there'.

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6. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Interpretive Frame

Interpretive Frame

Level 1 (Initial analysis)

Thematic content (what is said)
Organisation of narrative (the way the story is told)
Performance of narrative (positioning of teller and audience/co-construction)

Level 2 (Summary per interview)

- Identify main themes (storylines) 'the feel of life'. Across time. Highlight quotes.
- What are consistencies/inconsistencies within passages and across interview (re level 1)
- What does way story told say about **meaning** (for narrator, to me?)
- During turn-taking, which stories are advanced and how?

Level 3 (Contextual analysis)

- How has **Contextual** (social, political, cultural discourses) influence what has been said **(or not said)**
- What is the local context in which this story must be understood
- How have I (as researcher) influenced what has been said
- What are the common, opposing, elements of the different accounts?

Appendix B: Ethical Approval

Revised (September 2006)

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Student Investigator: Rachel Brown

Title of project: *"When the music changes, so does the dance": Exploring the process of sense making following Civil War in Sierra Leone.*

- **Supervisor:** Dr Saskia Keville (Principle Supervisor)
- Professor David Winter (Secondary Supervisor)
- Dr Nick Wood (Secondary Supervisor)

Registration Protocol Number: PSY/02/12/RB

The approval for the above research project was granted on 27 February 2012 by the Psychology Ethics Committee under delegated authority from the Ethics Committee of the University of Hertfordshire.

The end date of your study is 20 April 2012.

Signed:



Date: 27 February 2012

Professor Lia Kvavilashvili
Chair
Psychology Ethics Committee

STATEMENT OF THE SUPERVISOR:

From my discussions with the above student, as far as I can ascertain, s/he has followed the ethics protocol approved for this project.

Signed (supervisor): 

Date: 24.5.13

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

PROJECT TITLE:

“When the music changes, so does the dance”: Exploring the process of sense making following Civil War in Sierra Leone.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the processes which people go through in their attempt to make sense of their experiences during the Civil War in Sierra Leone.

What is involved?

If you agree to take part in this study you will firstly be asked to take part in a group interview. This interview will be recorded and is likely to last approximately two hours. Following your participation in this group I may ask you if you would like to take part in a separate individual interview. If you were happy to do this, I would arrange a time with you on another day to carry out this interview. It is likely that this individual interview would also last approximately two hours. **During both of these interviews the researcher would not ask you any specific questions about the details of what happened to you during the war**, rather she would be enquiring about the processes involved in how you have made sense of such experiences. **To take part in this research you need to be able to speak English**. If you have any further questions the researcher would be happy to discuss them with you further prior to taking part in the study.

What are the risks in taking part?

The risk involved in taking part in this study is that talking about your experiences may trigger some feelings of distress. In case this happened you would be able to stop the interview at any point and I would provide you with appropriate support. However, it may also be that talking about such experiences has a positive benefit for you. Either way, you will be given an opportunity at the end of your interviews to discuss your experience of taking part in the research. The researcher is a Clinical Psychologist in training, and therefore has experience of supporting people in distress.

What are the benefits of taking part?

As stated, you may find that exploring how you have made sense of your experiences is beneficial for your well being. Furthermore, through sharing your knowledge and understanding you will be helping to inform practices aimed at supporting people who have had similar experiences.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this project is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without the need to justify your decision.

Confidentiality

Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Any identifiable information will be changed so all the information you give remains anonymous throughout the research process; however, please note that some general themes from people's stories may be used in the write up of the project. All recorded files will be stored securely and destroyed at the end of the research process. All participants will be required to sign a consent form but this information will be stored separately from the interview files.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The data collected during this study will be used as part of doctorate thesis at the University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom. The researcher would be able to provide you with information regarding the results of this study once the interviews have been analysed. In the event that the results of the study are published your anonymity will be retained and the researcher would be happy to provide you with a copy of the paper.

Who has reviewed this study?

The project has been approved by the Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Hertfordshire (protocol number **PSY/02/12/RB**)

Further Information

For further information about this research please contact:

Rachel Brown: (Researcher : rachel_brown39@hotmail.com)

Or

Professor David Winter: (Supervisor: d.winter@herts.ac.uk)

Appendix D: Debrief Sheet

PROJECT TITLE:

“When the music changes, so does the dance”: Exploring the process of sense making following Civil War in Sierra Leone.

Thank you for taking part in this study. The aim of the interviews, which you have participated in, was to explore the processes which people go through in their attempt to make sense of their experiences during the Civil War in Sierra Leone. It is hoped that knowledge gained through this project will help develop current understanding about people’s responses to distressing situation, and therefore inform future ways of supporting people who have had similar experiences in the future.

- The researcher has given you the opportunity at the end of the interview to discuss your experience of taking part in this research. The researcher has also made you aware of who you can contact within your service/organisation should you require further support due to issues raised during the interview. *(Please tick the box to confirm this has happened)*

Do you have any further questions?

Do you wish to be informed as to the outcome of the study? *(Please tick)*

Yes

No

Thank you for participating in this study.

If you would like to clarify any details in the future you can contact: Rachel Brown: (Researcher : rachel_brown39@hotmail.com) or Professor David Winter: (Supervisor: d.winter@herts.ac.uk)

Appendix E: Organisations Information Sheet

Dear XXXX,

I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist studying at the University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom. I heard about your service through Professor David Winter, with whom I understand you have links. I am writing to you because I am looking for people to take part in some research that I am planning to carry out at the end of March 2012. In brief, I am hoping to undertake an exploratory study focused on the processes which people go through in an attempt to make sense of their experiences during the Civil War in Sierra Leone; I am particularly interested in how culture and religion/spirituality may relate to this process. I would hope that through understanding more about the experience of people following events like Civil War, it will be possible to further understanding about the most helpful ways to support communities, and individuals, following similar experiences in the future.

I am aiming to find people who would be interested in taking part in my research who consider themselves to have experienced a significantly distressing experience/s during the Civil War. It might be that the person is still experiencing some distress related to these experiences, or they may no longer feel distressed. *The important criterion is that the person found the event distressing at the time.*

I hope to find people who would be happy to be interviewed in a group setting, and then I would also like to interview some people individually. It is likely that both these interviews, which would be recorded, would each last for about two hours. I would be interested in interviewing both the people you work with and members of staff within your organisation. If you took part in this research all identifying information would be changed to ensure your confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. **Please note that to take part in this research people will be required to speak English.**

The research has been considered by the Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology at the University of Hertfordshire, which is happy for it to proceed if it receives local approval to cover the organisations in which the research is conducted. Please find enclosed the Memorandum of Understanding, which 'Place B' requested me to complete. If you are happy for the research to proceed, I should be most grateful if it would be possible for guests and staff of 'Place B' to be asked if they would be willing to participate in the research.

We have arranged the provisional date of **27th March at 10am** for me to visit and provide any more details that you or potential participants may require about the interview process, and to arrange a convenient time for me to conduct the interviews. Please find attached a sheet for potential participants providing information about the research. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information. Although the interviews will be confidential, I shall be happy to provide you and participants with a report on the results of the research in due course.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Brown

Trainee Clinical Psychologist, University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom.

Contact telephone number: +44 (0)7809736670, E-mail address: rachel_brown39@hotmail.com

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

Project Title:

“When the music changes, so does the dance”: Exploring the process of sense making following Civil War in Sierra Leone.

Statement by Participant

- I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for this study.
- I understand what my involvement will entail and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, and that I can withdraw at any time without prejudice.
- I understand that any identifiable information will be changed to maintain my confidentiality.
- I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.
- I understand that my interview will be recorded.
- Contact information has been provided should I wish to seek further information from the researcher at any time for purposes of clarification.

Participant’s Name

Participant’s

Signature Date

Statement by Investigator

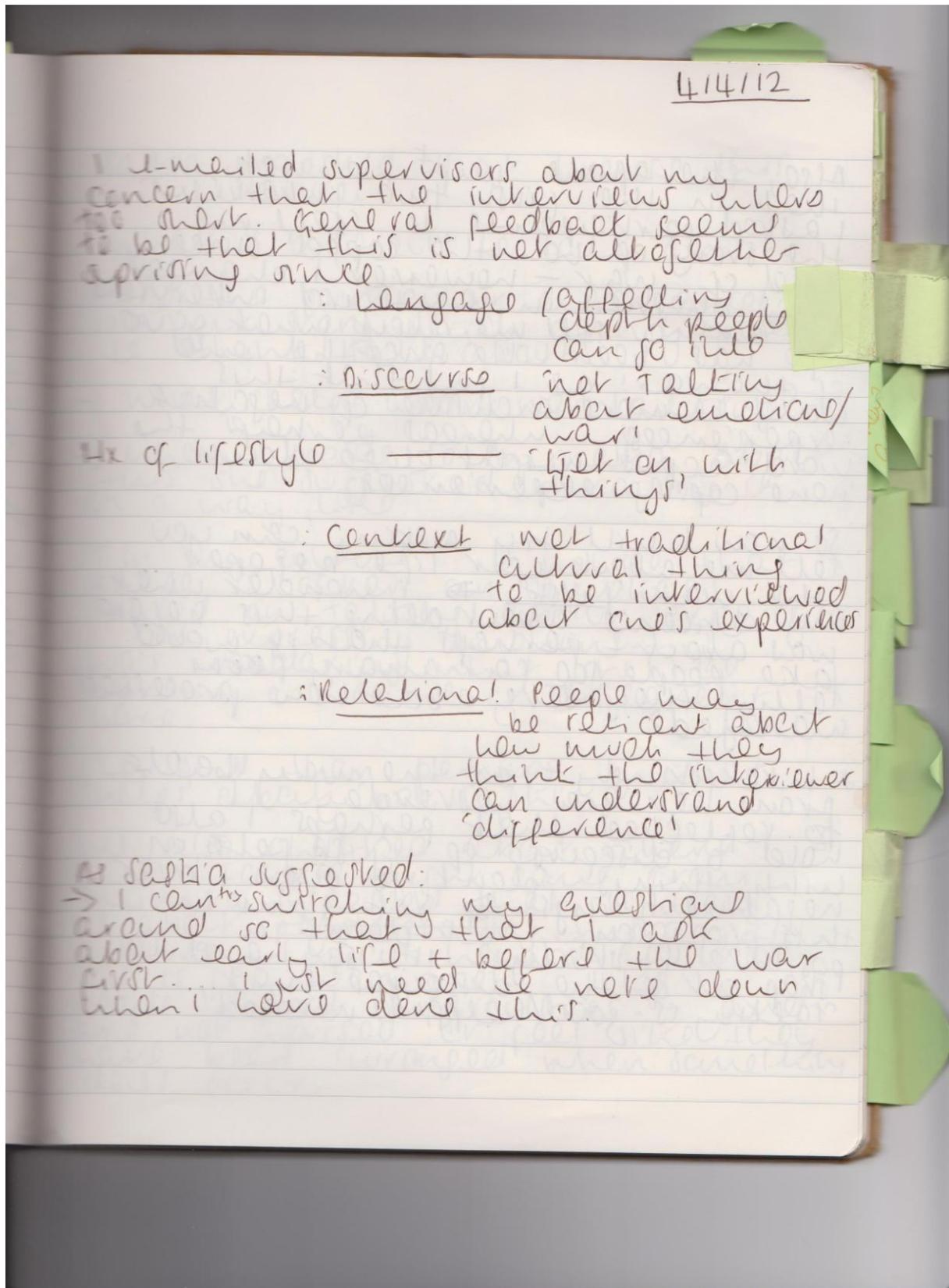
- I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this participant without bias and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Investigator’s Name

Investigator’s

Signature Date

Appendix G: Example of Reflective Journal (indicating changes to interview schedule)



Also, therefore imp^t to not
that in the first two interviews
I asked participants to 'tell me
the story of how the cope' since
end of war - however I changed
this question in the third interview
to 'can you tell me about what your
life has been like since the end
of the war' as I felt that this
would be more inclusive of negative
experiences... whereas perhaps the
word 'cope' might close down
'new' coping experiences

So now I will try asking 'can you
tell me about your life before
the war ~~first~~ ^{to} I wonder what
my reticence about doing this kept
was about - perhaps that it would
take people too far away from
telling they story about how process
managed?

* Interestingly - on the way back
from Geneva yesterday I
to reflected that perhaps I also
held a discourse of 'just get on
with things' don't go over + over
negative things. Yet I am in
this profession... but doing a
positive & study... its so hard to
step out of the discourse that
'talking is good/helpful/needed'

I wonder how Maslow's hierarchy of needs fits with this.



Also... if therapies aren't available... then... people haven't had the opportunity to 'talk'

↳ interesting regarding Hx of 4 therapies as an upper class white tradition...

Yet also... interesting that there are some organisations here providing therapy + it seems they are helpful.

... so maybe therapies associated with specific 'trauma' focus could work...

Anyway... Nick Wood as mentioned about considering where this discourse might come from + in what form...

Public-political drive to 'get on with things' (not reminisce about the war, perhaps with fear of old passions, hurts, + divisions being raised)

? or avoid treading on egg shells of war memories in case it all comes flooding back.

Appendix H: Interview Schedule

Focus Groups

Set-up

- Thanks and Welcome
- Introductions (name labels)
- Noting recording
- Outline procedure
- Ground rules of group
- Recap purpose
- Opportunity to ask question

I am interested in what you as a community, and as individuals, have been through since the end of the Civil War. I am not asking you to tell me about specific events that happened to you; rather I would like to learn about how you have coped overtime with what happened and what life is like for you now. If at any point you feel uncomfortable, or want to stop the interview, please let me know.

Questions for group interviews:

1. Could you tell me about what you, as a community, have been through since the end of the Civil War?
 - What has helped people to keep going?
 - What are the strengths within your community?
 - For example, faith, resilience, dedication, fighting spirit, want to protect each other, values?
 - What has been been/difficult for your community since the war?
2. What was life like for your community before the war?
 - Do you notice any changes in your community?
 - What is different now?
3. What do you think the future will be like for your community?
 - What do you hope for?

Ending

- Reiterate thanks
- Reiterate confidentiality
- Give opportunity for questions
- Provide debrief sheet and sources of support
- Give opportunity for participants to reflect on their experiences
- Confirm with people who is going to take part in individual interviews

Individual interviews:

Same intro protocol as above

1. Would you be able to tell me about what life was like for you before the Civil War?
 1. *What was life like when you were a child?*
2. Could you tell me about what you, personally, have been through since the end of the Civil War?
 - What has life been like?
2. Have there been things that have helped you to keep going?
3. Where do you draw your strength from?
4. What has been hard for you along the way?
 - How did you get through the hard times? What helped?
5. Do you think you have changed as a person?
 - In what way?
6. Compared to others around you has your story been similar or different?
 - What aspects are similar/different?
7. What are your hopes for the future?

Same ending as above

Appendix I: Confidentiality Agreements



Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

University of Hertfordshire

Transcription confidentiality/non-disclosure agreement

This non-disclosure agreement is in reference to the following parties:

Rachel Brown

And

dictate2us

The recipient agrees to not divulge any information to a third party with regards to the transcription of audio recordings, as recorded by the discloser. The information shared will therefore remain confidential.

The recipient also agrees to destroy the transcripts as soon as they have been provided to the discloser.

The recipient agrees to return and or destroy any copies of the recordings they were able to access provided by the discloser.

Signed: 

Name: Jonathan Dalby, Business Development Executive, *dictate2us*

Date: 31/08/2012

Transcription Agreement

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology
University of Hertfordshire

Transcription confidentiality/ non-disclosure agreement

This non-disclosure agreement is in reference to the following parties:

Rachel Brown

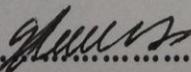
And

Sarah Jones (Research Assistant)

The recipient agrees to not divulge any information to a third party with regards to the transcription of audio recordings, as recorded by the discloser. The information shared will therefore remain confidential.

The recipient also agrees to destroy the transcripts as soon as they have been provided to the discloser.

The recipient agrees to return and or destroy any copies of the recordings they were able to access provided by the discloser.

Signed:.....

Name:.....*SARAH JONES*

Date: 1 November 2012

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

University of Hertfordshire

Confidentiality/non-disclosure agreement

This non-disclosure agreement is in reference to the following parties:

Rachel Brown

And

Aminata Mansaray

The recipient agrees to not divulge any information to a third party with regards to the audio recordings, as recorded by the discloser. The information shared will therefore remain confidential.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Aminata Mansaray', written in a cursive style.

Name: Aminata Mansaray

Date: 31/08/2012

Appendix J: Example of Transcript and Analysis

| Speaker ISATU | Stage 1 | |
|---|---|--|
| R: I'll put it here | <p>Tells story of war...despite question being about how coped since</p> <p>In Kalbaton and 1'Oclock the rebel people came we listened to the fierying all over kalbaton, people came from wellington, I so torment at this time, people from waterloo came inside the city, I took my daughter peeping to see what going on, so much fiery, people crying, daughter crying, so much confusion. People asking 'whats going on' who are these people and that are they coming?</p> | <p>1st telling Firey fiery fiery</p> <p>Chaotic like event being described-almost as if re-living</p> <p>Use of questions to whom..research, community, rebels (ghost audience)</p> |
| P: Yeah | | |
| R: Okay, so.. could you tell me about how you personally have managed and coped since the end of the Civil War | | |
| P: Well you see that time in the war time ummm because.... stay in Kalbaton | | |
| R: umhum | | |
| P: So we stay in Kalbaton midnight yes around 1 o'clock | | |
| R: ummm | | |
| P: The rebel people coming | | |
| R: ummm | | |
| P: 1 o'clock time | | |
| R: Hmmmm | | |
| P: So we just listen to fiery fiery fiery (<i>hmmm</i>) all over the Katbaton they come to wellington, kissy so many fiery (<i>hmmm</i>) in that night. So I have a small children with me boys,(<i>Okay</i>) my daughter | | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>R: yeah...</p> | | |
| <p>P: So I so torment that time, so I just open the door I peep in the house I</p> | | |
| <p>R: ummm</p> | | |
| <p>P: I see so many people.. come in the city</p> | | |
| <p>R: Hmmm</p> | | |
| <p>P: From Waterloo, they come from Waterloo in the city now (hmm) they come inside the city</p> | | |
| <p>P: So that time i just taking that daughter, I peeping to myself so I sit down and look what going on now I see so many people.. come. from Wellington part (<i>hmmm</i>)sofiery fiery fiery{?} come {?} people daughter crying crying crying cry cry so that time they so many confusion {?} {?} (<i>hmmm</i>){?} whats going on? How these people coming in this town now, who are these people?</p> | | |
| <p>R: hmmm</p> | <p>Say to each other 'don't fret we not do anything to nobody'.</p> | |
| <p>P: So we can see 1111 people say okay don't fret we not do anything to nobody, we not do anything to nobody</p> | <p>People all go inside one house, people say the rebel people are coming so stay inside house,</p> | |
| <p>R: ummm</p> | <p>houses burning, food burning, clothes everything, they go and then come back and want to cut</p> | |
| <p>P: So we looking to these people some start going inside this house, taking the one house, maybe 100 people come inside the one house, they rest, they looking for the {camping what coming up?} Okay in 2 /3 this time back, we see the other people come back, they asking for these people going inside this house, who peep who they are some people they say the rebel people coming they keeping to this house an so so so the{ people light out firey how burning the house? vehicle} all over the city {?} so inside we stay now, all food we be had burning (<i>mmm</i>), house burning clothes {?} everything burning anytime they go.. they come back they want to cut hand...{?} shot people all this we see so many people.. dead.. in the bush side</p> | <p>hands, shot people, we see some many people dead in the bush</p> | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: so so many torment that time I take my daughter one church i been attend church of god of {proffesy?} from Katbaton i take my daughter we go hide in from that church | Torment at this time, go and hide in church | |
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: the rebel people come, they want fiery in that church I say well now, they told me let me throw in that daughter let me leave in the bush, I say 'no' (mmm){?} forget this my daughter, me and the daughter now finish {?} nobody feel anything {?} I leave this daughter in the bush so how me feel? I not feel well. Them burning my things then, money everything I have I lost everything so hungry and we having some the area we see some {dispo po?} pop o you know po pop? | The rebel people come to the church and want me to leave daughter in the bush, I say 'no'. The rebel people burnt all my things, I lost everything. So hungry so go into bush and pick | |
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: Po Po | | |
| R: No | | |
| P: ah we go pick that one, cooking | | |
| R: Ahhh | | |
| P: Popo | | |
| R: OKay | | |
| P: poppyay, | | |
| R: Yes | | |
| P: you know that? | | |
| R: Yes "(Laughs tentatively)" | | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| P: {Colsul?} | | |
| R: ahhh | | |
| P: {Binch?} | | |
| R: ahhh | | |
| P: All day we picking | | |
| R: mmmm | | |
| P:{blocking?} eating | | |
| R: eating hmm | | |
| P: One go get water, no chance | Can't even get water because so many shooting. So torment that time, I not feel good | |
| R:mmmm | | |
| P: People all over shooting (aghh) S:OOOO many torment that time | | |
| R: mmmm | | |
| P: So I not feel good at all | | |
| R:mmm | | |
| P: then my other first daughter i gave to my sister that in Kalamba | Found out that first daughter who I gave to sister, the rebel people had killed, so my heart not good at that time | |
| R: mmmm | | |
| P: The rebel people go an kill that first daughter, so my heart not good at all that time | | |
| R: mmm | | |
| P: The working this place {?} all rebel people come inside this hospital all killing doing thing bad to other people, so we not feel well that time at all my home burning my people house my | The rebels came to my work, the hospital, killing, burning my | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>fathers house even up till now we no have nothing from that house we not have the money for build house because how many build house.. all the rebel burning put everything to zero so after a the while now I try try try {?} i go from Wilkinson road so many people know me I get some friend take me to {?} give me clothes {?} anything they need for give me, my daughter, my wife {?} they say so after the house house I do small small job I get money I buy {proper things from my house?} so this happen {?}, they say..{?}</p> | <p>home, my fathers house, we still do not have money to buy new house, because everything build house rebel people burn everything to zero</p> | |
| <p>R: Okay</p> | | |
| <p>P: we don't know what we doing, nothing we no do to nobody</p> | <p>But after awhile I try try try and fo and get small job, friends help me and give me clothes</p> | |
| <p>R: hmmm</p> | | |
| <p>P: but the rebel come {?} anybody they want do bad to they do to, do bad to</p> | <p>But we don't know why this happened, nothing we do to nobody</p> | <p>Starts conclusion..now job BUT we shows struggle to understand what happened when not done anything bad</p> |

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| | | |
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: so this all now we thank god for this APC government come now (<i>mhmm</i>), we look everybody looking forget because we have job now, (<i>uhummm</i>) everybody do work now {?}, everybody working, we thank god and this government do best, work (mmmm) {?} so we look forget now about rebel business | But now we thank god for new government, everybody looks to forget because we have jobs now, we now we forget about rebel business (exit talk?) | Entrance of resolution: thank god and government....which tell su to forget |
| R: mmm | | |
| P: You see, but great problem it happened this country, great great problem | But great problem that happened (reconsiders resolution?) | Presents resolution BUT |
| R: Yes | | |
| P: So people dead in the wather side | | |
| R:mmmm | | |
| P: You see, so that happened | | |
| R:hmmm | | |
| P: Thats it | Exit talk | |
| R: Okay hhhhhh I can't imagine | | |
| P: yeah | | |
| R: what that mush have been like | | |
| P: mm | | |
| R: for you | | |
| P: okay | | |

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| R ummm, but I'm really, I'm really interested in what you say about how people have moved on and got jobs | Researcher asks' what has helped people to keep going' | |
| P: yeah yeah | | |
| R: and you say 'oh it happen but' | | |
| P: yeah | | |
| R: you know 'now we keep going' | | |
| P: yeah | | |
| R: What do you think has helped people to keep going to not give up? What has helped people | | |
| P: What has helped de people? | | |
| R: yeah like yourself | | |
| P: uhuh | | |
| R: what has helped people to keep going when | | |
| P: okay, like we are because only say we getting government, the church number one | Going to church has helped people to cope. Pastor preach for you, give you advice, mind cools down and we just forget everything, nobody keeping anything from the heart, it has passed and everybody try to forget about war problem, we pray to god for something new to come and life in Sierra Leone | Thank God BUT Elaboration on conclusion/resolution Narrative moves in and out of thanks to GOD and BUT we did and do still suffer |
| R: ah okay | | |
| P: the church when you go to church in the Sunday or all the time you go to church, pastor preach to you | | |
| R: uhmmm | | |
| P: he give so many advice to you | | |
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: mind just cooling down small, we look forget cos pastor preach to you everything so you just | | |

| | | |
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| forget everything | | Things are better BUT there are still problems |
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: Nobody keeping anything from the heart | | |
| R:hmm | | |
| P: because this just past now we everybody try to forget about war problem | | |
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: now we pray god, new something come {?} having us life Sierra Leone now so encourage me then we forget everything | | |
| R:okay | | |
| P: so this we look now what going on, but we {did still?} suffer hungry we want to go get water for warmth, for drink ah so many problem | So many people still suffer but you can go free where you want, no rebel so we thank god and forget about anything | |
| R: hmm | | |
| P: {?} so many suffer in this country | | |
| R: ummm | | |
| P: but now you can go free anywhere you want to go, no rebel, (mmm)no problem you see, so we thank god | | |
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: the war we forget about anything now | | |
| R:ahh | | |

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| R: ahh okay | | |
| P: you see, because if that not happen everybody go want revenge | | |
| R: ahh | | |
| P: want to do B:ad because the other people come to fight does not understand this person and you know, but the advice , preach so many things then you forget everything | | |
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: you see, you look to G:od | | |
| R: okay | | |
| P: because God can do anything, God bring {energy?}, life | | |
| R: hmm | | |
| P: you see because so many fiery, so many burning, now sleep well don't trouble, go anywhere, no body asks you | | |
| R: mmm | | |
| P: We Thank to god, we thank to god | | |
| R: ahah | | |
| P the other country now so many suffering, now we thank to god, you see we having food {????} after fight no food | Other countries are still suffering, we thank god because we have food, after fighting no food, no water | |
| R: hmmm | | |
| P: you want water for drink, no water | | |

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| R: no water | | |
| P: no chance for drink water, no chance for eating, no chance for cooking | | |
| R:hmmm | | |
| P: yeah, chicken suffer, even dog suffer, everything suffer, but now everybody sleeping well {?} job thank to almighty god in Sierra Leone {?} you see? | Before everyone suffer, chicken, dog, everything, so thank to almighty god | |
| R: okay | | |
| P: so but {trdee?} (<i>oh wow</i>) too many difficult (<i>yeah</i>) you see {any side you want to go regular??} all now we thank to god now, because no fiery, no rebel {?} so everything going normally | But before to much difficult, but now no firing, no rebel, everything going normally | |
| R: ummmm | | |
| P: thank to go (<i>hmm</i>) you see | | |
| R: So what, if I understand correctly | | |
| P: yeah | | |
| R: what your saying is that | | |
| P: uhummm | | |
| R: you feel that if you hadn't been able to turn to God personally and as a community, um people would have wanted revenge and there would have been maybe more fighting but because you were able to turn to God | Researcher summarises and checks understanding | |
| P: yeah | | |
| R: then people were strengthened | | |
| P: yeah, yes yes | | |

| | | |
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| <p>what we do rebel we no understand rebel (mm) in this country what happen? (mmm) this Difficult for we because we are sleeping in one o clock time {?} and just firery friery fiery what going on?? We no do to nobody we no understand anything going on (mm) that time you see {?} we asking pwoplw what is this what is this so many people fighting fighting who's this what these people fighting for we no understand this in this country who are these people fighting for killing innocent people burning so many houses burning so many people dead (mm) {?} this all so many difficult for me (Yeah) you see but after the war now do small job they give you money buy dressing {? Oh other person sorry for you? Like the white other white can come give dressing money everybody {?} but we suffer so many people suffer</p> | <p>don't understand what we did</p> <p>It was difficult to understand why it happened because we are Christians and we did not do anything bad</p> <p>BUT after the war do small job</p> <p>Other people, like the white come and give money</p> <p>BUT so many people suffer</p> | <p>it happened...on one hand religion says do good you will get good, but then this happened...but solution being presented to people is if you revenge then bad will happen</p> |
| <p>R; so you were saying that there was a time where is was really hard to understand 'why is this happening' 'we haven't done anything why are rebels coming' (yeh) it didn't make sense (we don't know, we don't know nothings)mmm</p> | <p>Research summarises participants distress at not understanding why war happened</p> | |
| <p>P: but somepeople understand what the rebel come this country (mm) but we {?} don't know nothing (mmm) we just see fiery fiery fiery fiery fiery what now {?} killing killing killing (mm) so this so many difficulties for me what going on we looking for the dead we two there people one one one one people plenty people in the town for that time you know in one hour two time you see one person how, my daughter asking me how father I see nobody in the country i say people stayer some people hiding some people dead (mmm) {?} you see these people all rebel kill these people not try to hiding find any corner keeping two three days we stay down in one place no eating no water no wash so many difficult (very hard) yeah (back ground noise)</p> | <p>Some people understand but we don't know nothing, see fiering, killing, looking for dead</p> <p>Some people stay some hide, no eating, no water</p> <p>So many difficulties</p> | <p><i>So we leave everything to GOD</i></p> |

| | | |
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| <p>R: and.... do you think that since the war finished (uhuh) do you think you have changed as a person?</p> | | |
| <p>P: yeah because what are you to do to person i no fight nobody now (mmm) what the bad people doing to me, so for know I know i understand to nobody (mmm) i just leaving everything to almighty god (okay) because if {?} revenge nobody if I want to revenge like {? see yo for now} you see me if you doing me bad you aghh do me something so I want to revenge now(mm) you see my the people come doing just bad)mm) so going dead so what you do now all mighty goad already decide everything you so no nothing somebody do only all god (mmhmm) do something you see because jesus Christ told me in the bible some body {love you they give the left to you you just give the right to him??} (mmm) yeah (okay) if somebody slap you left you suppose forgive his life (aghhh) yeah</p> | <p>Now just leave everything to almighty god, I don't understand, what else is there to do</p> <p>If you do bad to me I want to revenge but</p> <p>Almighty god already decided everything, do nothing but only good</p> <p>Jesus Christ in bible said id somebody slap you left just give him the right</p> <p>Forgive his life</p> | <p>Voice of religion....if someone do bad then you do good to them</p> |
| <p>R: so somebody slaps you on the left then you (yeahh, what i say)</p> | | |
| <p>P: if somebody do bad,(yes) just you do good to them</p> | <p>If somebody slap you you just do good to tem</p> | |
| <p>R: Agghhh</p> | | |
| <p>P: like somebody slap you the left here, just do good to him</p> | | |

| | | |
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| <p>R: aghhhh, wow</p> | | |
| <p>P: you see because Jesus Christ don't like bad no he don't like bad according to the preaching the bible say all person forget put in almighty god {put in good for you for the best?} the god can fighting for we because like some people doing the bad..now dead.(hmm) some crazy...some crazy like this place here some coming her christen but just do bad before (mm) no christen come enter here you see all is god doing that you see so we always learn for forgive (okay) you see but {?} that we forgive evrytime you see so nothing {?} do to rebel because we no understand what they mean what we do thing we do bad to them we don't understand they come back so {?{ look to almighty god what can do for now good okay then can benefit you see because any body do we won;t fight (mm)we receive the benefit if you do bad you get the payment of bad (mmm) you see so {nothing we do them?} because we don't know what we do to them who's bad we do to them come kill innocent people then burning house (mm) give small daughter (mm) all this when them doing nothing (mm)only all mighty god decides (mm) you see we just lokk to {?} now after the war everyone work hard little salary (mm) you see to your family only we look to this country (mmm)</p> | <p>Bible says forget and put into almighty god</p> <p>If you do bad..then dead...some crazy</p> <p>We don't understand so we look to almighty god, what can do for now food...we wont fight</p> <p>If you do bad you get the payment of bad</p> <p>BUT..now after war little salary...you see to family...and look to country (Repetition of concluding talk)</p> | |
| <p>R: and when you were talking it sounded to me (uhmm) i'm not sure if im right (uhmmm), that since the war your belief in god has god stronger?</p> | <p>Researcher introduces idea that religion not only helped but also changed/got stronger</p> | |
| <p>P: yeah</p> | | |
| <p>R: is that right?</p> | | |
| <p>P: yeah! Because if I not believe in that time maybe I join the rebel (mmhmm) but i look these</p> | <p>Participant agrees</p> | <p><i>The Stand</i></p> |

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| <p>people i not suppose join these people not goo government this (mmm)you see because they come for kill innocent people (mmm) boiling burning i not support join these kind of people because they doing bad now (mm) so no right for join these people (mm) because i like my country i like my family i like everybody (mm) so i no like to join these bad people doing bad to nobody (mmm) i no like that you see so I just take time keeping to my daughter {?} we hinding {?} go away until this war pass (mm) because all the rebel put all gun for me ear question question question i say i no do nothing i no have money my family no have money what you get from me know you see they do alot of problem all this (action made on table) chopping my hand they want to cut this hand (yes) because so many some people they cut this hand {?} cutting this hand you see so this all going on in this country but we look to almighty god, (mm) you see because no use i not see no use {?} nothing for doing to {?} yes nothing for doing to i leave everything to almighty god because I am christen i going to the church (mm) every Sunday so we know what pastor told me (mm) you see so no nothing we look to god/government calling (okay) you see</p> | <p>If I not believe then maybe I would have joined the rebels</p> <p>But I don't support them, I like my country, my family, everybody</p> <p>BUT rebel put gun to my ear, questions, I say I no do nothing, they want to cut hand</p> <p>BUT we look to almighty god, I see no use in doing, nothing for doing, so leave everything to almighty god because christen and that is what pastor told me</p> <p>We look to god and government</p> | <p>Story of standing up to rebels...first time presented self as having agency...story engaging and persuasive</p> |
| <p>R: so you look to the government as well as god?</p> | | |
| <p>P: yeah because they know everything, (ah) government know what going on what me going on you see so al just look to government and almighty god (mm) you see (mm) i don't know {?} for fighting nothing (mm) who are these people nothing i don't understand so i just in 1 o clock (mm) in the night rebel coming to my door (mm) open fiery killing (mm) oohhh {?} so many problem you see rebel do al gun gun gun what do we do?(mm) I ask question i ask the rebel man 'god sent you for killing me, with my daughter?' (ahhh) 'god sent you for killing me</p> | <p>Government know everything, I don;t know, I just see fighting, rebels coming to my door</p> | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>with my daughter?' I say you can try, if god told me say me i die by gun no problem maybe you god send i don't know so what your plan carry on' I look the rebel man look at me and he say no you come from the line go and {?} (hmmm) because people they tie some people to line make line all must stay {?} i come to finish you now so tomorrow you not see tomorrow no more i finish you right now' 'what i do you?' 'I do you anything?' ' i cut you I beat you i do anything?' 'i do bad to you one day?' 'i don't want to know i want to fire you now' i say okay if you god send you for come kill me with my daughter no problem i allow you do what you want to do' he look at me and he say no i no kill you you go {?} (mmm) (wow) i take the daughter we stay on the right hand side the other people alllll they do that to them no kill no other person from my area so after that pass we move from the place go in the bush go hiding you see (mm) but forget job now no job no water all these {?} difficulties (mm) {?} you in the bush we can sleep in the bush so many ants in the ground all this so many difficulties because we don't understand what going on you see we don't know nothing just sleeping waking the fiery just fiery fiery (mm) what we know that time we don't know nothing you see</p> | <p>Asked rebel man if god sent him to kill me with daughter, if god say so then no problem, rebel man said leave the line</p> <p>Change from talk as having no control to standing up to rebel</p> <p>Repeats story again with dialogue...Persuasive talk, engaging, horrifying?</p> <p>Rebels then did not kill no other person form my area</p> <p>Then moved into the bush, but no job, no water, difficulties, can sleep in bush by ants</p> <p>We don't understand what going on. Just sleeping. Waking, fiery</p> | |
|--|---|--|

| | | |
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| | | |
| <p>R: and now that some time has passed since the war finished (uhuh)....do you..do you have any...in your mind..any understanding of why why it happened because you've been telling me at the time its like 'why is this happening?' 'Has god sent you?' 'what is going on?' now that some time has passed how do you think about it?</p> | <p>Research asks if have understanding of the war now</p> | <p>Story 7 <i>Things are different now BUT</i></p> |
| <p>P: well they way after this war pass you see so many thing I lost i getting now past that (mmm) you understand? Ummmm we see so many good things coming now what no did before because now look now in the road all this we no have better road in this country we see all</p> | <p>So many things lost but getting past it now, good things are coming, road, machines, train,</p> | <p>If fight come back how will</p> |

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| <p>while good come now we see so many machines so many Chinese people come in this country now do good job we see train come in this country now first train now after this war train come back in sierra leone so all this we see new thing come back so we happy (okay) we happy (mm)we not like fighting in the country we no so like fight in this country we no like fight at all you see we want to see new thing anything different changes we want to learn something forget about fighting (mm) good we need good from this country because we other people come {?} this country we no need to torment these people we what everybody come here live well sleep good eat good this we need in sierra leone we no need no bad in this country we no want to fight in this counry nothing you see (mm) so after this pass we pray still because we don't need no fighting in this country (mm) so we like prayer we so like prayer pray pray pray pray pray (mmmm) no need foght no need (mmm) fight no need fight (okay) because {?} some people no having money no having house so many suffering so if fight come back how will people believe more suffer in the county you see we like other people come from the other different country we need them we want to see them we want good from other country come in this city so we no need fight (mmm) you see se from this past now we just look everything everybody mind cooling down now look forget you see some people no forget though some people see no forget (okay)but some people need god looking everything to my {?} look to god (mmm) you see but some people do forget some do forget (okay) some stiiil they watch what going on because some pe some burning some house don't understand what they doing maybe some going oversea get money come build house from here {?} the family from the house rebel kill that family house burning no easy for forget people you see so some people forget some people don't forget (okay) you see</p> | <p>we are happy</p> <p>We not like fighting, we want to learn something and forget about fighting, we no need bad</p> <p>We pray, we so like prayer, pray pray x 10! No need fight</p> <p>If fight come back how will people believe (suggestion that people coping now but only JUST...couldn't talk it again? Think layer of forget)</p> <p>We want people from other counties to come</p> <p>Everyone mind cooling down, forgetting, but some no foget, some people need god, some people still watch what going on (on guard??) because hard to forget</p> | <p>people believe...who's voice is this?</p> <p>Inconsistency...some forget...some do not...idea that well being come with forgetting...dominant discourse</p> <p>The more you think the harder it is?</p> |
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| | Some forget some don't forget (exit talk) | |
| R: What do you think makes the difference that helps some people to forget and makes it difficult for others to forget? Whats the difference? | | |
| P: the difference? | | |
| R: yeah | | |
| <p>P: Well because some some losing so many property (mm) so it no look easy for them forget (okay) you see (okay) some forget some don't forget because some losing family children property so that because I want to see my mother i think about my mother i think my brother i think my sister so anytime i think about them i want to see them rebel kill all these people how? what i do? What my mother do? What my brother do? What my sister do? You see anytime i think about them i want to see them and somebosy tell me you family all rebels kill this family what my family do? So no easy me forget you see always i think about my family i get that feeling i no feel good (mm) because i no do something to rebel my family no do something to rebel (mm) the rebel just come to kill all these people so if i think all the time about my family i not feel good (mm) i not feel good at all (mm) i feeling bad so all this (mmm)some people forget some people no forget you see (okay) because so many problem you see (mmm) maybe my uncle yesterday he stay America her send money yesterday for all family rebel kill that uncle how this other family live now? Because this uncle yesterday send money for all this family (mm) today the rebel kill this family (mm) how we suppose to forget now (mmm) anytime we need this uncle we feeling bad uncle do very well something yesterday today rebel kill this man now we think about this uncle all people feel difficult you see (mmm) so that you see (okay). So now we try to build back new place (mm) try to the children going to school learn more wisdom (yes) this all way after you see we no need the rebel in this country because we {?}some many problem so many problem you see. Rebel using drugs smoking marijuana do any ah no good (mm) no good at all....</p> | <p>Some lose so much no easy for them to forget</p> <p>If you think about your family and rebels have killed family, you ask what my family do, so not easy to forget, if you think about family then no feel good</p> <p>If I have an uncle and he provide for family then rebel kill uncle how suppose to forget, then if think about uncle difficult</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>Now try to build, learn, we no need rebel,</p> | |

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| R: and as a community you've been telling me about how people are rebuilding their lives and you know the roads and people are going to school and, as a community as a group of people (uhuh) what do you think has helped people to do that? | | |
| P: What do we think for help? | | |
| R: Yeah, as a community what has helped people be able to look to the future? | | |
| P: Okay now because from after this war some community can gather gather we can maybe 100 people or 200 hundreden people comminuty everybody earn money maybe get some 10 thousand for month that 10 thousand anything from the family something wrong to any family no look to this give help to this family (ahah) you see (okay) even my home the rebel people going bomb all the houses from my home mckenny after mckenny i burn {?} so rebel going that town burning all the houses my father houses all burn but we all live{ from that home come in the city?} we make {commune ?} small commune {we can gather in the?} first Sunday every each person 10 thousand every each person give ten thousand some body something gone from that home we looking from this community pooled money help (ahhhh) yep we can help to the people because everybody look forget you see some people no get clothes if I get clothes i can {poole twp clothes two throses? I God send?} so we all doing that help in the home (mmm) people looking forget {?} you see (wow) you see. If we no do do that people no feel good (mm) you see and the church back some people stay in over sea for the church can send so many things maybe clothes shoes for help the church the people in the church all this can come in this country so {?} all man forget you see (mmm) after this war..you see | Community's gathered and gave 10 thousand, we make a small commune, every first Sunday each person gives ten thousand anf then if something goes wrong from someone we look to pooled money and help the people If we no do that people no feel good | <i>Communities came together</i> (different view to participant in group) |
| R: so your telling me how once people formed a community (uhumm) its like everybody joined together and put a little bit of money together (mm) and helped whoever needed it | | |
| P: yes something wrong with anyone person (yeah) then people helping to this person yeah do helping maybe dead taking over that devil do everything you see can do that yeah you see because one person maybe no have no money no good family but if you join the community everybody give 10 10 10 10 thousand or 5 5 thousand we can do help to the other person to poor family you see that we can do for help all yeah (mm) you see (huuhhh) ha hmmm (wow) good | If something wrong with a person then people helping to this person, maybe dead maybe taken over by devil | |

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| | If you join community then can do help to the other person, to poor family | |
| R: uhum so that's something thats helped, by everyone joining together its helped to you've supported each other and helped each other and | | |
| P:yes yes | | |
| R: whoever needed that help | | |
| P:Yes because when you do help everybody feel good (mmm) you see (mm) that will make everybody feel good (mmm) that will make community you see everybody 5 5 thousand 10 thousand (mmm) but everybody will forget you see because somebody dead money can do something or the church do something or if you anow muslimism okay the muslim {?} so many help, that going on in this country yes (okay) you see (mm) you see so that we can do (mmm) | When you help everybody feel good That will make a community And everyone will forget That we can do | |
| R: okay.....mmm.... and you've been telling me about how your community has moved forward and joined together and you've told me about you're personal belief in God (mm) and how that helped you (uhuh) during your experience and after as well (yeah) what are your what are your hoped for the future? What do you hope for yourself and what do you hope for your community? | | |
| P: well like me now I having 4 daughter now (you have..) daughter 4 (ahh) so I want to pay for my daughter having 3 {?} now 3 {?} (ahh) so i buy after this war i try to buy 3 {?} country now so I try to do something for my daughter because tomorrow i no want my daughter suffer again after school come to house but that house will be myself house you see if yo are going other person house maybe I not get money tomorrow this other person need money (mmm) I don't | Hope to get land/house for self and daughter I no want my daughter suffer | |

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| <p>get money this is a big problem (mmm) but I having house now for myself my daughter will go to school come i having money pay school fee all this can look forget daughter come fine 'okay' {?} help me not problem you see 9ah) but we are no having no family oversea so so many difficult for me you see {?} because {?} 250 150 this country no so many you see...ooo only because my mother still now no debet?} yeah my daughter I try for my daughter (mm) can keep learn in the school we you learn maybe tomorrow god can help me can go oversea or other thing having good job in this country anyone anyone god do for me (okay) you see so this I try (mm) you see this I try always (mmm) I having the land now</p> | <p>again</p> <p>But don't have support from family oversea...so maybe tomorrow god can help me</p> | |
| <p>R: you have the land now</p> | | |
| <p>P: yeah (uhuh) for build now</p> | | |
| <p>R: you build</p> | | |
| <p>P:for build (ahh) this land this is problem because need money to do that</p> | | |
| <p>R: to build</p> | | |
| <p>P: yeah, you see</p> | | |
| <p>R:mmmm so you hope to be able to build on your land so that you have security for yourself and your daughter (yeah yeah) and so she can go to school</p> | | |
| <p>P: yeah my daughter no book (mmm) no look good for me (mmm) you see even tomorrow self I dead my daughter having book I no feel anything bad travel any country you want to go oversea you know anything so no doubt you see so that I try for help the daughter make the daughter come fine you see (mmm) this all like my problem</p> | <p>If I died by daughter had book not feeling bad, I try to help the daughter</p> | |
| <p>R: and how about for your community, as a group of people, as a community what do you hope for your community for the future what do you hope your life will be like as a community?</p> | | |
| <p>P: well community we can gather we need money from the community like we are home what community see my home we need hospital from the home we having school now (uhmm you have a school now) first thing having church (you have a church) we still have that church {?} we having mosque in the town now we try for hospital in the town (ahhh) so if you we have</p> | <p>Need hospital, have a school, have a church, have a mosque, now we try for hospital in the town</p> | |

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| <p>hospital in the town so so many problem lice in the home now we having school (mmm) church mosque (BANG AT DOOR) yes (DOOR OPENS) (hello i just want to collect my stuff okay..) you see so now the hospital (mmm) we need that one so all this community sit down in one place (ahah) we need small small money evry year we take this money we {?} so we look what we do with that money (uhmm) you see but we need the hospital in the town</p> | <p>Community sit down, gather money and look what to do</p> | |
| <p>R: so you hope that you have a school and you have a church (yes) and you hope that you'll have a hospital</p> | | |
| <p>P: we want to do better things in the home in the city here once I have money i support for do better thing for my family for myself (mmm) f I no need bad (mm) i need good so bad no good (mm) you see in family come well you look nice {?} this family your daughter come well nice for see ooohh so many problem tomorrow next tomorrow cry cry tomorrow no we no need this one (mm) you see so that we try all {?} we need help (okay) you see</p> | <p>We want to do better things, but so many problems, We need help</p> | |
| <p>R: ahhh (yeah yeah) thank you for telling me your story (okay) I'm going to stop the player now (no problem okay)</p> | | |

Appendix K: Example of Analysis Summary Sheet

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| <p>GABRIEL</p> <p>What are the main themes (storylines), 'The feel of life' The narrative arc (across time)</p> | <p>Before: go to school, not responsible, trying to help self After: NOT EASY, become responsible, 'I have to reach myself to go out', to survive You fall down they step on you Everyone against everyone Friends turn enemies Trust no-one, nothing for nothing 'If my time comes to die, I will die' You just do something to sustain life, ONLY GOD What happened happened, neither good nor bad Before we love ourselves, now we don't like ourselves, strong hearted Now only respect material modern people life Learnt to be content, learnt to love family, learnt don't focus on drugs, learnt don't allow yourself to be pushed around Believe, work hard and get what I want Hope rest with God; new leader; go out and do something</p> |
| <p>What does way story told say about meaning (for narrator, for me?)</p> | <p>There is a lot of description/detail about 'what' happened. Graphic...engages imagination...brings story 'alive' Multiple examples/hypothetical situations given to illustrated point about 'we don't like ourselves' and 'stronghearted' ?He wanted me to UNDERSTAND? Persuasive performance Use of questions to researcher as a 'am I right or wrong', repetition Presenting 'collective' voice of how managed rather than personal (until I directly asked for it)</p> |
| <p>For whom was this story constructed and for what purpose?</p> | <p>Feels like a testimony? To have his pain acknowledged?</p> |
| <p>How has Contextual (social, political, cultural discourses) influenced what has been said (or not said) Give examples</p> | <p>Family/cultural discourse 'you have to help yourself- do something'; you have to be responsible for your family Societal: People from overseas are money and aid (and colonial powers??) Societal- ONLY GOD Political- there is no democracy...indication that he rejects dominant narrative of democracy? What is inside of me?...cultural understanding of the self...as with others...as inside me</p> |

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| <p>What cultural resources does the story draw on/take for granted?</p> | <p>Draw's on religion but does not elaborate...everyone in Sierra Leone believes in God so with no elaboration ? personal connection sense making through GOD</p> <p>-</p> |
| <p>How have I (as a researcher) influenced what has been said</p> <p>During turn taking which stories are advanced and how?</p> | <p>I challenged the story about 'strong hearted' (perhaps because I wanted to hear some hope!) and perhaps this lead to him give more examples of his point and using me as an example... GRACES ect He was giving collective narrative about how managed until I directly asked what he had learnt I did ask what strong hearted meant and challenged this belief....which may have lead to more stories being told to get me to understand?</p> |
| <p>Are there gaps and inconsistencies which might suggest preferred, alternative or counter narratives?</p> | <p>Counter narrative (survival vs it was not easy) (God vs you have to do something) (Acceptance vs anger/outrage)</p> |