Exploring Systemic Injustice and Wellbeing among Uyghurs in Australia

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ABSTRACT

Extensive research has shown that people with refugee backgrounds face many challenges to their wellbeing that occur in the pre- and post-displacement contexts. However, little research has explored the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing for this group, despite the fact that many will have faced such injustices, and that they are often unresolved. As such, the aims of this thesis were: (1) to explore the understandings of justice among refugees and asylum seekers who have experienced systemic injustice, (2) to understand how systemic injustice impacts wellbeing for refugees and asylum seekers and (3) to explore the pathways to restoring justice after systemic injustice. The research questions were initially explored with a focus on both refugees and asylum seekers through a systematic review of the literature, followed by qualitative research with a focus on a case study of Uyghur people resettled in Australia. The Uyghur people are an ethnic and cultural group from East Turkistan, located in Central Asia, who have faced decades of persecution and injustice under Chinese Communist occupation.

This thesis comprised three studies. Study 1 was a systematic review of the relationship between systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers. The systematic review followed the guidelines set out by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). Fourteen studies were included in the review and the data was analysed thematically. The main findings were that justice is understood as rights and balances in power. Systemic injustice was associated with mistrust in legal systems and preference for informal and cultural forms of justice. Systemic injustice was also found to have negative impacts on wellbeing, especially in terms of agency, control, and emotional reactions such as anger.

Studies 2 and 3 were qualitative, interview-based explorations of understanding and restoring justice, as well as the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing, among Uyghur

refugees resettled in Australia. Twenty-seven semi-structured interviews with twenty women and seven men were conducted and analysed thematically. Study 2 specifically explored how participants understood and defined justice as well as the pathways to restoring justice following systemic injustice. The resulting themes highlighted that justice is understood as equal rights, truth and freedom. Restoring justice included acknowledging injustices, right of return, safety, self-determination and political intervention.

Study 3 explored the impact of systemic injustice on the wellbeing of participants. The themes indicated that systemic injustice is associated with negative, pervasive impacts on wellbeing such as psychological distress and challenges with interpersonal relationships. Participants reported anger, guilt, and helplessness towards the injustices they faced. Participants expressed fear for the future which included, worrying about friends and family, fears for their safety in addition to the potential loss of cultural and linguistic identity. Participants experienced a greater sense of agency after resettling in Australia and becoming engaged in advocacy for the rights and freedoms of all Uyghurs.

Overall, the findings of thesis indicated that justice is an important factor to consider in understanding the wellbeing of people with refugee backgrounds who have faced systemic injustice. This finding has implications for understanding justice as a social determinant of health, incorporating understandings of justice and experiences of systemic injustice in clinical practice and, future research with people with refugee backgrounds.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable.

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Finally, I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

1st of October 2022

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Publications

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Last but not least, my deepest gratitude goes to my participants for sharing their stories and experiences with me. Thank you for trusting me to share your voices in research. I sincerely hope that this body of work is a reminder and proof of the ongoing fight for justice and freedom for all Uyghur people.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADAPT	The Adaptation and Development after Persecution and Trauma Model
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
EMDR	Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing
ET	East Turkistan
MMAT	Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool
NET	Narrative Exposure Therapy
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PGD	Prolonged Grief Disorder
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
SDoH	Social Determinants of Health
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
WHO	World Health Organisation
WUC	World Uyghur Congress

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THESIS OVERVIEW

Outline of Thesis

This thesis explores understandings of justice, pathways to restoring justice and the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing for people with refugee backgrounds, with a specific focus on Uyghur people resettled in Australia. The program of research aimed to expand on understanding wellbeing for people with refugee backgrounds. It also aimed to build upon the limited research on the experiences of Uyghur people.

This thesis is structured as a thesis by publication which differs to the conventional written thesis. The thesis is made up of three papers, two of which are published, that are closely linked in subject and have not been submitted for any other award. Under the guidelines of The University of Adelaide Graduate Centre, the papers presented may be any combination of published, submitted for publication or unpublished and unsubmitted work in a manuscript style. Chapter 1 comprises a literature review in the field of study, aims and rationale for the present research. The concluding chapter, Chapter 6, is an overall discussion of the findings of the individual studies, overall significance and contribution of the research, limitations, and future directions for research. For further information, please see the Adelaide Graduate Centre (2020) guidelines.

Please note that reference lists are provided at the end of each chapter to ensure consistency across chapters and to allow for different formatting requirement of journals for the published studies in this thesis.

Outline of Candidature

This research was undertaken as the thesis component of a combined Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Psychology (Clinical) program. This program combines coursework and clinical placements required for a Master of Psychology (Clinical) with a full

research program for a Doctor of Philosophy. The Masters component included seven academic subjects and 1,000 hours of clinical experience at three different clinical psychology workplaces which were all successfully completed in July 2021. The research component of this degree is presented in this thesis reporting results of three studies: one systematic review (Chapter 3) and two qualitative empirical studies (Chapters 4 and 5).

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

It is well established that both refugees with official recognition of their status and asylum seekers awaiting their claims face a range of challenges throughout displacement and the journey to resettlement. In general, the challenges lead to a typically negative profile of wellbeing when compared to general populations (Schweitzer & Steel, 2008). This includes higher rates of mental ill health, with prevalence in the order of 13 to 42% for anxiety, 30 to 40% for depression and, 29 to 37% for PTSD (Henkelmann et al., 2020). While there are a range of well-known predictors for this poor mental health profile, including exposure to conflict, torture, forced displacement and barriers to resettlement, there remains gaps in knowledge about the ways in which these experiences may impact wellbeing (Bogic et al., 2015; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Steel et al., 2009).

One such gap - which to date has been largely overlooked in research - is the problem of unresolved systemic injustice that many refugees face and its impact on their wellbeing. Systemic injustice refers to injustices that are perpetrated by governments, authorities or powers that result in the denial of access to resources and fair procedures for people (e.g., Elbaum, 2020; Fiske, 2014; Yasmine & Moughalian, 2016). Although pre-existing research has not specifically referred to the term ‘systemic injustice’ in the context of refugee experiences, there are studies that have acknowledged ongoing war and conflict in countries of origin as well as human rights violations having a significant impact on the wellbeing of refugees (Chen et al., 2017; Steel et al., 2009). Moreover, in the case of systemic injustice there is often no recourse to restore justice and actions taken against the injustices often result in further injustices and persecution (e.g. people protesting against an oppressive government and being imprisoned for doing so). In general, research shows that when people face

injustices in their everyday lives, they experience negative wellbeing outcomes and are often motivated to take action to restore a sense of justice (Darley & Pittman, 2003; Lerner, 1980; Wenzel & Okimoto, 2016). This action can take many forms from seeking the punishment of perpetrators to making amends or seeking the help of legal systems (Worthington, 2001). However, for people who have experienced systemic injustices such as refugees, there is typically no clear pathway to recourse and as such, they remain in a state of unresolved injustice.

This thesis aimed to address this gap in research in two main ways. Firstly, the thesis aimed to collate the existing literature concerning systemic injustice for people with refugee backgrounds in general, in order to understand existing research and highlight the gaps. Secondly, the thesis aimed to use the knowledge generated by the collation of existing literature to develop a qualitative study exploring what justice means for refugees with experiences of systemic injustice and how systemic injustice impacts their wellbeing. In relation to the second of these overarching aims, the thesis focused on the Uyghur community in Australia as a group who have experienced systemic injustice in the context of Chinese Communist occupation in East Turkistan (ET) and who have arrived typically as refugees.

1. 2 A Note on Terminology

1.2.1 Terms Related to Migration

It is important to take note of the different terminology in this area of research and the potential implications of using various terms. Within this field, commonly used terms include ‘refugee’, ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘migrant’. In relation to the first of these, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR, 2006) defines a refugee as someone who has fled their country of origin for fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (UNHCR, 1951). As such, a refugee is an individual whose

claim to refugee status has been recognised by the UNHCR. On the other hand, the term ‘asylum seekers’ refers to someone whose claim to refugee status is awaiting approval and thus they do not have permanent protection from any given country of resettlement. Additionally, it is important to note that many countries, including Australia, have punitive policies in relation to asylum seekers, including mandatory detention and a lack of particular rights such as access to some free medical treatment or the lack of work rights (Refugee Council of Australia, 2018).

Finally, a migrant is an individual who has moved from one country to another for a variety of reasons (e.g., work, family) for a period of time or permanently (International Organization of Migration, 2020). Importantly, some research indicates that while some migrants leave for reasons such as access to work or to move closer to family, others may be leaving similar circumstances as refugees, including to escape persecution or systemic injustice (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Long, 2013). Notably for this thesis, this is frequently the case for Uyghur people in Australia who primarily arrive by student, tourism or working visas but who are nevertheless leaving behind situations of persecution. The specific circumstances of Uyghur people in Australia are outlined in Section 1.5.

Interestingly, in relation to terminology for Uyghur people resettled in Australia, there were mixed responses among participants regarding whether they identified themselves as refugees or migrants, and it became clear that there was not a simple distinction of categories. Data regarding this issue is presented here as it contributes to broader issues in research with refugee, asylum seeker, and migrant populations and the terminology used in this thesis but did not form part of the themes and results in later chapters. Please note that all participants are referred to with pseudonyms throughout this thesis in order to protect the identities of participants.

The majority of participants had applied for a humanitarian visa *after* arriving in Australia, having initially arrived by plane on either student or tourism visas with limited time. To these participants, their identity as a refugee was clear as they experienced the process of applying for asylum while in Australia. However, a few participants' path to resettlement was through work, or family or spousal sponsored visas (that is, migrant visas). For these participants, their identities as refuges (or not) was more complex, and there were varying viewpoints and perceived identities. For example, Ali, a 21-year-old man who arrived through a family sponsored visa said:

> "I mean if you look at it that way, we are all refugees, in terms of, since we migrated from our own country to flee to a different country, technically we're refugees seeking a better life."

However, other participants did not identify as refugees but rather as migrants – although even within the same family there were different perceptions of identity as discussed by Leyla, a 20-year-old woman, below. In this case, identification as a migrant or refugee was predicated on the route of arrival:

> "I identify myself as a migrant because when I see refugees, the definition of refugees you have to escape because there's a danger toward your life. And I didn't escape because there was immediate danger. My parents have always told us, we came here for a better life for us and they've given us examples – if we'd stayed this would've happened. But I feel like for my brother who was born here, he was a refugee. My father I feel like was a refugee because he did face the questioning, the pressure from the government from his work side about us and where we were. I feel like me, myself, I'm an immigrant not a refugee."

Here, Leyla refers to her brother as a refugee as he was unborn at the time of arrival in Australia but if they had not migrated his life would have been in danger due to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) policies regarding family planning and the two-child policy at the time.

Given the diversity in perspectives from the participants in this study, and in order to honour their own lived experience and identities, this thesis primarily uses the term 'refugees' - but occasionally 'migrants' when specifically appropriate to an individual - to refer to Uyghur resettlement in Australia. In addition, the use of terminology was also influenced by publication requirements. In the second study in this thesis (Chapter 4) refers to participants as 'refugees and migrants' for clarity as it was published in an international human rights journal. The same participants are referred to as 'refugees' in the third study (Chapter 5). Notably, however, when reviewing other research, the language used in the studies themselves is mirrored, in order to ensure specificity and avoid overgeneralisation; thus, the terms 'refugee', 'asylum seeker' and 'migrant' are used in specific sections of this thesis and are used in a manner consistent with the definitions provided above. Also, it is important to note that being a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant does not determine the entirety of an individual's identity and although it is more appropriate to use the phrase 'people with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds', this chapter refers to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants for the purpose of brevity.

1.2.2 Wellbeing

The term 'wellbeing' also warrants a discussion concerning terminology with reference to existing theories and models. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines wellbeing as a "state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1948). This is a broad, holistic and inclusive

definition of wellbeing as it allows for varying cultural understandings of wellbeing and includes positive functioning as opposed to a focus on illness and disease (Hugman et al., 2011; Ziersch et al., 2020). This is the definition broadly adopted in this thesis, and thus this definition provided direction for the way in which wellbeing was explored with participants, particularly in relation to including focus on both positive and negative elements.

The Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) framework was used alongside the WHO definition of wellbeing as a guiding framework in this thesis, since SDoH are closely linked to wellbeing outcomes for refugees (Ziersch et al., 2019). The WHO defines SDoH as 'the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes' including the wider system that impact the conditions of daily living (WHO, 2021). These factors can range from employment, housing, conflict, food security, social inclusion, access to health services and also include social and political policies that shape and influence these factors (WHO, 2021); as outlined further in Section 1.2.4 and 1.3.2.

1.2.3 Theories of Wellbeing

Research in the area of wellbeing has been fraught with challenges in defining, measuring and developing models and theories of wellbeing (Dodge et al., 2012; Gallagher et al., 2009). Researchers have often focused on defining the dimensions of wellbeing rather than an accepted definition (Dodge et al., 2012). Historically, there have been two approaches to wellbeing, namely the hedonic tradition and the eudaimonic tradition. The hedonic tradition focused on constructs such as happiness, positive affect, life satisfaction and the absence of pain or negative affect (Busseri & Sadava, 2011; Kahneman et al., 1999). One such example of the hedonic approach to wellbeing is Diener's (1984) work on subjective wellbeing. Subjective wellbeing includes the presence of positive affect, the absence of negative affect and life satisfaction as perceived by the individual. On the other hand, the

eudaimonic tradition views wellbeing as positive psychological functioning and development (Huta & Waterman, 2014; Rogers, 1961; Ruini & Ryff, 2016; Ryan et al., 2006; Waterman, 1999). It is concerned with the fulfilment of goals and potential (Ryan et al., 2006).

An example of the eudaimonic tradition is Ryff's (1989) work on psychological wellbeing, which consists of six factors: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Ryff's model is concerned with an individual's perception of his or her life, capacity to manage own difficulties, and perceives wellbeing as continued personal growth and development (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2008). Social wellbeing as proposed by Keyes (1998) focusses on wellbeing from a social relations perspective. This model of wellbeing is comprised of five factors: social integration, social contribution, social coherence, social actualization, and social acceptance. Social wellbeing is concerned with how individuals overcome social challenges and how they relate to and interact with their social world. The model of social wellbeing (Keyes, 1998) shifted the focus from intrapersonal wellbeing in Ryff's model (1989) to interpersonal wellbeing (Gallagher et al., 2009). Later work on wellbeing attempted to develop an integrated model, which brought together the different factors in hedonic, eudaimonic, and social wellbeing known as flourishing mental health (Keyes, 2005; 2007). These models have been criticised for their lack of distinction and significant overlap between variables in hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing (Disabato et al., 2016; Keyes et al., 2002).

Defining and capturing wellbeing in a model has been challenging at the individual and interpersonal levels, however culture adds another layer of complexity when wellbeing is considered across societies and cultures (Diener & Tov, 2007; Kahneman & Kreuger, 2006). Previously, wellbeing was compared across cultures based on statistical measures and differences (Diener & Suh, 2000). However, it is now acknowledged that this is a constrained

view of wellbeing that does not reflect how wellbeing is perceived cross-culturally (i.e., what is socially acceptable and/or what aspects of wellbeing are valued in a particular culture), nor whether specific measures were culturally appropriate (Mathews, 2012). One example is positive regard for the self as a factor of wellbeing; Markus and Kitayama's (1991) cultural theory of self demonstrated that self-esteem was a predictor of life satisfaction in individualist cultures compared to collectivist cultures. Another predictor of wellbeing is positive interpersonal relationships (Ryan et al., 1996; Ryff & Singer, 1998) and in cross-cultural studies, this was shown to have a stronger predictive power for wellbeing in collectivist cultures compared to individualistic cultures (Kwan et al, 1997). As such, researchers have advocated understanding wellbeing within the cultural context rather than comparing relatively between cultures (Diener & Tov, 2007).

Reflecting on the challenges and limitations of wellbeing research as discussed above and taking into consideration the specific aims and research questions of this thesis (listed in Section 1.6), this thesis leans towards a eudaimonic understanding of wellbeing based on the models proposed by Ryff (1989) and Keyes (1998). These models view wellbeing as being intrapersonal as well as social and relational. In the context of refugee wellbeing as will be covered extensively in Section 1.3, it is apparent that wellbeing for this group is impacted by many external factors such as exposure to conflict or separation from family. In such cases, it is reasonable that they would experience negative emotions and distress. Furthermore, the challenges to wellbeing that this group may face is rarely isolated and individual, rather it impacts communities, societies, and generations.

A eudaimonic approach also views wellbeing as a changing state with room for personal growth. This is important as the refugee experience may be marked by negative and difficult experiences, but this does not imply that positive emotions, experiences and growth are not possible. However, in this thesis a specific model of wellbeing is not adopted, rather

the WHO (1948) definition that views wellbeing as a state of physical, social and mental wellbeing and not just an absence of illness provides the guidelines for considering refugee wellbeing. This broad understanding allows for the consideration of factors such as cultural, social and political contexts that may influence the wellbeing of the specific group under study. This broad conceptualisation also allows flexibility alongside the qualitative paradigm of this thesis to explore wellbeing from the perspective of participants and to be open to their understandings as well as matters of importance in relation to wellbeing. This approach also lends to the use of the Social Determinants of Health framework for understanding wellbeing as will be covered in the following section and later in Section 1.3.4.

1.2.4 Social Determinants of Health

SDoH are the social, economic and political factors that influence the wellbeing of individuals, communities and populations (Lucyk & McLaren, 2017). SDoH emerged from early research that demonstrated the 'social gradient of health'; specifically, that poor social and economic conditions were related to higher levels of illness and lower mortality rates (Marmot et al., 1978; Marmot et al., 1991; Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003). As such, SDoH factors highlight the ways in which an individual's health is influenced by their social status which is in turn influenced by social, political and economic conditions (Blane, 1999; Wilkinson, 2003). As such, individuals who have the resources to access better healthcare (e.g., access to money, knowledge, and power) are more likely to have better health outcomes (Link & Phelan, 1995).

Health equity is an overarching theme in SDoH research (Lucyk & McLaren, 2017). Health equity refers to the concept that all individuals in a society or population have equal access to the best available opportunities for health (Braveman et al., 2011). On the other hand, health inequity refers to inequalities in access to such opportunities due to unfair and

avoidable differences among populations (WHO, 2008). Health equity and inequity are viewed as socially produced outcomes due to systematic and social processes that impact the distribution of resources (Whitehead, 1991). Understanding wellbeing through a SDoH lens helps to identify the factors contributing to health inequity and where action and intervention (e.g., changing policies, redistributing resources) can be taken to promote health equity (Lucyk & McLaren, 2017). That is, it is widely accepted that wellbeing is not simply determined by biological factors, but rather influenced by social, contextual and psychological factors (Hynie, 2018a). Addressing SDoH is essential for improving wellbeing and reducing health inequity by acknowledging the role that each sector in society (e.g., education, government, health) has in contributing to wellbeing (WHO, 2021). In relation to refugees, SDoH allows examination of a range of social factors, typically post-resettlement, that impact health and wellbeing. These have been outlined by numerous scholars and include issues such as access to housing, education, social inclusion, financial (in)stability, and temporary visa status (Byrow et al., 2022; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013; Hartley & Fleay, 2014; Hynie, 2018b; Ziersch & Due, 2018; Ziersch et al., 2021). Taken together, these factors allow for examination of a broad range of determinants of health.

1.3 Refugee Wellbeing

This section reviews the literature on the challenges that refugees face and the implications for their wellbeing. This is discussed in terms of pre- and post-displacement factors, prevalence and predictors of mental illness and trauma and in relation to the SDoH framework which informs the approach to wellbeing in this thesis.

Although the research that is reviewed here conceptualises the refugee experience in terms of pre- and post-displacement factors it is important to address at the outset that there are limitations in this approach to considering wellbeing for refugees. Researchers and

theorists have argued that the refugee experience is “characterised by multiple events occurring in multiple contexts” (Porter & Haslam, 2005, pg. 603) that endure over time which often leaves them vulnerable to negative wellbeing outcomes (Hollifield et al., 2002; Jablensky et al., 1994). Therefore, understanding refugee wellbeing as a series of factors limits the multidimensional and contextual factors that impact wellbeing across migration, resettlement and beyond.

1.3.1 Pre-Displacement Factors

Pre-displacement factors (also referred to as pre-migration factors in the literature) are the factors that occur prior to displacement and forced migration for refugees. Pre-displacement factors include but are not limited to exposure to war, conflict, torture, rape, overarching persecution and human rights violations, dispossession and forced displacement (Murray et al., 2008). Exposure to war can be both direct and indirect, and may include personal combat involvement (Haldane & Nickerson, 2016; Lindencrona et al., 2008; Lindert et al., 2009). Persecution can occur for political, ethnic and religious reasons, and can also involve torture, imprisonment, human rights violations, and threats to the safety or even death of family members (Priebe et al., 2013; Steel et al., 2009). In addition to these traumatic events, the World Health Organisation (WHO) lists a lack of livelihood, lack of opportunity for education and development as stressors in the pre-migration stage (International Organisation for Migration, 2020). Clearly, the pre-displacement factors that refugees experience reflect the reasons why migration was necessary (Giacco et al., 2018).

In a systematic review of migrants (N = 15,549 migrants of which 10,584 were refugees and 4,401were internally displaced people), Mesa-Vieira and colleagues (2022) found that exposure to armed conflict and the intensity of the conflict were important pre-displacement factors associated with negative mental health consequences. Another

systematic review exploring the prevalence of complex PTSD lists human rights violations, sexual and gender-based violence, health threats and witnessing murder as pre-migration traumas experienced by refugees and forcibly displaced peoples (Mellor et al., 2021). Some examples of individual studies documenting pre-migration traumas include a study of Burmese refugees (N = 70) newly resettled in Australia, who had experienced serious injury, lack of food and water, lack of housing, exposure to combat, witnessing torture and rape in the pre-displacement stage (Schweitzer et al., 2011). Similarly, in a study of Rohingya refugees (N = 1,184), participants had experienced physical and sexual abuse or witnessed family experience abuse, denied medical care and attention, forced to live in inadequate and unsafe shelters, lack of access to clean water and food prior to displacement (Hossain et al., 2021). In another study of refugees (N = 1,085) resettled in Australia, Nickerson et al. (2021) collated pre-displacement potentially traumatic events experienced by participants and found that lack of food and water, being close to death and exposure to torture were the most commonly experienced factors. Other potentially traumatic events included imprisonment, torture, forced separation from family, murder of family members and strangers and sexual abuse.

While this is not an exhaustive list of studies documenting pre-displacement factors for people with refugee backgrounds, these studies highlight similar experiences prior to displacement across different refugee groups. Furthermore, there are strong links in the literature to show that exposure to or experience of pre-displacement factors is associated with mental health outcomes in the resettlement context (Mellor et al., 2020; Mesa-Vieira et al., 2022; Silove et al., 1999; Terheggen et al., 2001). Traumatic experiences in the pre-displacement stage have been associated with psychiatric disorders such as PTSD, anxiety and major depression (Birman & Tran, 2008; Carlson & Rosser-Hogan, 1991; Keller et al., 2006; Silove et al., 2007). However, research has also highlighted the importance of post-

migration factors on wellbeing for refugees, as discussed in the following section (Davidson et al., 2008; Hynie, 2018a).

1.3.2 Post-Displacement Factors

Post-displacement factors (also referred to as post-migration factors) are factors related to the asylum process and the resettlement context (Chen et al., 2017). Post-displacement factors include mandatory detention, discrimination, socioeconomic disadvantage, cultural bereavement, loss of social supports, challenges with acculturation, and difficulties with adjusting to new environments (Chen et al., 2017; Davidson et al., 2008; James et al., 2019; Li et al., 2016; Murray et al., 2008; Porter & Haslam, 2005). Other factors include changes to identity and sense of self, language challenges, difficulty accessing education, housing and employment (Davidson et al., 2008; Hynie, 2018b; Li et al., 2016; Murray et al., 2008). These factors will be expanded upon in relation to specific studies on refugee groups as well as reviews conducted in this area.

In a meta-analysis of post-displacement factors and their association with mental health (N = 22,221 refugees and 45,073 'non-refugees' which included asylum seekers, internally displaced people and those who were stateless), Porter and Haslam (2005) identified stable housing and employment opportunities as key factors associated with better mental health outcomes. Ongoing conflict in country of origin, even post-displacement, was also a significant predictor of mental health outcomes in that participants had better mental health outcomes when the conflict that resulted in their displacement was resolved. The review also found that women and those with higher levels of education and higher socioeconomic status prior to displacement had worse outcomes post displacement, whilst young people and children were often more resilient with better outcomes. These findings show that pre- and post-displacement factors are connected and factors prior to displacement

can impact outcomes post-displacement. The finding that ongoing conflict in country of origin was associated with mental health outcomes is particularly notable. It suggests that even though refugees may resettle into relatively safe environments, the ongoing injustices in their country of origin still has a significant impact on their wellbeing, although the injustices were not the focus of the review.

Acculturation is another key post-displacement factor documented in the literature, with the ability to adapt or integrate quickly in a new environment associated with better wellbeing outcomes (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 2011). Much of the research on acculturation in migrant populations have been based on Berry's (1997) acculturation strategies that include four categories: Integration, Assimilation, Separation and Marginalisation. These categories describe the extent to which individuals accept or reject their own culture and the culture of their new environment. Integration refers to maintaining both the individual's own culture and the new culture in which they are living. Assimilation is the rejection of own culture and adoption of the new culture. Separation is maintaining own culture while rejecting the new culture. Marginalisation is rejecting both own and the new culture. Ager and Strang (2004) suggest that indicators for positive integration include access to education, employment, housing, training and social capital. Indicators that contribute to negative experiences and are barriers to integration include negative public attitudes towards refugees, discrimination, lack of effective integration polices and reported feelings of fear and insecurity.

A systematic review of acculturation challenges in migrant populations (N = 61,885) which included migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people found that marginalisation was associated with higher levels of depression and integration was associated with lower levels of depression (Choy et al., 2021). Additionally, marginalisation was associated with three-fold higher chance of anxiety compared to those who were

considered ‘integrated’. Separation was linked to even worse outcomes for anxiety, with a six-fold chance of anxiety related symptoms. This review also found three key factors that may contribute to acculturation stress and poor mental health – low levels of education or limited skill set, low proficiency of the host country’s language and financial difficulties. Financial difficulties for people with migrant and refugee backgrounds can include difficulties with accessing or restrictions on employment opportunities, being underemployed and difficulties with providing financial support to dependent family overseas (Bakker et al., 2017; Hynie, 2018; Kim, 2016; O’Donnell et al., 2020). Other systematic reviews in this area of research have also found similar acculturation challenges for people with migrant and refugee backgrounds (Balidemaj & Small, 2019; Deslandes et al., 2022; Sheikh & Anderson, 2018; Yoon et al., 2013).

Furthermore, research has highlighted similar outcomes in relation to acculturation with factors such as lack of social services, experiences of discrimination, inadequate housing and challenges with the asylum process acting as barriers to integration in the resettlement context and resulting in higher levels of distress and poor wellbeing (Dow, 2011; Kartal & Kiropoulos, 2016; Phillimore, 2011; Sam & Berry, 2010, Walsh et al., 2022; Ziersch & Due, 2018; Ziersch et al., 2020). Specific research into the impact of punitive asylum seeker policies have also been associated with negative impacts on wellbeing (Kenny & Procter, 2016; Procter et al., 2017). These findings also support Berry’s (1997) argument that policies, attitudes and service provision in the resettlement context impact upon the acculturation experience.

A systematic review of language proficiency and its association with mental disorders among migrants found that inadequate or low language proficiency in the host country was consistently associated with higher rates of mental disorders such as anxiety and mood related disorders (Montemitro et al., 2021). However, the review also identified some

longitudinal research which suggested that language proficiency acquisition was associated with positive effects on the severity and prevalence of mental disorders. Other research has found similar relationships between language proficiency and wellbeing outcomes in the resettlement context (Isphording & Otten, 2014; Yoon et al., 2013). Language proficiency is a particularly important post-displacement and SDoH factor as it is associated with interpersonal communication and financial stability in the resettlement context (Brydsten et al., 2019; Delander et al., 2005; Isphording & Otten, 2014; van Niejenhuis et al., 2015). Good language proficiency has been associated with higher levels of education, better relationships with the host population and higher levels of post-migration employment (Montemitro et al., 2021).

Given the importance of language and communication, access to interpreting services is also essential as a lack of professional interpreters has negative implications for wellbeing particularly in health settings where this can deter the uptake and use of important services and treatments (Kirmayer et al., 2011; Thomson et al., 2015). Language barriers have also been linked to depression (Bogic et al., 2015; Watkins et al., 2012). In a review of SDoH and refugee access to health services in Australia, Taylor and Haintz (2018) found that culture, trust and past experiences in addition to language difficulties were also barriers to accessing services and this was similar across a range of services. A lack of access to interpreting services can also have negative implications for understanding legal and social policies, which in turn can limit refugees' ability to advocate for their rights and needs (Strang et al., 2017). Research has indicated that interpreters have an important role in mental health benefits in addition to language learning such as acting as cultural brokers (Gartley & Due, 2017). It is clear that language barriers and language proficiency are another factor among the SDoH that affect the wellbeing of refugees.

In addition to language, social supports are a key factor in the wellbeing of people with refugee and migrant backgrounds (Schweitzer et al., 2006). A study of refugees (N = 138) resettled in the UK found that the majority of participants found social support with peers who were of the same cultural or faith-based communities (Phillimore, 2011). However, for newly arrived participants it could take up to a year or more to find a community where they experienced a sense of belonging and support. Being connected within own cultural group and maintaining a strong ethnic identity has been associated with better management of acculturation stressors even among migrant groups (Moyerman & Forman, 1992; Yoon et al., 2008). Although migrant groups may not face the same challenges as refugees in terms of pre-displacement experiences and forced migration, research has shown that migrant groups also struggle with acculturation (Kuo, 2014; Liem et al., 2021). Among migrant groups, acculturation stress has been associated with depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, psychological distress and loss of self-identity within own cultural group (Hovey & King, 1996; Hwang & Ting, 2008). However, better social networks and relationships may help buffer against adverse and stressful experiences (Sargent et al., 2002; Vanderhorst & McLaren, 2005). The positive impacts of social networks have also been noted among refugees experiencing the additional stressor of visa insecurity (Nickerson et al., 2019). In terms of social supports provided in the country of resettlement (e.g., newcomer programs, mainstream organisations), research has found that refugees and migrants face barriers to engaging in supports and services due to language barriers, discrimination, lack of information on services and policies that impact support provision such as resource constraints (Simich et al., 2005; Stewart et al., 2008).

Interpersonal factors such as loss or absence of social supports, isolation and discrimination are also important factors for wellbeing among refugees post-displacement. Feelings of loneliness and social isolation are linked to poor wellbeing, particularly among

older refugees (Bogic et al., 2015; Miller & Rasmussen, 2017; Porter & Haslam, 2005). Language barriers, separation from family, financial challenges and discrimination can all lead to social isolation (Hynie, 2018a). Separation from family members in particular contributes to lack of social support which has been linked to depression in many studies of refugee wellbeing (Bogic et al., 2012; Bogic et al., 2015; Shishehgar et al., 2017). There are also many studies documenting the negative impact that discrimination and social exclusion has on wellbeing. Experiences of hostility in the country of resettlement has significant impacts on mood disorders among refugees and is also associated with high levels of stress and anxiety (Bogic et al., 2012; Shedlin et al., 2014).

Difficulties with social integration, worrying about friends and family overseas and loneliness have also been linked to post-migration stress (Chen et al., 2017). Poor or absent social support has also been linked to higher levels of depression and PTSD among refugees, independent of traumatic experiences (Gorst-Unsworth & Goldenberg, 1998). This is consistent with the findings of Chen and colleagues (2017) who found resettlement stressors including loneliness and social integration stressors were the most significant modifying factors between pre-migration and post-migration mental health after controlling for other confounding factors. Social connectedness has long been associated with improving wellbeing outcomes and it is clear that for this population who have endured significant losses, it is particularly important (Saeri et al., 2018).

As can be seen thus far, research into pre- and post-displacement factors has identified important factors in the displacement and resettlement stages that have strong associations with wellbeing. In this thesis, wellbeing is viewed through a SDoH framework and factors such as employment, education and housing as mentioned in the above studies are also SDoH factors. Broadening the lens through which refugee wellbeing is viewed to include a SDoH framework can provide a bigger picture of some overlooked factors or dimensions, including

social determinants such as access to health services, housing and education, levels of discrimination, and political influences on migration and resettlement (Hynie, 2018a; Lai et al., 2022; Ziersch & Due, 2018). Importantly, the post-migration conditions that refugees often live in can place them at the lower end of the social gradient, which goes some way to explaining the higher prevalence of mental illness which is covered in Section 1.3.4 (Hynie, 2018a) Indeed, these factors can contribute negatively to wellbeing as refugees experience prolonged material and social deprivation. Research has consistently shown that income, housing, employment, language, access to healthcare, social support and social isolation, discrimination and the refugee and asylum-seeking process are all SDoH factors that significantly impact refugee wellbeing (Due et al., 2020; Fleay et al., 2013; Hartley & Fleay, 2017; Hynie, 2018a; Walsh et al., 2022; Ziersch et al., 2017; Ziersch & Due, 2018; Ziersch et al., 2020).

Often refugees have to leave resources and material possessions behind in the migration process (Hynie, 2018a). This can also include important documents showing their professional qualifications. This loss of income and resources leads to disadvantage and inequality whereby refugees live in low socioeconomic conditions in their countries of resettlement. Studies in refugee mental health have noted a relationship between low socioeconomic status and distress, PTSD and depression (Bogic et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2017). A meta-analysis comparing the mental health of refugees and the non-refugee populations also found a linear relationship between mental health and economic opportunity, which encompassed factors such as the right to work, access to employment and socioeconomic status (Porter & Haslam, 2005). Refugees face additional challenges to gaining employment such as language barriers and difficulties with having their qualifications recognised in their resettlement context (Bogic et al., 2012; Shishehgar et al., 2017). Furthermore, when refugees are employed they are often overqualified for their

positions and this is associated with lower reported sense of self-worth and overall mental health (Allen et al., 2014; Bambra et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2010). These challenges further maintain low socioeconomic status and financial challenges for this group leading to negative outcomes for wellbeing.

Another SDoH factor related to refugee wellbeing is housing. In a systematic review of the relationship between housing and health for refugees, Ziersch and Due (2018) found that refugees experienced considerable issues with housing in both refugee camps and countries of resettlement which was associated with worse wellbeing outcomes. Particularly in countries of resettlement, issues included housing quality, affordability, discrimination and overcrowding (Beer & Foley, 2003; Flatau et al., 2014; Forrest et al., 2013; Rose, 2001). These issues have been linked to poor physical health, compromised sense of safety and stress (Allen et al., 2014; Ziersch & Due, 2018). In one particular study of refugees from former Yugoslavia, inadequate housing and financial challenges, in addition to family separation, were found to be the most notable sources of stress for participants post resettlement (Bogic et al., 2012).

The asylum-seeking process itself is another significant stressor that is linked to poor wellbeing outcomes (Momartin et al., 2006; Silove et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2022; Ziersch et al., 2021). There is a lot of uncertainty throughout the asylum-seeking process and asylum seekers may spend months and years waiting for the outcome of their application whilst also having limits imposed on legal work (Hynie, 2018a). Momartin et al. (2006) investigated the impact of temporary versus permanent residency among refugees in Australia (N = 116) and found those with temporary visas experienced higher levels of stress, fear of being sent home, separation from families and limited access to health care services. Visa status was found to be the strongest predictor of anxiety and depression highlighting the importance of safety and security for wellbeing. Similarly, in another study of people with refugee backgrounds in

rural areas of South Australia (N = 44), it was found that feelings of safety and social connectedness were enablers for positive wellbeing whilst again discrimination, limited employment opportunities and constraints to accessing services were all barriers to wellbeing (Ziersch et al., 2020). Safety is a particularly important SDoH for refugees considering the trauma, torture and dislocation that they have likely experienced prior to resettlement. In addition, the enablers of SDoH or the positive contributors to wellbeing are linked to better integration in the resettlement context (Ziersch et al., 2020).

It is clear that each of these factors among the SDoH have significant and far-reaching consequences for the wellbeing of refugees. As Hynie (2018a) suggests, using a SDoH framework for refugee wellbeing allows us to view and connect the risk factors experienced prior to migration with protective factors in the resettlement context in terms of material, physical and social conditions within the broader social, economic and political contexts. This can then better inform how changes are made across different contexts to enable and cultivate positive wellbeing for this population.

1.3.3 Injustice and Refugees

Pre-displacement factors are often considered fixed and difficult to alter after resettlement,.and therefore much of the research has focused on post-displacement, resettlement contexts and conditions (Chen et al., 2017). Although this focus on post-displacement and resettlement contexts is an appropriate course of action, it overlooks much of the pre-displacement experience and the enduring effects that these experiences may have on wellbeing. Numerous studies have established that pre-migration experiences are related to psychological distress and mental health outcomes even years after resettlement (Li & Anderson, 2016; Silove et al., 1999; Steel et al., 2002; Terheggen et al., 2001; Torres & Wallace, 2013). Studies have also shown that the impact of trauma and torture experienced

prior to resettlement has long lasting effects even several years after resettlement (Bendjo et al., 2019; Bogic et al., 2015; Schweitzer et al., 2006). Some studies have shown that pre-migration traumatic events were related most consistently to poor mental health in recently and long-term resettled refugees (Lindencrona et al., 2008; Bogic et al., 2015). For example, Vietnamese refugees who had experienced higher levels of trauma were more likely to experience mental disorders even 10 years after resettlement, compared to Vietnamese participants with no history of trauma (Steel et al., 2002).

Another way of looking at pre-displacement risk factors and their enduring impact on mental health and wellbeing is through the lens of systemic injustice; a lens which can also be applied to post-displacement factors. Each of these factors whether it is exposure to conflict, torture, forced displacement, religious persecution or family separation in the pre-displacement stage or lack of housing, employment or educational opportunities, or challenges in the asylum-seeking process in the post-displacement context – these factors can all be viewed as violations of justice. These injustices occur due to unfair or unequal distribution of resources that often disadvantage refugees and unfair and unequal distribution of power that allows authorities or government to continue violating the rights of refugees. These are not isolated, singular incidents of injustice, rather they are systemic and carry consequences for refugees in all domains of life. This is the view that underlies this thesis, leading to the conceptualisation of 'systemic injustice', which will be further explained in Section 1.4. Research indicates that perceptions of injustice, failure of the justice system to address injustices and human rights violations, and the lack of accountability for perpetrators of injustice are all associated with negative wellbeing outcomes among different refugee groups and survivors of mass conflict (e.g., Basoglu et al., 2005; Bendjo et al., 2019; Pham et al., 2004; Sonis et al., 2009). This research will be further explored in the following sections of 1.4.1 and 1.4.2.

1.3.4 Prevalence and Predictors of Mental Illness

People with refugee backgrounds face many challenges associated with psychological wellbeing, and this is often evident in the abundant empirical research documenting the high prevalence of mental illness in this population. For example, Fazel et al. (2005) conducted a systematic review of the prevalence of mental disorders among refugees (N = 7,003) resettled in seven Western countries and found prevalence rates of 9% for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 5% for major depressive disorder with high rates of comorbidity. Their results showed that PTSD was ten times higher among refugees than the general population in the countries of resettlement. Bogic et al. (2015) also conducted a systematic review of mental disorders with a focus on long settled (five years or more) refugees (N = 16,010) who had experienced war. They also found that rates reported in studies varied but were typically in the range of 20% or more for depression, PTSD and unspecified anxiety disorders. Specifically in the Australian context, a large-scale study of humanitarian migrants (N = 2,399) found that 31% of participants met criteria for PTSD and 16% of participants met criteria for severe mental illness based on the clinical measures used in this study (Chen et al., 2017). In another review of the relationship between torture and traumatic events to the mental health outcomes for populations exposed to conflict (N = 81,866) from 40 countries, Steel et al. (2009) found significant variability in the prevalence rates for PTSD and depression, with PTSD prevalence ranging from 0% to 99% whilst depression prevalence ranged from 3% to 85.5%. However, the weighted prevalence rates approximated to 30% prevalence for both disorders. In a more recent systematic review and meta-analysis of prevalence rates of mental illness among refugees resettled in high income countries, Henkelmann et al. (2020) also found that refugees (N = 14,882) experienced higher levels of mental illness compared to non-refugee populations. The review reported prevalence rates of 13 to 42% for anxiety, 30 to 40% for depression and, 29 to 37% for PTSD. This review also

found that up to one in three refugees had current depression or PTSD and one to two refugees out of every 10 had current and diagnosable anxiety disorders. Furthermore, they concluded that these prevalence rates were consistent over time.

Although the prevalence rates reported in these studies show that refugees experience higher rates of psychiatric disorders compared to non-refugee populations, there is a high level of variability and inconsistency across studies. Variability in prevalence rates across studies may be associated with the wide range of diagnostic measures and cut-offs used, cultural differences in expressions of distress, factors specific to the sample (e.g., higher levels of exposure to trauma, torture) and research designs (e.g., sample sizes, sampling approach) (Davidson et al., 2008; Fazel et al., 2005). Prevalence rates were reported from studies which included both self-reported measures and formal diagnostic interviews for different disorders (Henkelmann et al., 2020). Among these systematic reviews, it has been noted that larger scale more rigorously conducted studies tended to yield lower prevalence rates of mental disorders (Fazel et al., 2005; Steel et al., 2009). Despite such variability in prevalence rates across studies and those reported in systematic reviews, the reported rates of PTSD are significantly higher than for non-refugee populations (Silove et al., 2017).

Studies on prevalence of mental illness have also provided important insights into the predictors of mental illness for refugees. Higher levels of exposure to traumatic events prior to displacement has been consistently associated with higher rates of mental disorders compared to those who reported lower levels of exposure (Bogic et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2017; Steel et al., 2009). Previous research has also found a similar dose response relationship between exposure to traumatic events and PTSD (e.g., Frost et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2008). Exposure to war was strongly associated with the risk of having a serious mental disorder compared to the general population and this was consistent even several years after resettlement (Bogic et al., 2015). Experiencing torture is strongly associated with PTSD and

cumulative exposure to potentially traumatic events was most strongly associated with depression (Steel et al., 2009). This is consistent with other research that found experiencing torture is a significant predictor of the likelihood of developing a mental disorder and more so when torture is suffered over a long period or when the victims fear for their life (Abu Suhaiban et al., 2019; de C Williams & Van der Merwe, 2013; Shrestha et al., 1998;).

Prevalence rates of mental disorders was also linked to the countries of origin and the countries of resettlement (Bogic et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2017). Some countries of origin (such as former Yugoslavia and Cambodia) and some countries of resettlement (such as the United States) were associated with higher levels of mental illness (e.g., Bogic et al., 2012; Carlson & Hogan, 1994; Chung & Kagawa-Singer, 1993; Marshall et al., 2005; von Lersner et al., 2008). This may be attributable to differences in asylum related stressors as resettlement countries differ on migration policies, temporary protection and mandatory detention which can contribute to stress and poor wellbeing (Chen et al., 2017). It may also be attributable to the degree of war and conflict in the countries of origin (Bogic et al., 2015). Other studies have shown that refugees who were displaced from rural areas had poorer outcomes compared to those displaced from urban areas (Porter & Haslam, 2005). Unemployment, language barriers and lack of social support in countries of resettlement were particularly associated with higher rates of depression (Bogic et al., 2015). When controlling other factors such as age, gender, country of origin and marital status, the review by Porter and Haslam (2005) found that the number of economic difficulties participants had, and levels of loneliness, were strongly associated with PTSD post-migration. These findings highlight the importance of the resettlement context and post-migration factors (as discussed previously) for the wellbeing of refugees as well as indicating that the pre-migration context, specifically exposure to war, can have enduring effects on wellbeing. In addition, Steel et al. (2009) suggests that there is an association between the state of political violence in a country

and the mental health of individuals (e.g., Momartin et al., 2006; de Jong et al., 2001; Steel et al., 2006). This further adds to the understanding that PTSD and other disorders do not simply arise from a traumatic experience but are also shaped by the ongoing socio-political contexts that pose a threat to safety and security for individuals (Steel et al., 2009).

Interestingly, length of residence in resettlement countries was found to be unrelated to prevalence rates of mental illness in one review (Henkelmann et al., 2020). This indicates that resettlement alone is not necessarily associated with positive wellbeing and there are other post-migration factors that impact upon the ability to adapt and lead to positive outcomes for this group. However, other reviews have concluded that length of time after resettlement and permanent resettlement were associated with better mental health outcomes (Steel et al., 2009). These differences in findings may be due to the specific inclusion and exclusion criteria among the studies reviewed as some systematic reviews chose to include self-report measures for mental disorders, whilst others limited to formal diagnostic data.

1.3.5 Trauma Research

In addition to the research on pre- and post-displacement factors to understand refugee wellbeing, research has also been influenced by a trauma-based psychiatric epidemiological perspective which focuses on trauma and trauma related disorders (Bogic et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2006; Steel et al., 2009). More specifically, a substantial amount of research has focused on PTSD given the high prevalence rates among refugee groups (Fazel et al., 2005; Thompson et al., 2018). The trauma model emerged with the inclusion of PTSD in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual - third edition (DSM-III) in response to the experiences of US Vietnam veteran who displayed high levels of psychological distress (American Psychiatric Association, 1980; Scott, 1990). The Vietnam war also led to the displacement of hundreds and thousands of refugees who were resettled in Western countries

(Robinson, 1998). Subsequently, this led to the investigation and application of the trauma paradigm on refugees (Kinzie et al., 1980; 1990).

The trauma model, with the focus on PTSD, has provided many benefits to understanding and supporting refugee wellbeing (Schweitzer & Steel, 2008). The model provides an important role in documenting human rights abuses among refugees, the severity, and the extent of impact on wellbeing (Kirmayer et al., 2004; Steel et al., 2009). It also provides a model of care and support for refugees and mental health advocacy based on the trauma model has resulted in the development of specialised treatments and rehabilitation programs for victims of conflict related traumas (Basoglu, 2006; Cunningham & Silove, 1993).

In relation to specific treatments developed with the trauma model, whilst there are promising and effective results, the field is also fraught with struggles and challenges in engaging refugee groups and providing treatments. In a systematic review of treatment for PTSD among refugees and asylum seekers, Crumlish and O'Rourke (2010) highlighted the limited number of randomised controlled studies that had been conducted in this area which generally had small sample sizes. They suggest that difficulty conducting research with and accessing vulnerable refugee groups may explain the shortage of studies. Their review found narrative exposure therapy (NET) and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to be the most common modalities of treatment with more support for the use of NET. In another review by Robjant and Fazel (2010) of NET with refugees and asylum seekers, NET was found to have efficacy in treating PTSD. Other reviews have also reported similar findings with trauma-focused therapies showing efficacy in the treatment of PTSD among refugees and asylum seekers (Lambert & Alhassoon, 2015; Nickerson et al., 2011, Nose et al., 2017). In a more recent systematic review, Thompson et al. (2018) found that trauma-focused psychotherapy was the most effective treatment for PTSD, with some support again for NET and eye

movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) in the treatment of PTSD among refugees. However, refugees often face barriers to accessing mental health services and receiving such treatments such as language and cultural factors which results in less uptake of evidence-based treatments compared to non-refugee groups (Langlois et al., 2016, Murray et al., 2010; Priebe et al., 2016).

Although the trauma paradigm has provided many advantages as those mentioned above, it has also been criticised for its use with refugee groups. Trauma models predominantly focus on symptoms, negative functioning, and psychiatric diagnoses surrounding trauma, such as PTSD (Fazel et al., 2005; Schweitzer & Steel, 2008). This is evident in the research reviewed in Section 1.3.1 where most studies have a focus on trauma, often conceptualising pre-migration events (such as exposure to violence or torture) as traumatic and focusing on PTSD as an outcome (Birman & Tran, 2008; Carlson & Rosser-Hogan, 1991; Keller et al., 2006; Silove et al., 2007). Whilst the trauma model has utility in documenting, diagnosing and advocacy leading to the provision of specific services, specialised care and interventions for people with refugee backgrounds, it can also limit understandings of wellbeing for refugees, especially when it comes to considering positive functioning (Schweitzer & Steel, 2008). Moreover, a trauma focus may limit discussions of broader understandings – such as SDoH - which consider the social, cultural and political contexts to wellbeing in this population (Ryan et al., 2008).

Researchers have also questioned the appropriateness of applying Western trauma models to culturally diverse refugees (Hollifield et al., 2002; Nickerson et al., 2011). Trauma models have been criticised for pathologizing refugee distress, disregarding the importance of a human rights approach and wider social, political, and cultural meanings for refugees (Nickerson et al., 2011; Patel et al., 2016; Steel et al., 2009). Furthermore, clinical tools used for the assessment of PTSD are often not culturally validated for refugee groups (Hollifield et

al., 2002). Whilst acknowledging these criticisms, researchers also advocate for a pragmatic use of trauma treatments for significant traumatic stress symptoms and in conditions where primary needs for safety and security are established before addressing other needs (Carlsson et al., 2014; Nickerson et al., 2011; Turner & Herlihy, 2009).

In response to the criticisms of the trauma model, researchers in this field have advocated for a more systemic approach to understanding refugee wellbeing which considers the individual, family, community and wider social system as opposed to an individualistic approach (Papadopoulos, 2007). Focusing on trauma therapies for traumatic experiences in the pre-migration context may overlook important aspects of refugee wellbeing such as family and social relationships, sense of meaning and adaptation in a new environment (Ryan et al., 2008; Slobodin & de Jong, 2015).

1.4 Justice Research

The following sections will review existing research on justice, how people respond to injustice and how systemic injustice has been conceptualised in this thesis. In particular, this will focus on procedural and distributive justice as it relates to the experiences of people with refugee backgrounds.

1.4.1 Responding to Injustice

Justice is important to people and often when an injustice occurs, people are motivated to take action and restore justice (Lerner, 1980). Furthermore, when people experience or witness an injustice it can elicit strong affective responses such as anger which is a motivating factor to restore justice (Darley & Pittman, 2003; Wenzel & Okimoto, 2016). Responding to injustices can occur at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and societal levels.

At the intrapersonal level, people can engage in cognitive strategies to deal with the injustice such as reframing the injustice, forgetting, forgiving, forbearing (tolerating), or accepting the hurt (McCullough et al., 2003; Worthington, 2001). At the interpersonal level, offenders may engage in post-transgression efforts with the victims of injustice, such as apologizing or making amends (e.g., McCullough et al., 1998). Victims may reduce injustice by punishing offenders which can be an action that is empowering (Strelan & Di Fiore, 2017). At the societal level, people can engage in retributive or restorative justice processes, work for social justice or pursue successful conflict resolution (Worthington, 2001).

Injustices also create a power imbalance between victim and perpetrator as the injustice disregards the victim's rights or freedoms and can symbolically place the offender above the victim (Heider, 1958). Furthermore, injustices can negatively impact wellbeing by impacting the victim's self-determination and sense of control (Thye et al., 2006). At the societal level, an injustice can be understood as a violation and disregard of norms, laws and values in the community by the transgressor thus symbolically undermining the community's shared understanding of what is fair and just (Durkheim, 1964; Vidmar, 2000).

There are several forms of justice that are relevant in the context of systemic injustice, such as retributive and restorative justice. Retributive justice refers to any negative outcomes imposed on a perpetrator in response to an injustice that is considered an appropriate punishment (Wenzel & Okimoto, 2016). Punishment can be a material or a symbolic loss or suffering which is imposed on the offender either by the victim or another party (e.g., judge) (Brooks, 2012; McKee & Feather, 2008). Retributive justice seeks to deter perpetrators from future transgressions (Wenzel & Okimoto, 2016). Another form of justice is restorative justice. Restorative justice refers to ways in which just relationships are restored between transgressors, victims, and the broader community to restore a sense of justice (Cohen, 2016). Restorative justice works to attend to the victims needs and place responsibility for the

injustice on the perpetrator (Marshall, 1999). The retributive or restorative justice pathways to restoring justice can include but are not limited to retaliation or seeking revenge, civil or legal pathways, personal restitution, esteem-lowering acts for the transgressor, public ceremonial acts, acknowledging divine justice or belief in karma (Worthington, 2001). Regardless of the pathways to restoring justice, if the method is regarded as restoring a sense of justice, negative affect is expected to be reduced.

Victims of injustice can usually work towards restorative or retributive justice pathways to restore a sense of justice. However, working towards restoring justice is unlikely for people who have experienced widespread, systemic injustice, such as people with refugee backgrounds. Despite the high chance of this group facing significant levels of systemic injustice, there is currently very little research concerning the experiences of this group and how these experiences may change or shape their understandings of justice as well as impact their wellbeing.

Research conducted with groups who have experienced mass conflict, war and genocide have indicated that a sense of injustice is related to many negative outcomes for wellbeing. For example, among survivors of war in former Yugoslavia, Basoglu et al. (2005) found that participants (N= 1,358) experienced high levels of psychological distress when they perceived impunity for the perpetrators of injustice. High levels of PTSD and depression were reported among participants, and this was related to the loss of control over life and fears around safety. Similarly, research conducted on the Rwandan genocide and the retributive and restorative justice processes that were implemented post conflict highlight the importance of justice as well as the complexity of restoring justice after such large-scale injustices (Brehm et al., 2014; Drumbl, 2010). In such studies, it was found that the level of trauma that participants experienced and diagnoses such as PTSD was related to negative attitudes towards justice processes such as local judiciaries and the international criminal

tribunal (Brehm et al., 2014; Drumbl, 2010; Pham et al., 2004). Another study of Serbian refugees (N = 12) highlighted that the failing of the justice system and lack of accountability for those who perpetrated persecution and torture was associated with difficulties in resettlement even after two decades (Bendjo et al., 2019). Other research with Cambodians who witnessed the Khmer Rouge era and the trials that ensued found that participants (N = 1,017) exhibited high levels of PTSD and the greater their perceived sense of injustice was, the worse the mental health (Sonis et al., 2009).

Although these are not all studies of refugees, these studies are of systemic injustices and demonstrate the widespread, negative impact that systemic injustice carries. This is evident even when the major conflict or war has passed. This research suggests that the inability to gain justice, experienced by refugees, may further contribute to poor wellbeing outcomes, which presents a growing issue with the worsening humanitarian crisis (UNHCR, 2018). The following section seeks to address the conceptual understanding of systemic injustice and highlight what is known thus far in the literature.

1.4.2 Systemic Injustice

In this thesis, systemic injustice is defined and conceptualised as an absence or denial of procedural and distributive justice. Systemic injustice is conceptualised as situations where individuals have experienced injustice due to the actions of a system under which they have been living, for example, persecution on the basis of religion, ethnicity or political views. Moreover, it is difficult to identify a single instigator of the injustice as it may be a particular person whose policies have led to the injustice (e.g., a dictator) or it may be a particular party from whom several leaders are responsible, or it could be the actions of more local authorities. In all these instances, victims rarely see justice done (e.g., a dictator tried and sentenced). In effect, victims of systemic injustice remain in a state of unresolved injustice.

Furthermore, taking action against injustices such as speaking out against oppressive governments can lead to further violations of justice. In the following paragraphs, systemic injustice will be explained in relation to distributive and procedural justice.

Distributive justice is concerned with the fair distribution and allocation of rights, conditions and resources which affect individual and group wellbeing (Deutsch, 1975). Three underlying principles of equity, equality and need influence how distributive justice is implemented. Equity refers to the principle of distribution based on input, equality refers to equal distribution regardless of individual input and need refers to distribution based on needs of individuals whereby resources are allocated to those most in need. The application of these principles is influenced by group or societal values. In the case of systemic injustice for refugees, victims experience an absence or denial of distributive justice which can present as an unfair or inequal distribution of rights (e.g., human rights are violated or disregarded), experience of poor or unsafe living conditions and disadvantaged or no access to important resources such as food, water, education and employment. These injustices and conditions do not occur in isolation but are created, influenced or maintained by broader structural powers (e.g., governments) and their policies.

Procedural justice refers to fairness of procedures and decision-making processes (Vermunt & Steensma, 2016). The element of voice, in both distributive and procedural justice, is important to decision making processes and refers to the extent to which people can express their concerns and be involved in such processes (Baldwin, 2006). Individuals who have experienced systemic injustice often have no voice in procedures that impact them, and moreover utilising their voice is often a threat to their safety. Other aspects of procedural justice include the consistent application of procedures for all over time without bias and in the instance of procedural injustice, the opportunity to appeal and correct the injustice (Vermunt & Steensma, 2016).

Usually, individuals rely on people in authority to implement fair procedures for all, but in the case of systemic injustice, those in power may not uphold procedural justice, instead acting with discrimination or persecution (Deutsch, 2006). Similarly, appealing and correcting unjust procedures for refugees is often not an option for those experiencing systemic injustice due to negative consequences (i.e., being sentenced to prison for speaking out against an oppressive government). Moreover, people experiencing systemic injustice often face discrimination in the distribution of resources such as access to education, health care and employment, and inequality in rights or freedoms due to identity, political views or religious beliefs. In short, the denial of distributive and procedural justice for victims of injustice, such as people with refugee backgrounds, contribute to ongoing experiences of systemic injustice.

In the context of systemic injustice, retributive and restorative justice processes may be most relevant to restoring justice, however it is clear that access to such pathways is limited and involves further repercussions. So, what can victims of systemic injustice do? One possibility may be for the victims of systemic injustice to forbear the injustices; however, it has been suggested that severe injustices may be more difficult to forebear due to the impact it has on an individual's life compared to minor injustices (McCullough et al., 2003). Another alternative could be forgiveness as there is ample research indicating that it has positive impacts on wellbeing among general populations (Akhtar & Barlow, 2018; Davis et al., 2015; Griffin et al., 2015). Forgiveness research with refugees is more limited and thus far the relationship to wellbeing is more complex showing both positive and negative impacts for wellbeing (Alim et al., 2019; Kandemiri, 2019; Kira et al., 2009; Park, 2012; Stein et al., 2008). However, considering the lack of research into the experiences of systemic injustice for refugees and the impact on wellbeing, it was considered inappropriate to suggest or research forgiveness as a first step in this specific area. Instead, this program of research

aimed to provide a wider scope by exploring from participant experiences what their understandings of justice are and what is required to restore justice without pre-empting their response or being prescriptive in how they should deal with systemic injustice.

1.4.3 Injustice in other Systems

Although there is little to no research that has conceptualised refugee experiences – either pre- or post-migration - and wellbeing in terms of systemic injustice, there is justice research in other areas that may be helpful to draw on. Research has been conducted with different populations regarding organisational, educational and healthcare structures and injustices (that can also be viewed as systems of their own) which have demonstrated significant consequences for wellbeing. Although this thesis is not focused on these specific systems, previous sections on refugee wellbeing in this thesis have established that economic opportunities, access to health care and education are all crucial aspects of wellbeing for this group. Therefore, reviewing research that has been conducted with general populations may provide some insight into the consequences of systemic injustice in other systems and how it shapes human behaviour, cognitions and wellbeing.

One area that has a wealth of research is organisational justice. This area of research is concerned with justice processes in relation to the workplace, people's attitudes and behaviours in the workplace and job performance depending on the perception of just processes (such as allocation of resources, hiring and firing procedures) (Dijke & Cremer, 2016). Procedural and distributive injustices in the workplace were associated with negative mental health outcomes (Ndjaboue et al., 2012). Justice has been positively associated with employee attitudes including job satisfaction and the extent of commitment to the organisation for which they work (Dijke & Cremer, 2016). Justice also influenced how employees perceived the organisation and contributed to organisational trust and work

performance (Colquitt et al., 2001; 2003; Conlon et al., 2005; Fassina et al., 2008). High levels of justice were also associated with decreased levels of undesirable behaviours such as discriminating against colleagues based on ethnicity or gender, violating confidentiality and company theft (Mclean Parks 1996; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Interestingly, some studies have even shown that high levels of justice in the workplace can increase employee creativity, as employees perceive a sense of trust and safety in the organisation and their management (Khazanchi & Masterson, 2011). Lastly, leadership can also influence employee behaviours. When leaders adopted distributive and procedural fairness, employees were more likely to be satisfied in their jobs, have positive emotions and increase in intrinsic motivation (Colquitt et al., 2001). These findings further highlight the importance of justice and its impact on cognition and behaviour.

Education is another field of study in which distributive justice is particularly important as educational institutions distribute limited resources including money, jobs, status, and influence (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016). This distribution of educational resources impacts a range of factors (e.g., knowledge, attention, help with learning, academic achievements, career opportunities) that affect the socioeconomic wellbeing of individuals across the lifespan (Bills & Wacker, 2003; Connell & Connell, 1993; Oakes & Saunders, 2002). There are obvious disparities in resource distribution between educational institutions and evidence shows those who are from higher socioeconomic backgrounds receive a higher quality of resources, which can include more qualified and experienced teachers, and thus have better academic outcomes compared to those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Betts et al., 2000; Gamoran & Long, 2007). These disparities are maintained by policies that allow privatization of resources that advantage particular social groups (Gamoran & Long, 2007; Witte, 2000). This is an example of distributive justice not only being about equal or fair allocation of resources but also equal and fair access to these resources. Teacher-student

relations are another factor in which injustices arise. Perceived injustice in this relationship has been linked to students' learning motivation, behaviour, willingness to help other students, trust in teachers, and a sense of belonging at school (Gogard, 2012; Resh & Sabbagh, 2014; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005). These findings demonstrate that it is not only the injustice itself that shapes behaviour but also the perception of the injustice that plays a role in how individuals react or respond to an injustice.

Justice in healthcare is also important and again when considering justice in this context, it is often distributive justice that is being referred to. Distributive justice in this context is concerned with equal and fair distribution of healthcare resources and access (Daniels, 2001). However, procedural justice is also relevant as the rules, procedures and norms that influence this distribution of healthcare also affects health outcomes (Lucas, 2020). Studies have shown that socioeconomic status was related to provision of health services, with people from lower socioeconomic status receiving less therapeutic and diagnostic services (Kahn et al., 1994; Yergan et al., 1987). Specifically, in the American context, a great deal of research has shown unequal healthcare delivery from conditions such as asthma and depression to major surgeries with African Americans receiving less high-technology testing and care (Cruz-Flores et al., 2011; Falcone & Broyles; Zoratti et al., 1998). Lack of trust in healthcare systems and discrimination may be some of the factors that contribute to injustices in healthcare systems (Gilson, 2003) and this is another example of the broader social and political influences on wellbeing for disadvantaged groups.

Interestingly, justice related cognitions have also been linked to wellbeing outcomes for individuals (Lucas, 2020). For example, when an individual's beliefs around justice are consistent with their experiences, they are more likely to have better health outcomes (Lucas et al., 2016; Major & Townsend, 2012). This is most evident in the relationship between perceived justice or fairness and mental health in that when individuals perceive fairness,

they are less likely to experience negative emotions and depression (Elovainio et al., 2002; Jackson et al., 2006; Lucas & Wendorf, 2012). Justice perceptions also impact physical health with some research showing that perceived injustice was associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular illness (Lucas, 2020). As Lucas (2020) suggests, justice is an important psychosocial determinant of health.

If we apply this line of thinking based on research in these different areas, we can expect that justice does play a significant role in the wellbeing of vulnerable populations, especially refugees. However, what is different when we think of refugees is the access to resources and means to restore justice. As difficult as situations of injustice may be in the workplace or in the medical system, people can take action to some extent such as quitting a job and looking for a new one or changing medical providers or even choosing not to engage in treatment. However, for people with refugee backgrounds they cannot simply choose to change authorities or oppressive governments and more often than not, they also cannot choose to leave. This is the case for the group under study in this thesis (the Uyghur people) and their specific context will be elaborated in Section 1.5.

1.4.4 Justice and Culture

Another aspect of justice that is important to consider is that of culture; specifically the way culture may influence justice perceptions and responses to injustice. Hofstede's (1980) key study on cross-cultural differences led to current understandings of cultural differences along several different dimensions. The dimensions most relevant to this thesis are those of the individualism-collectivism dimension, power-distance, and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980). At a broad level, distinctions can be made between individualist and collectivist cultures, whereby individualism assumes that individuals in any given society or culture are independent of each other while collectivism assumes that groups bind through

mutual obligation (Oyserman et al., 2002). Power-distance refers to the degree of hierarchical differentiation between individuals in a group, some may have low power distance as individuals are seen as equals whilst others may have significant status differences (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994). Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which individuals are open to and can tolerate uncertainties in life as opposed to striving for certainty and structure (Hofstede, 1980). There are also other cultural dimensions, such as value dimensions and leadership dimensions in the literature (e.g., House et al., 2004; Schwartz, 1994; Smith et al., 2013) however Hofstede's dimensions are the most widely utilised.

In a meta-analysis of participants (N = 67,060) from 23 countries, Fischer and Maplesden (2006) found that greater power distance was associated with greater levels of interpersonal injustice. Using status and position as reward criteria in the workplace was found to be more acceptable in high power distance countries (Mendonca & Kanungo, 1994). Many studies have shown that justice perceptions are strongly influenced by what is valued culturally and again this research has often been conducted in organisations and workplaces (Brockner et al., 2001; Erdogan & Liden, 2006; Farh et al., 1997; Fischer & Smith, 2006). There have also been inconsistencies in findings, with some studies indicating that collectivist values strengthen procedural justice effects (Brockner et al., 2005) whilst others have suggested individualistic values strengthen procedural justice effects (Farh et al., 1997). Theorists have also suggested that the link between justice and culture is motivated by concerns for belonging and control (Fischer, 2013). For example, individuals may value different aspects of just procedures depending on whether they value interpersonal relationships or value maintaining power distances. When individuals value interpersonal relationships they may be more aware of respect and shared values in procedural justice as it affirms their belonging to a group (Brockner et al., 2005; Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Overall, it is important to note that culture plays a role in understandings of justice in particular in addition to how different aspects of justice may be more or less valued depending on cultural values and differences between cultures.

1.5 The Uyghur Context

The Uyghur people of East Turkistan (ET) are a Turkic ethnic group located in Central Asia. For the past 72 years - since China established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 - ET has been occupied the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and renamed Xinjiang (meaning 'new territory') Uyghur Autonomous Region (Duguri et al., 2021). The CCP have systematically implemented policies which limit the cultural, linguistic and religious identity and freedoms of the Uyghur people (Anand, 2022; Duguri et al., 2021; Seytoff & Szadziewski, 2018; Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2022). The CCP's policies dehumanise and openly discriminate Uyghurs (see Abdulla & Shamseden, 2021 for an analysis of the role of xenophobia in the Uyghur situation). Specifically, since the 'war on terror' after 9/11, China has used this line of reasoning to justify its human rights violations against Uyghurs as the Uyghur population is predominantly Muslim (Seytoff & Szadziewski, 2018). Unfortunately, there is a lack of information on the migration patterns of Uyghurs in the diaspora and it is difficult to determine exact numbers and figures. Some information presented in this section is known as the author is a member of the Uyghur community in Australia and through data specifically collected for this thesis. An effort has been made to find reliable sources and, in some cases, mainstream media news articles are cited due to the lack of other resources and academic works.

In recent years, evidence has emerged from ET of the human rights abuses committed by the CCP such as organ harvesting, sterilization, forced labour, the development of detention centres and the increasing rates of imprisonment in the Uyghur population (Dwyer,

2005; Raza, 2019; Zenz, 2019). Reports indicate that more than one million Uyghurs are detained in these camps, incarcerated or forced into labour, however this could be a severe underestimation in light of ongoing and emerging evidence (Finley, 2021). Organisations such as Amnesty International and Human rights Watch have also reported on the human rights abuses against Uyghurs (based on investigations and interviews with Uyghurs), which include family separation, threats to safety even in countries of resettlement and the repercussions of speaking out on the safety of family members living in ET (Amnesty International, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2021).

The voices and experiences of Uyghurs are largely missing in empirical studies, with existing literature often written from an outsider perspective with a focus on political or historical analyses (e.g., Bonnenfant, 2018; Caprioni, 2011; Chen, 2010). Conducting research with Uyghurs in ET has always been highly sensitive and political (Roberts, 2020) and at present is practically impossible. Unfortunately, academic papers on Uyghurs in the diaspora are also limited (e.g., Marat, 2016; NurMuhammad et al., 2016) although recent times has seen a significant increase in media attention and news reports (e.g., ABC News, 2022; Al Jazeera News, 2021; Special Broadcasting Service, 2018). However, one thesis has explored the impact of China's security policies and surveillance on Uyghurs living in the Netherlands (Koeleman, 2021). The main findings were that participants experienced a sense of fear and external control over their lives, and often engaged in self-censorship which was associated with feelings of anxiety, suspicion, and alienation. Despite living abroad, participants still experienced the impact of CCP policies and reported being harassed and threatened with monitoring, phone calls, and online messages.

Another study was conducted with Uyghur migrants (N = 12) in Canada and their experiences of integration (Mahmut & Waite, 2021). This study found that participants faced challenges in economic opportunities as well as in reconciling cultural differences between

ET and Canada and international differences between themselves and their children growing up in Canada (Mahmut & Waite, 2021). Whilst this research highlights important aspects of Uyghur experiences, no research has approached the Uyghur experience from a systemic injustice perspective.

At the time of finalising this thesis, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report in August 2022 confirming the human rights abuses of the PRC against the Uyghur people (OHCHR, 2022). The report confirms the presence of re-education camps which they referred to in the report as 'vocational education training centres'. It also confirms experiences of torture, sexual abuse, arbitrary imprisonment, forced labour and family separation.

According to the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) an estimated 1 to 1.6 million Uyghurs live abroad (Amnesty International, 2020). Specifically in the Australian context, there is a relatively large community with approximately 5,000 Uyghurs (Al Jazeera News, 2021). According to the 2016 census in Australia, 1,051 individuals identified as having Uyghur ancestry (Special Broadcasting Service, 2018). Typically, the pathways to resettlement in Australia involve tourism, student or spousal and partner visas before applying for asylum. If applications are approved, people then become refugees and are granted temporary and then eventually permanent residency in Australia, and finally and citizenship if eligible.

The following extracts from interviews with participants in the current thesis are presented to provide some context around the specific experiences of systemic injustice among the participants that were not included in the published studies due to scope and journal requirements. The examples of systemic injustice experienced by participants in ET were often discrimination across a wide variety of settings, lack of freedom of movement,

and suppression of the Uyghur language and religious practices. The lack of freedom to practice their religion, make life choices and safety were hallmarks of the systemic injustices reported by participants. In this first extract, Aygul (29 years old), who had arrived in Australia two years prior to the interview on a spousal visa, compared her experiences in ET and Australia:

> "Back home you can't do what you want, whether its religion or anything else there are always restrictions, no safety or peace of mind, always being threatened and afraid of the Chinese. They don't give you peace of mind…ahh just thinking of those days, they were so bad. Coming here all I see are people smiling at each other, helping one another, they don't meddle in your business. There is a freedom to do whatever you want. Over there you can't do any of that, especially with practicing religion."

In addition to these restrictions, women in particular also discussed systemic injustices related to the CCP's two-child policy, which involved enforcing family planning laws which criminalised having more than two children:

> "Because of the family planning laws I had to have my third and fourth child in secret. While I lived there, I never admitted that they were my children. We could not stand the oppression anymore and that is why we fled here." (Maryam, 50 years, W)

It was evident throughout interviews that the experiences of systemic injustice, such as those described above, had significant negative impacts on the wellbeing of participants. The negative impact was magnified as participants not only experienced these injustices themselves but also witnessed the suffering of family, friends, and the broader Uyghur community.

A common realisation among participants who had lived part of their adult life in ET was the extent to which their experiences were unjust, and their rights violated; a realisation they often only made after resettlement in Australia:

> "Back in homeland we studied in Chinese…we were used to the oppression, we thought it was okay, the discrimination against us is okay here and there. I just thought it was part of life, but when I came here, I realised it is not like that...I came to Australia and I realised wow this is how human beings should live…I really feel like I live like a human, free to do anything, don't have to bribe anybody. Basic human rights have been denied to us back in our home country. To enjoy freedom has been a tremendous relief and happiness." (Erkin, 47, M)

1.6 Study Rationale and Aims

In light of the literature reviewed thus far in this chapter (refugee wellbeing, systemic injustice, the Uyghur situation), the aims of this thesis are as follows:

1. To systematically collate previous research concerning systemic injustice and refugees
2. To explore how justice is understood among people who have experienced systemic injustice (specifically Uyghur people)
3. To understand what is required to restore justice after systemic injustice from the perspective of Uyghur people living in Australia
4. To explore the impact of the ongoing systemic injustices in ET on the wellbeing of Uyghurs resettled in Australia
5. To give voice to Uyghurs in the diaspora (specifically Australia) and present their experiences in research

1.7 Thesis Overview

In light of the literature reviewed in this chapter and the aim to outline the current literature concerning systemic injustice and refugees, the first study in this thesis is a systematic review of the relationship between systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers (Chapter 3). This systematic review was conducted to identify what specific research had been conducted for this group as it was evident from the outset of this thesis that there was limited research in this specific area. Very few studies had considered justice in their research with refugees, therefore it was important to locate the studies that had and collate their findings. Alongside this, the systematic review also aimed to assess the quality of the research that had been conducted. In accordance with the qualitative paradigm of this program of research, the data collected through the review was analysed and reported through qualitative techniques.

There are three central questions that are often referred to in the study of justice (Jasso, 1989). The first question is 'What do individuals and collectivities think is just?'. Secondly, 'What is the magnitude of the perceived injustice associated with given departures from perfect justice?'. Lastly, the third question is, 'What are the behavioural and social consequences of perceived injustice?' (Jasso, 1989, p.354). When considering the experiences of refugees, the factors associated with poor wellbeing outcomes for this group and the systemic injustices that lead to their forced migration, it is surprising that barely a handful of studies have explored the meaning of justice for this group and how their experiences of systemic injustice have shaped these understandings. Thus, the second study in this thesis (Chapter 4) qualitatively explored the understandings of justice and pathways to restoring justice for Uyghurs living in Australia. In reference to Jasso's second question, exploring the pathways to restoring justice was important from the perspective of the participants as their experiences of systemic injustice are departures from justice. Finally, the

third study was designed to understand the impact of systemic injustice on the wellbeing of Uyghurs (Chapter 5). This study aimed to provide some insight into the consequences of systemic injustice with a broad and inclusive conceptualisation of wellbeing.

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CHAPTER 2. METHODS

This chapter outlines the paradigm of research for this thesis in addition to the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions that informed the research. Additionally, important ethical considerations are discussed, followed by details of the procedures, participant sample, recruitment, and data analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of reflexive practice, the role of the researcher and the criteria for ensuring quality in qualitative research.

2.1 Qualitative Paradigm

This thesis was informed by a qualitative paradigm, whereby the research was interested in participants' lived experiences, their words and meaning making (Silverman, 2000). Qualitative research offers several key benefits suited to the aims and research questions of this thesis. These include research as context, flexibility in methodology, and research subjectivity (Haslam & McGarty, 2014; Willig, 2008). Firstly, within qualitative research, data (here in the form on interviews) is considered contextual in that participants' accounts in interviews cannot be separated from their own lived experience and the socio-cultural and physical context in which the interview took place (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Silverman, 2000). This is important in this program of research because participants understandings and perceptions of justice cannot be removed or isolated from the social, cultural and political contexts in which they experienced injustices. Furthermore, the relationship between their experiences of injustice and wellbeing also cannot be isolated from these contexts.

Secondly, given the aims and subject matter of this thesis, qualitative research methods were advantageous as they enable flexibility in methodology, often resulting in rich data, as well as the opportunity for participants to speak to nuanced accounts of their

experiences with justice and wellbeing. Additionally, qualitative methods offer flexibility in research design that is particularly useful for under explored phenomenon and populations - which is the case for the research questions of this thesis and the group under study (Haslam & McGarty, 2014; Willig, 2008). In this thesis, this allowed the researcher to follow the stories of participants and explore new angles as they presented themselves. Furthermore, given the topic area has limited research and more so limited research in the case of Uyghur people's experiences, the flexibility of the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to ask questions to elaborate and explore different aspects of participant experiences that may not have been pre-empted with interview questions (see Appendix A for interview guide). This paradigm of research also recognises that the subjectivity of the research cannot be removed from the research process, (unlike positivist research which strives to remove researcher bias) and views this as a strength rather than weakness (Silverman, 2000). As such, in this thesis the researcher is transparent in their identity and its influence on the research whilst also drawing on strengths such as cultural and 'insider' knowledge to assist in the research process. This relates to the importance of reflexivity in qualitative research which will be discussed later in Section 2.4.

2.2 Methodological Approach

All research, including qualitative research, is underpinned by ontological and epistemological assumptions that guide the research questions and methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The assumptions made about knowledge, what can be attained and what cannot, significantly influence the way that research and scientific inquiry is approached (Cohen et al., 2007). Ontology refers to the relationship between the world and social interaction and is the study of the nature of reality and what we can know about it (Richards, 2003; Spencer 2003), including whether reality is a 'knowable' truth or something which cannot be separated from human interaction, meaning and knowledge (Braun & Clarke,

2013). Along the continuum of ontology, realism assumes that there is an independent truth or reality that can be attained through appropriate research methods and tools and is the ontology that often underlies quantitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Tebes, 2005). On the other end of the continuum, relativism assumes that there can be multiple truths and realities that are socially constructed and influenced by time and context - often underlying some qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Cromby & Nightingale, 1999).

This thesis takes a critical realist approach to ontology. Critical realism assumes that there is a knowable reality or truth that is socially influenced and constructed, but which can only be partially accessed through research and is always context-dependent (Madill et al., 2000). This approach was adopted in order to recognise participant accounts of injustice and its impact on wellbeing as reflective of their lived experience and their own independent reality, while also recognising that such accounts could not be separated from the social and political context in which they were produced (including the setting and timing of the interviews undertaken for this thesis). Therefore, in collecting data and conducting analyses, participants' accounts were considered real and true in the social and political contexts of their experiences.

Epistemology refers to the assumptions made about the nature of knowledge and what is possible to know about the world (Crotty, 1998; Richards, 2003). There are several different epistemological positions relevant to qualitative research: namely positivism, constructionism and contextualism. Positivism posits that knowledge can be acquired through objective and 'unbiased' collection of data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Constructionism differs from positivism in that knowledge is not seen as an objective reflection of the truth or reality, but rather as socially constructed and not founded on a singular truth or knowledge. Finally, contextualism also views knowledge as influenced by the social and cultural context (e.g., 'context-sensitive') but also reflective of an existing truth, at least for any given individual.

Here, contextualism suggests that truth or knowledge can be accessed in certain contexts and moreover is only valid within the context it was obtained (Madill et al., 2000; Tebes, 2005).

Ontology and epistemology are necessarily interrelated and as such, following the adoption of a critical realist ontology, this thesis follows a contextualist epistemology. Thus, the research undertaken – including individual participant accounts as well as the analysis of those accounts - is considered to be true and valid in the social, cultural and political context in which they were situated. It follows then that the researcher is not an objective, unbiased observer but rather an integral and active actor in the production of knowledge for this thesis (see Section 2.4 for further details on reflexivity specifically). A critical realist approach was adopted in this thesis since it allowed the exploration of participants' relationships with their world and how social and political contexts may have shaped their understanding of justice, experiences of injustice and wellbeing.

2.3 Procedure

Schweitzer and Steel (2008) note that although much of the refugee research is conducted with a human rights agenda, quantitative research methods with positivist assumptions rarely acknowledge or explore this agenda. Furthermore, quantitative methods may overlook the wider socio-political context and the capacity of humans to reflect upon meanings of their experiences. Therefore, they suggest qualitative research methods are more suitable for exploring refugee experiences and challenges as research questions are mainly explorative or inductive. Liamputtong (2007) also recommend using research methods that accurately capture and reflect the experiences of participants, especially in the case of cross-cultural research. As such, this thesis was conducted with qualitative research methods as it aimed to explore and understand meanings of justice for people with refugee backgrounds

(focus on Uyghur people as a case study) and explore the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing.

This section covers the procedure for the three main studies that form this thesis as well as ethical considerations and consideration of the overarching synthesis of the findings. As noted in Chapter 1, the first study involves a systematic review of systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers, and the second and third studies are qualitative, interview-based studies exploring understandings of injustice, pathways to restoring justice and the relationship between systemic injustice and wellbeing among Uyghur people resettled in Australia.

In terms of the first study (Chapter 3), a systematic review was conducted to highlight the existing literature in the area of refugees, asylum seekers, systemic injustice and wellbeing. In line with the qualitative paradigm of research and the interest in contextual data and meaning making, the data collected in the review was analysed using thematic analysis (TA) so as to meaningfully synthesise and collate the different findings across the studies located in the review. The findings of the review informed the two later studies (Chapter 4 and 5) in relation to the research questions that informed each study. For example, the review highlighted that there was limited research into understandings of justice and that studies had explored aspects of justice without making sense of participants understandings of justice. Therefore, it was important in the interview-based studies to firstly ask participants what they understood justice to be. Additionally, findings in the review relevant to wellbeing often took the viewpoint of trauma and psychiatric disorders. Although this contributes important research, the approach to wellbeing in this thesis (as discussed in Chapter 1) lead to a more explicit questioning of how systemic injustice impacted wellbeing at a more holistic level.

Semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection for the studies that formed Chapters 4 and 5. Interviews are the most widely used qualitative data collection tool best suited to exploring perceptions, meaning making and experiences of participants (Briggs, 1986; Husband, 2020; Roulston et al., 2018). Interviews in qualitative research have been defined as 'professional conversations' that are designed to get participants to talk about their experiences, and capture language and concepts in relation to a topic set out by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Semi-structured interviews involve an interview guide prepared by the researcher; however, it is not necessarily followed in exact wording or order, and the process can be iterative with questions modified as the interviews progress (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow participants to raise unanticipated issues that are salient to them, and thus it is important for the researcher to be open and flexible and ask spontaneous or clarifying questions in response. Semi-structured interviews are also well suited to research that aims to explore perceptions and understandings of particular topics, especially when participants have a personal stake in the topic under investigation – as is the case for the research questions and participants in this thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Roulston et al., 2018).

As noted above, the study gained institutional ethics approval, after which flyers were directly advertised to the Uyghur community in Australia via posts on social media and presentations at community events (See Appendix D for recruitment flyers). A passive, snowball sampling method was used to recruit participants whereby participants who had participated in an interview informed other eligible participants within the community. Prior to conducting an interview, participants were given information regarding the purpose of the interview, the aims of the research, contacts for support services as well as a form to give written informed consent (see Appendix B for participant information). Overall, through

social media posts and sharing as well as advertising at community events, it is estimated that information regarding the research reached roughly 150-200 people in the community.

A total of 27 interviews were conducted between November 2018 and September 2020; 22 were conducted face to face and five were conducted on Zoom or by phone call due to covid-19 restrictions. The average interview length was 33 minutes (SD = 15.73). All interviews were transcribed and those conducted in Uyghur were translated verbatim into English before analysis (the candidate is fluent in written and spoken Uyghur).

How to determine the number of interview participants in qualitative research has been widely debated across a range of disciplines, including psychology (Boddy, 2016; Malterud et al., 2016; Sim et al., 2018). One commonly used method is that of data saturation, or the concept that there will be a point in the process of interviewing at which no new information is heard in the interviews conducted, and thus no new codes will be developed and interviews can cease (Guest et al., 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Many studies have attempted to quantify the number of participants required for data saturation - leading to differing views from as few as six participants to as many as 40 participants (Francis et al., 2010; Guest et al., 2006; Hagaman & Wutich, 2017). Data saturation is a contentious process, with some researchers proposing that data saturation is 'the gold standard' while others contend that the idea that there can be a fixed sample size required to reach data saturation aligns with the positivist approach to research and is not as appropriate for qualitative methods (Braun & Clarke, 2021; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Vasileiou et al., 2018).

On the other hand, predetermining a sample size - such as through the use of a sampling frame - is problematic in interpretive forms of qualitative research such as reflexive thematic analysis (reflexive TA) which is the specific form of analysis employed in this thesis

(Braun & Clarke, 2021; Sim et al., 2018). Within reflexive TA, there is an underlying assumption that themes are generated through data analysis are not pre-existing, waiting to be found (Braun & Clarke, 2019), rather the authors make a judgement of when to stop at each stage of the research process, including participant recruitment (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Low, 2019). As such, and given the clearly defined research questions and sample within this research, data collection ended when the candidate deemed there was enough depth, detail and context in the data to allow for a rich analysis. An example of this was in the analysis of the first round of interviews conducted in 2018. Contextual differences were identified between the younger adult and older adult participants in relation to their experience of injustice and time in Australia, and thus another round of recruitment was undertaken in an attempt to get more participants who were younger and born in Australia.

Finally, as an alternative to data saturation, Braun and Clarke (2021) suggest taking a pragmatic approach to determining sample size which factors in limitations to resources, time, acceptable norms within the discipline, researcher expertise and, journal publication requirements amongst others. Taking these varying approaches together, data saturation was considered to have been reached by the 18th participant, however, when other considerations - such as diversity in participants – were taken into account, interviews were conducted until a pragmatic decision was made that in light of the pandemic, it was unlikely that more participants would be gained (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Low, 2019).

2.3.1 Ethical Considerations

Ethical practice is essential in conducting any research, but was particularly the case for the subject matter and participant sample of this thesis. As such, this section presents key ethical considerations in order to provide context to the procedures used in this thesis. Ethics approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (H-2017-122). Key ethical considerations included participant and researcher

assumptions in interviews, ensuring informed consent and confidentiality, responding to participant distress and producing meaningful research that not only benefitted the author but also the community in which the research was conducted (Ziersch et al., 2019).

Gaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality is a key aspect of ethical research, particularly in the case of qualitative research with populations who could be considered 'vulnerable' (Ziersch et al., 2019). As part of informed consent, participants were provided information about the purpose of interviews, what would happen to the interview data in relation to publishing and reporting and use in the thesis, the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw any time, and the right to not answer particular interview questions. Careful ethical negotiation was also required in relation to interviewing participants that the PhD candidate knows in the Uyghur community, especially where participants disclosed in interviews experiences that the author would not have otherwise known and which may not have been widely known in the community more generally. Moreover, given that this research involved working with a group of people who are experiencing ongoing threats to safety – even in Australia - and in the context of the ongoing impact of injustice in ET, it was crucial to ensure that the data could not lead to participant identification. As such, it was important to balance providing sufficient detail and context to the results without compromising the safety and identity of participants (Liamputtong, 2010). This was particularly challenging when presenting the findings on wellbeing (Chapter 5) as the demographic and contextual information was important to the analyses. In general, this meant a balance between methodological rigour and ensuring participant safety so that the extracts presented could not be traced back to or identify participants.

Another important issue to consider was the wellbeing of participants and the risk of re-traumatising them through recounting events in the interviews (Hugman et al., 2011; Jacobsen & Landau, 2003). Clear protocols for managing participant distress and direction

towards services and supports accessible by participants was necessary as well as reiterating that participants could withdraw from interviews or choose not to answer particular questions (see Appendix B for participant information). Where participants showed signs of distress in interviews (e.g., crying), interviews were paused until participants were ready to resume. Participants were reminded of the list of accessible supports and the interviewer followed up after interviews to thank participants and check in. No interviews were terminated due to distress or withdrawal from participation.

Lastly, the National Health and Medical Research Council (2018) principle of beneficence was particularly important for this research, which states that the likely harms and burdens of the research to participants must be justified, and the benefits of the research should be to participants and the wider community. In this thesis, applying this principle meant that the research minimised any risk or harm to participants (such as maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of participants) and the research also contributed something beneficial back to participants and the Uyghur community more broadly. Ziersch et al. (2019) make an important note of this and argue that researchers should use their findings to advocate for change and better outcomes for the groups with whom they work. In keeping with this principle, a summary of the research findings was given to participants (see Appendix C for Research Summary) and also motivated the publication of findings in academic journals (Chapters 3 and 4 are published studies). Upon completion of this thesis, the findings will be shared more widely with organisations dedicated to supporting refugee wellbeing and those particularly involved with the Uyghur community.

2.3.2 Participants

The eligibility criteria for participation included being 18 years or older, arriving in Australia at least 12 months prior to participation or being born in Australia, and identifying as Uyghur. The reasoning behind the criterion of having been in Australia for at least 12

months was two-fold: firstly to avoid re-traumatisation of participant experiences; and secondly to allow time to have passed since arrival for participants to provide scope to think about justice and wellbeing. Interviews were conducted in either English or Uyghur, as the author is proficient in both.

Seven Uyghur men and 20 Uyghur women participated in interviews for this PhD thesis. Participants had lived in Australia between two and 38 years (M = 14.74, SD = 7.69). One participant was on a bridging visa (BV; a short-term visa provided while claims to asylum are assessed), two were permanent residents (PR) and 24 were citizens at the time. Among the participants, 14 had arrived in Australia as adults aged between 18 and 39, eight participants had arrived as children between the ages of eight and 16 and five participants were born in Australia. Participants had arrived in Australia either on a student visa (N = 3), partner, spousal or family sponsored visa (N = 17), tourism visa (N = 1), or work visa (N = 1), and then applied for a humanitarian visa in Australia followed by permanent residency and eventually citizenship. Education levels varied among participants from primary school through to postgraduate education.

2.3.3 Data Coding and Analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) was selected as the most appropriate approach to data analysis for the aims and objectives of this thesis. TA is an advantageous analytical method as it is a theoretically flexible approach that allows for a rich and detailed account of the data, thereby allowing interrogation of data on a range of 'top down' topics such as systemic injustice, as well as 'bottom up' considerations related to issues important to participants but not necessarily pre-empted in research questions such as parenting difficulties and managing relationships (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Specifically, the data collection and analysis follow the guidelines as set out by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013). TA is 'a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pg. 79).

There are different types of TA that have differing philosophical assumptions and procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The analysis was conducted with the ontological and epistemological assumptions in mind, as discussed in section 2.1, within a critical realist and contextualist framework. As such, considering the different approaches to TA, 'reflexive TA' was best suited to the analysis within this framework. Reflexive TA acknowledges that analysis is not a linear process, rather it is recursive in that the researcher moves back and forth between different stages of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019; 2021). In this thesis, the author often moved between coding, searching for themes and reviewing the themes until the themes generated best fit the data and represented the experiences of participants in a meaningful way. For example, codes related to changes in identity for participants were revised many times through reviewing the data and placing the data in the context of age differences. This showed that although there was a broader theme of identity changes, the analysis did not quite fit the data until age differences were considered which also related to the context of where participants had grown up (either in East Turkistan or Australia). Reflexive TA also acknowledges the central role of the researcher, their subjectivity and the importance of the researcher engaging with and reflecting on the data. The researcher is also active in the process of generating themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Subjectivity and reflexivity will be discussed further in the next section.

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline six main stages in conducting TA. The first step in TA involves 'familiarisation with the data' which refers to transcribing the interviews, reading and re-reading the data and making notes of initial ideas. For this thesis, interviews that were conducted in Uyghur were translated into English for transcription and all interviews were analysed in English. The interview audios were listened to multiple times and the transcripts were read against the audios to allow the author to immerse in the data.

The second step in TA is ‘generating initial codes’ in which interesting elements of the data are coded systematically and the data relevant to these codes are gathered. This was done through highlighting sections of transcripts with interesting data relevant to the research questions and making separate lists of codes. The generation of initial coding was deductive in that data specifically related to defining justice, restoring justice, and wellbeing impacts were coded separately in these three categories. The third step ‘searching for themes’ involved taking the codes and grouping them into potential themes. Themes are considered meaningful and important patterns of responses in the dataset related to the research questions of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This stage involved a more inductive approach as it required the consideration of contextual factors such as age of the participants, whether they had children (i.e., were parents) and at what age they had resettled in Australia. This resulted in separating codes contextually, such as grouping based on migration pathway or age. A more specific example of this is the distress that participants experienced in themselves and in their relationships. It became evident after generating the initial codes that being a parent was an important contextual factor that impacted this distress. This led to the final theme of ‘parenting and relationship impacts’ in Chapter 5. The fourth step involved reviewing themes in which the themes were refined and checked in relation to the earlier codes and overall dataset. Some themes were grouped together to form a broader theme, and some were broken down into different themes to convey further detail. This process produced ‘thematic maps’ which are presented in each analysis chapter. This particular stage was most challenging as it was important to ensure that themes generated accurately reflected the available data and also captured the candidate’s interpretations and analysis. The fifth step was ‘defining and naming themes’ which involved reviewing the themes and providing a description of the analysis in each theme. At this stage it was important to consider the story that each theme told about the data separately and as whole, including how to present these in

different studies and published papers while still meeting the overarching aims of the thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Naming the themes is a way to inform the reader in a short phrase what the theme will convey. Through the drafting process of the later chapters, the names of themes were modified many times until they best captured the content of themes. The sixth and final step 'producing the report' included carefully selecting sufficient extracts from interviews that showed evidence of the themes in the data and producing a written report of the findings. The author carefully selected the extracts and tried to ensure that participants were well represented in the papers in terms of age, gender and migration pathways and also to avoid over reliance on the interviews of a few participants.

2.4 Reflexivity

Unlike quantitative research which typically approaches research from a positivist epistemology, whereby researchers may be seen as objective, and where there is an imperative to minimise bias, qualitative research paradigms usually recognise and value the subjectivity of the researcher; particularly within contextualist frameworks. In qualitative research it is acknowledged that it is the author's subjectivity that draws them to particular areas of interest in research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). According to Braun & Clarke (2013) researchers are influenced by their subjective experience, values, histories, politics and assumptions. This is evident in that the candidate pursued this specific research topic due to personal experiences and cultural identity. The same applies to participants as they also have their subjective experiences, which they bring to the research and perhaps motivate them to participate in the first place. It is crucial for the researcher to be reflexive in their approach to conducting research. Reflexivity is understanding that the research is influenced by the author's subjective experiences and is a critical reflection on how the researcher plays a role in the research produced. It is important to acknowledge that this research was conducted with a human rights and social justice agenda which is not rare in qualitative research

(Schweitzer & Steel, 2008; Steel & Silove, 2004). This research was conducted in the hopes of shedding light on human rights abuses and also in promoting ways to restore justice. For the candidate, this in itself is a form of advocacy and activism for Uyghurs and against ongoing systemic injustices.

I position myself as both a Uyghur Australian and an active member of the Uyghur community in Australia. Thus, a key goal was to work with my local community in developing the research. As established in Chapter 1, research in this particular area of systemic injustice and wellbeing is sparse, however this is even more apparent in research related to Uyghur people. The voices and experiences of Uyghur people are strikingly absent in the world of research and where there is research conducted, it is often from an outsider perspective. It became important to me to conduct this research and to publish the studies to have some representation of Uyghurs that reflects our personal experiences. Working towards publications was also significant as it was a means to give back to the participants and the community who have had so much taken from them.

A challenging part of this research for me was my dual identity of both researcher and community member. Being a community member was positive in the sense that it provided access to the community, I had an insider perspective, cultural awareness, spoke the language and related to community members' experiences as often the experiences were similar to my own. On the other hand, it was difficult at times to conduct the interviews, as participant accounts were deeply personal and painful. Furthermore, reading existing research on other cultural groups who have experienced conflict, persecution and genocide was difficult as it was disheartening to know and realise that such atrocities have occurred many times before in human history. Part of managing my own distress and being reflexive was to maintain a journal of my thoughts and feelings as the interviews progressed and I delved into analysis. TA requires the researcher to immerse in the data, which for me was to listen to the interview

audios and read transcripts many times over. However, it was also important to remove myself from the data and take time away to reflect at different stages of analysis so that the analysis was not impacted by my own emotional distress. This was particularly helpful in managing the need to include every bit of data as it all felt important. Another way I managed to engage with, but also be critical in my analysis was to seek supervision. Discussing and reflecting on my internal processes with my supervisors and coming back to my research aims and questions assisted in the data analysis. The themes were reviewed and refined separately and together with my supervisors.

Furthermore, it was crucial throughout this thesis to be mindful of my influence as the researcher on the research process - including being mindful of the assumptions that participants may have of me and how that may affect interviews. Often in interviews, participants would [correctly] assume my awareness and knowledge of the Uyghur situation, however this sometimes meant that they assumed knowledge of their personal experiences too. To manage this, participants were often asked clarifying questions or asked to expand on issues they may have skimmed over and sometimes the questions required reframing.

2.5 Quality in Qualitative Research

As with all research, it is necessary to ensure that qualitative research is conducted in a robust manner. In quantitative research, quality criteria are often concerned with validity, reliability, objectivity and generalisability (Winter, 2000). However, assessing quality in qualitative research is often discussed in terms of credibility (findings are meaningful), rigour (the methodology of the research is clear and appropriate), transferability (relevance to the context and phenomenon being studied) and reflexivity (reflection on the relationship and influences between the researcher, research topic and participants) (Kitto et al., 2008; Stenfors et al., 2020).

Tracy (2010) provides eight overarching 'big tent' quality criteria for conducting qualitative research and as such each of these criteria will be discussed in relation to this thesis. Tracy's criteria provide a helpful structure to assess quality and are advantageous as each criterion can be approached through different paths depending on the researcher, the research context, project and theoretical underpinnings. Furthermore, having such a framework can also communicate to different stakeholders the value and contribution of qualitative research. The eight criteria are (1) worthy topic, (2) rich rigor, (3) sincerity, (4) credibility, (5) resonance, (6) significant contribution, (7) ethics and, (8) meaningful coherence.

Worthy Topic

Tracy (2010) suggests that good qualitative research is 'relevant, timely, significant and interesting' (pg. 840). A worthy topic emerges from disciplinary priorities and are conceptually or theoretically compelling. The current program of research emerged from the researcher's own experiences of injustice, witnessing experiences of friends and family and belonging in the Uyghur community as mentioned above in Section 2.4. Furthermore, the research topic is timely and relevant given the ongoing persecution of the Uyghur people as outlined in Section 1.5. In the broader refugee and wellbeing context, research on justice is also relevant and important as refugee numbers continue to increase globally. It is important to explore and understand how experiences of systemic injustice shape perceptions of justice as well as overall wellbeing and what resettlement countries such as Australia can do to facilitate positive wellbeing. Tracy also suggests that worthy studies are interesting as they research topics that are not well known. In light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 1, it is clear that this program of research is necessary given the minimal research that has focused on justice as an important factor of wellbeing for those who have refugee backgrounds and have experienced systemic injustice.

Rich Rigour

Rich rigour refers to the criteria that qualitative research should have complexity and abundance in research method and design. This includes theoretical frameworks, data sources, contexts and samples. Furthermore, rigour also provides face validity - which means that at face value, the research is reasonable and appropriate (Golafshani, 2003). Considerations for ensuring and assessing rigour include sufficient data to support claims of the research, researcher spending sufficient time to collect meaningful and significant data, having an appropriate context or sample given aims of the research and lastly the researcher using appropriate data collection and analysis procedures. Transparency regarding these considerations is also another marker of rigour.

In this thesis, rigour is demonstrated in decisions such as selecting interviews as the primary method of data collection as it was most appropriate for the research aims. Conducting interviews in both English and Uyghur allowed for a greater representation of participants and richness of data. All analyses were conducted in English as interviews were translated verbatim. Transcription followed an orthographic/verbatim style in which all verbal utterances of participant and researcher were recorded. This style was selected as this program of research was interested in the content of participants speech rather than the way the speech was constructed in which case a more detailed and complex level of transcription would have been appropriate. In relation to collecting sufficient data, a pragmatic and alternative to data saturation as described by Braun and Clarke (2021) was used in which sufficient data is collected whilst also considering limitations on time and resources as was discussed in Section 2.3 on Procedure.

Sincerity

The criterion of sincerity refers to the research being marked by honesty and transparency of the researcher's goals and biases and how these may influence the research processes. The American Psychological Association (APA) also suggest in their Journal Article Reporting Standard for qualitative research that transparency in data collection and analysis is important to ensure the methodological integrity of the research and its findings (Levitt et al., 2018). Sincerity is often shown as an end goal through self-reflexivity or data auditing. Throughout this thesis, self-reflexivity was at the forefront of the research and demonstrated in several ways including the preface, Section 2.4 on Reflexivity, statements of identity and involvement in the Uyghur community throughout the studies as well as a final reflection at the conclusion of this thesis.

Throughout this thesis a reflexive journal was also maintained. Practicing reflexivity and keeping a reflexive journal is a means to ensure quality as the researchers' own thoughts and assumptions and the way these interact with the data is kept at the forefront of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The reflexive journal included notes on initial thoughts after interviews, managing distress, how to improve questions for future interviews or re-ordering questions. The journal was an ongoing part of the research process. Additionally, the development of themes was a collaborative process in that themes were developed both independently and together with all authors of the studies and the final themes reported were refined and agreed on by all. Although collaborative analysis is not always necessary in qualitative research, it was particularly important in this project, as the supervisors brought a different perspective to the analysis of data and helped navigate challenges such as those mentioned in Section 2.4.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the trustworthiness and plausibility of the research findings. Tracy (2010) suggests that qualitative credibility is demonstrated through methods such as thick description, triangulation, multivocality and partiality.

In this thesis, credibility was mainly established through member checking. According to Braun and Clarke (2013) member checking refers to the method of checking the data analysis with participants either as report or summary of the research. However, this technique for ensuring quality in qualitative research is contentious as it depends on the specific purpose of member checking and the underlying epistemological and ontological position of the research. In this thesis, member checking was used as a means to ensure participants' voices and experiences were reflected in the findings. Tracy (2010) suggests an alternative to member checking referred to as 'member reflections'. Member reflections involve sharing the research findings with participants and allowing opportunity to ask questions and give feedback but is it not a check of whether the analysis 'got it right' (Tracy, 2010). For this thesis, participants who had consented to receiving updates and findings of the research, were emailed a research summary (See Appendix C). Participants were welcome to ask questions and provide feedback. Overall participants responded positively to the research summary expressing hope that the research would be published and shared with them and would call people to take action against the ongoing injustices.

> "You conveyed our problems, expectations and solutions in a very concise matter. I believe your thesis will include all the methodologies, sources and detailed information of the oppression and torture. I hope it will bring some lights to Australian bodies to act." (Arzu, 44, W)

Resonance

Resonance captures the research's potential to meaningfully resonate with and affect the audience in a way that promotes empathic understanding. Tracy (2010) suggests that resonance can be achieved through aesthetic merit, evocative writing, and transferability. It is not necessary for all qualitative research to demonstrate resonance through the same means, however high quality qualitative research should have impact. Aesthetic merit refers to presenting the text in a way that is meaningful and evocative to the reader. This can be achieved by utilising narratives that are vivid, engaging and complex that can evoke the reader to react and reflect (Bochner, 2000; Richardson, 2000). In relation to this thesis, selecting the interview extracts to present alongside the themes was important and challenging. It was challenging to select a limited number of extracts that concisely represented the themes but also captured the voices of participants. It was also necessary to present interview extracts alongside contextual information of the participants such as age of arrival, pathways to resettlement and injustices witnessed or experienced to convey to the reader a whole picture – one that was meaningful and true to the experiences of participants and their experiences of injustice and wellbeing.

Transferability is another means to demonstrate resonance and refers to the research's potential to be useful across different contexts. Transferability can occur when readers feel that the findings of the research can relate or are meaningful to their own contexts or experiences. Although this body of research has not yet been presented widely, it is hoped that the completion of this thesis as well as the resulting publications will allow readers to relate to participant experiences of injustice and reflect on the meaning and significance of justice in their lives. Furthermore, the findings of this research may be applicable to groups that have refugee backgrounds or similar experiences of systemic injustice and allow them to relate and reflect on the state of their wellbeing as a result.

Significant Contribution

Another quality criteria as proposed by Tracy (2010) is that of significant contribution. This criterion requires a reflection on whether the research extends knowledge, improves practice or generates ongoing research. Significant contribution can also be viewed in terms of theoretical, heuristic or practical significance. Theoretical significance refers to building on existing theory and developing new conceptual understandings that can be utilised in future research. This thesis builds on existing theories of justice, refugee wellbeing and social determinants of health and the significance of these findings for theory and future research are discussed in Chapter 6. Heuristic significance motivates people to further explore and act on the findings of the research which overlaps with practical significance which relates to the usefulness of the research in creating practical change. One of the aims of this body of research is to promote a better understanding of wellbeing for people with refugee backgrounds and experiences of systemic injustice and suggest practical ways in which clinicians, researchers and policy makers can apply the findings. This is further discussed under implications of findings in Chapter 6.

Ethics

Conducting ethical research is important and an end goal of qualitative quality regardless of research paradigm. Tracy (2010) suggests considering procedural, situational, relational and exiting ethics. Ethical considerations specific to this thesis were outlined above in section 2.3.1, however some additional points related to ethics are discussed here. In particular, procedural ethics was important for this program of research as gaining institutional ethics approval required adherence to university guidelines and policies in relation to recruitment, protecting confidentiality of participants, storing and accessing data. A particular concern related to this was avoiding 'deductive disclosure' which would compromise participant confidentiality and anonymity in the presentation of research findings. This meant that although demographic information was collected for participants,

very limited and select information was included in the methods and results of subsequent chapters in order to prevent external parties from deducting participants' identities. This is of particular importance given the small Uyghur community in Australia and the ongoing threats to safety that Uyghurs experience as mentioned in Section 1.5 on the Uyghur Context.

Meaningful Coherence

Meaningful coherence represents studies that are clear in their stated aims and achieve said aims, use appropriate methods for the intended aims that fit with the research paradigm and connect existing literature with the research focus, methods and findings. In this thesis, a social determinants of health approach was taken to review and understand refugee wellbeing and a review of justice research lead to the conceptualisation of systemic injustice. The gaps in research highlighted in the review of literature lead to the focus on exploring the experiences of Uyghur people as a case study. Following this, a critical realist approach was taken to data collection and analysis. In this thesis, the research aims are grounded in the literature and the three studies presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 address the research questions and aims and connect the findings with the literature. Chapter 6 provides an overview of the research findings, connects back to broader literature, and discusses the significance and implications of the findings.

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CHAPTER 3. SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Relationship between experiences of systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers: a systematic review

3.1 Preamble

As established in Chapter 1, justice is important for people and violations of justice often motivate actions to restore justice. Injustice can also have negative impacts on cognitions and emotions. However, there is little research documenting the justice perceptions of people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds considering the systemic injustices that they are likely to face. Furthermore, there is an absence of research documenting the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing for these groups. Therefore, this systematic review explored the existing literature with the aim of collating research into systemic injustice among refugees and asylum seekers. The resulting review was accepted for publication in June, 2021 in *Australian Psychologist*.

3.2 Statement of Authorship

Title of Paper	Relationship between experiences of systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers: a systematic review
Publication Status	☒Published ☐ Accepted for Publication ☐ Submitted for Publication ☐ Unpublished and Unsubmitted work written in manuscript style
Publication Details	Alim, M., Due, C., & Strelan, P. (2021). Relationship between experiences of systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers: a systematic review. *Australian Psychologist*, *56*(4), 274-288.DOI: 10.1080/00050067.2021.1942776

Principal Author

Name of Principal Author (Candidate)	Mastura Alim		
Contribution to the Paper	Conceptualised the study, formulated research questions and search terms, performed searches, completed analysis on all articles, interpreted data, wrote the manuscript, and acted as corresponding author.		
Overall percentage (%)	80%		
Certification:	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature and is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in this thesis. I am the primary author of this paper.		
Signature		Date	22/09/2022

Co-Author Contributions

By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

i. the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);

ii. permission is granted for the candidate in include the publication in the thesis; and

iii. the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

Name of Co-Author	Associate Professor Clemence Due		
Contribution to the Paper	Supervision and input regarding development of research questions, search terms and research protocols, selection of articles for inclusion in the review, and analysis of the subset of data. Provided editorial and structural feedback on the manuscript.		
Signature		Date	27.9.2022

Name of Co-Author	Associate Professor Peter Strelan		
Contribution to the Paper	Supervision and input regarding development of research questions, search terms and research protocols, selection of articles for inclusion in the review, and analysis of the subset of data. Provided editorial and structural feedback on the manuscript.		
Signature		Date	23/9/22

3.3 Abstract

Objective: This study is a systematic review of the literature on systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers.

Methods: The review was conducted using the PRISMA guidelines for conducting systematic reviews. Four main databases were searched, and studies were screened based on specific inclusion criteria. The data was extracted and analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: Fourteen studies, with various research designs met the study inclusion criteria. Themes identified were that ‘justice is human rights and a balance in power’. Consequences of experiencing systemic injustice was highlighted in the theme of ‘mistrust in the legal system and a preference for informal forms of justice’. Systemic injustice has negative impacts on wellbeing which formed the themes of ‘injustice and wellbeing’, ‘sense of agency/control’ and ‘anger at injustice’.

Conclusions: Experiences of systemic injustice have a negative impact on the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers. Implications for refugee and asylum seeker wellbeing are discussed with suggestions for working with this population.

Keywords: Asylum Seekers, Justice, Refugees, Wellbeing, Mental Health, Review

3.4 Introduction

Background

The most recent estimate from the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) indicates that there are 79.5 million forcibly displaced people, of which 26 million are refugees (those who have fled their country of origin and have had their claim to refugee status recognised) and 4.2 million are asylum seekers (persons who are still waiting for their claim to refugee status to be assessed (Refugee Council of Australia, 2009; UNHCR, 2019). Both these groups typically face extensive challenges from displacement through to resettlement, placing them at a high risk of mental illness and psychological distress (Fazel, Wheeler & Danish, 2005; Bogic, Njoku & Priebe 2015). Asylum seekers arguably face additional challenges due to policies such as mandatory detention and temporary visas (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021). For many refugees and asylum seekers - most notably those who have experienced persecution and state-based violence - there is little possibility of redress for the injustices that they have faced.

Previous research has documented the negative impact of injustice and lack of redress on wellbeing for populations who have experienced mass conflict, war and persecution, such as in the case of the Rwandan genocide, the war in former Yugoslavia, and the war in Iraq (Basoglu et al., 2005; Kira et al., 2009; Stein et al., 2008). This research suggests that inability to gain justice plays a contributing role in poor mental health outcomes. However, there is limited research that has specifically studied: (a) how refugees and asylum seekers, who have by definition experienced systemic injustice, understand and perceive justice and, (b) how systemic injustice impacts the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers. Therefore, this systematic review aims to collate research that has explored how refugees and asylum

seekers understand and perceive justice, and to identify the impact of systemic injustice on the wellbeing of these groups of people.

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Wellbeing

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines wellbeing as a "state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1948). Therefore, we refer to wellbeing throughout this study to include both mental illness as well as positive functioning, thereby drawing upon a holistic and multidimensional approach to mental health.

Both pre-migration factors (e.g., exposure to traumatic events) and post-migration factors (e.g., socioeconomic disadvantage, acculturation difficulties, loss of social support) are well known risks for negative wellbeing outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers (Murray, Davidson & Schweitzer, 2008; Porter & Haslam, 2005). As such, refugees and asylum seekers have high prevalence rates for mental health disorders. For example, Bogic et al. (2015) conducted a systematic review to assess prevalence of mental disorders in long-settled refugees who had experienced war (five years or longer after displacement). They found prevalence rates for depression of up to 80%, for PTSD of up to 86%, and for unspecified anxiety disorder of up to 88%. In addition to these high prevalence rates, research indicates that these pre- and post-migration factors do not provide a complete explanation for the often poor wellbeing outcomes of refugees and asylum seekers (Porter & Haslam, 2005). One factor that may have been overlooked despite its significant impact on the wellbeing of people more generally (Mikula, Scherer & Athenstaedt, 1998; Barclay, Skaricki & Pugh, 2005) is justice—or more specifically, the perceived absence of justice. Refugees and asylum seekers are likely to have experienced a range of injustices at both structural and interpersonal levels, and these injustices are often ongoing because there is no avenue for

redress (Holzer, 2013; Mura, 2015; Pavlish & Ho, 2009). However, the role played by injustice in relation to wellbeing is currently not known.

Justice

Justice is fundamentally important to humans (Lerner, 1980). When individuals are transgressed against, they experience an injustice gap (Worthington, 2006)—a discrepancy between expected (fair) treatment and actual (unfair) treatment. The larger the gap, the greater the sense of injustice.

Worthington (2001) suggests there are several societal and intrapersonal mechanisms that people use to deal with an injustice and reduce the negative feelings that arise following a transgression. Experimental studies indicate that anger and guilt are the two most likely emotional responses to experiencing an injustice in the general population (Mikula et al., 1998). The extent to which a person may feel these emotions is moderated by their appraisal of the unfairness or the injustice of the situation (Mikula et al.). To reduce negative affective responses, at the societal level people can engage in punitive or restorative justice, work for social justice or pursue successful conflict resolution (Worthington, 2001). Worthington suggests that these punitive or restorative justice mechanisms can involve retaliation or seeking revenge, civil or legal justice pathways, personal restitution, esteem-lowering acts for the transgressor, public ceremonial acts, acknowledging divine justice or belief in karma. At the intrapersonal level, negative affective responses can be reduced by simply forgetting the transgression, reframing the transgression and its significance, telling a different story about the nature of people, forbearing or accepting the hurt, or even by forgiving. Negative affect should be reduced if justice is perceived to have been done, depending on how fair the method for restoring justice is seen to be.

Individuals who have been the victims of systemic injustice - such as refugees and asylum seekers - very rarely have the means to seek redress for the injustices that they have experienced (for a review of the relatively rare exceptions, see David, 2017), thereby potentially exacerbating negative emotional responses to their injustice. By systemic injustice, we refer to those situations where individuals have experienced injustice due to the actions of a particular system under which they have been living, for example, persecution on the basis of religion, ethnicity or political views. For refugees and asylum seekers, systemic injustice extends to forced dislocation and subsequent housing in refugee camps. In these cases, it is difficult to identify a single instigator as the injustice typically occurs at a socio-political system level. In these instances, victims rarely see justice done (e.g., seeing a dictator tried and sentenced). In effect, victims of systemic injustice remain in a state of unresolved injustice.

In terms of experiences of systemic injustice and wellbeing, research with non-refugee populations has found negative relationships with mental health, particularly trauma. For example, Basoglu et al. (2005) found that survivors of war in former Yugoslavia reported a sense of injustice at the perceived lack of redress for their trauma. In this study, when compared to control groups, survivors presented with higher rates of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Other research has also noted the significant negative impact of injustice on wellbeing for survivors of war, even after justice has been enacted (Pham, Weinstein, & Longman, 2004; Sonis et al., 2009). In general, this body of literature has found that the greater the perceived sense of injustice – including related to systemic injustices - the worse the mental health outcomes, particularly in relation to trauma and depression (Sonis et al., 2009). However, this relationship has not been specifically considered in the case of refugees and asylum seekers, who typically face a range of systemic injustices from pre-displacement (e.g., war, persecution), post-displacement (e.g., living in

refugee camps) and in resettlement countries (e.g., deterrent policies such as those in Australia concerning detention and temporary visa status). As such, the purpose of this review is to bring together the research on systemic injustice in the case of refugees and asylum seekers, across different cultures and contexts, in order to provide an understanding of how refugees and asylum seekers perceive justice and the relationship between systemic injustice and wellbeing for this population. In doing so, the review may further understandings of the ongoing negative mental health experiences of many refugees and asylum seekers even many years post-resettlement (Hynie, 2018a; Li, Liddell & Nickerson, 2016).

3.5 Methods

This review followed the guidelines set out by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) (Moher et al., 2009).

Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria were that the study was published or available in English, and: a) included refugees or asylum seekers as primary participants; b) focused on, measured or discussed justice or injustice relating to the experiences of refugees and/or asylum seekers; c) focused on, measured or discussed wellbeing for refugees and/or asylum seekers; d) be empirical, including data collection whether qualitative or quantitative and; e) be published in a peer reviewed journal or edited book collection. Grey literature, specifically unpublished theses, was also included in the searches. The inclusion criteria specifically looks at refugees and asylum seekers as opposed to internally displaced peoples as the intention to resettle somewhere and apply for refugee status distinguishes these two groups.

Search Strategy and Data Collection

An initial search of PsycINFO was undertaken to identify subject headings and potential keywords with the assistance of a research librarian. The subject headings and potential keywords identified in this initial search were: refugees, asylum seeking, displaced people, wellbeing and justice. A second search was then undertaken in PsycINFO using these keywords, subject headings and index terms (see Table 1 for search terms). The search was then undertaken in PubMed, Scopus, Embase and reference lists of articles selected for full text review were searched for articles of relevance. The research librarian was consulted again to ensure the searches were as accurate as possible for the topic under investigation. The final date for inclusion was the end of March 2021.

Table 1

Search Terms

Refugees	Wellbeing	Justice
Refugee*	Health	Justice
"asylum seek*"	Wellbeing	Injustice
"boat people"	"mental health"	"social justice"
"illegal immigrant"	PTSD	
"displaced people"	"post-traumatic stress"	
"displaced person"	"post-traumatic stress disorder"	
	Stress	
	Illness	
	Depress*	
	Anxiety	
	Anxious	

The initial database search returned 3,692 results that were considered for inclusion. All titles and abstracts were screened, and relevant articles were identified for full text review. Once the full text review was completed, the first author extracted important

characteristics of the included studies using a table which included: country where research was conducted, study aims and design, number and characteristics of participants, and results relating to justice and wellbeing for refugees and asylum seekers (See Table 2). This information was cross-checked by the second author. All authors agreed upon the final list of articles included in this review. In addition, reference lists of articles, existing systematic reviews, and profiles of researchers in refugee and asylum seeker experiences and wellbeing were also searched for relevant publications, resulting in one included paper (Nyarko & Punamaki, 2017).

Table 2. Overview of Included Studies

Authors and Year of Publication	**Country of study**	**Aims**	**Study design**	**Sample/ sampling**	**Outcome focus / measures**	**Findings relevant to the review**
Alim, Due & Strelan (2019)	Australia	To explore the perception of forgiveness among people with refugee backgrounds in relation to their experiences of systemic injustice and the impact of forgiveness on their wellbeing	Qualitative	7 Iranian Refugees Passive snowball sampling	Semi-structured interviews	The way participants perceived forgiveness was dependent upon the transgression, differing between interpersonal and systemic transgressions Forgiveness was associated with forgetting the injustices that participants had experienced Participants desired a restoration of justice before they could consider forgiving system-level injustices Resettlement in Australia was seen as a form of justice
Bendjo, Karnilowicz	Australia	To explore the experiences of	Qualitative	12 Male Serbian Refugees	Semi-structured interviews	Trauma experience was a main theme in this study comprising

& Gill (2019)		resettlement among Serbian refugees in Australia To provide a contextual social-psychological understanding of the settlement experience		Purposive Sampling		subthemes of (1) torture experience, (2) intergenerational transmission of trauma and violence and, (3) perceived injustice Traumatic experiences were significant in resettlement and for the wellbeing of participants Participants reported strong sense of injustice as the perpetrators were not held accountable, participants also perceived the legal system as having failed them Participants described a sese of powerlessness as the system (government) often protected the perpetrators
Chase & Rosseau (2018)	Canada	To explore the experiences of asylum seekers at a	Ethnographic Study Qualitative	Purposive sampling	The data was analysed Silove's	Aspects of refugee claim process in Canada was regarded as unjust

		community day centre as an intervention and to explore its impact on wellbeing		15 semi-structured interviews (9 asylum seekers, 5 refugees, 1 non-refugee staff member)	ADAPT framework Field notes from 50 participant observations over 6 months	Inability to do something in the face of injustice seemed to erode sense of agency and wellbeing Certain programs at the day centre, such as information sessions on asylum seeker rights, helped restore a sense of justice
Coffey, Kaplan, Sampson & Tucci (2010)	Australia	To examine the experiences of extended periods of immigration detention from previously detained asylum seekers and identify the consequences of these experiences for life after release	Mixed Methods	17 refugees, mainly from Middle Eastern countries Targeted sampling	Semi-structured interviews Standardised measures of mental health, trauma and quality of life	Standardised measures found high rates of anxiety, depression and PTSD and low quality of life scores Participants suffered an ongoing sense of injustice and insecurity, difficulties with relationships, changes to view of self and poor mental health Depression, anxiety, concentration, and memory disturbances were commonly reported

Holzer (2013)	Bududuram Refugee Camp, Ghana	To explore how the refugee camp system encouraged people to see themselves as subject to the law with a focus on UNHCR Examine how people came to understand the host legal institutions Analyse how refugees made claims for justice during social protests in Bududuram between 2007 and 2008 Discuss how security and justice elude refugees from	Ethnographic Study Qualitative	Liberian refugees (approximately 49 participants)	Field notes collected over 15 months, observations, documents and photographs Unstructured, semi- and peer interviews Focus groups	With the help of the UNHCR, people developed an understanding of themselves as distinctive group of rights holders with a special relationship to the international community as refugees Most people remained alienated from host legal institutions despite understanding themselves to be international rights holders Safety from harm and fair and just treatment were two factors that kept people from seeking their rights through legal institutions

		effective legal practice				
Kira et al., (2006)	US	To examine whether retributive justice has positive mental health benefits among Iraqi refugees Test the validity and reliability of a new scale measuring the retributive justice response	Quantitative Cross-sectional study	Quota sample 501 Iraqi refugees recruited via snowballing	Measures for trauma, forgiveness, retributive justice, social adjustment, health, religiosity, socio-cultural adjustment Clinician administered measure for post-traumatic stress	Retributive justice in the case of political injustice has significant healing effects on the victim The more harm the victim has endured, the greater the healing effects of retributive justice No positive changes in PTSD symptoms associated with perceived retributive justice
Liebling, Barrett & Artz (2020)	Uganda Settlement	To investigate the health and justice responses for South Sudanese refugees living in resettlements in Northern Uganda who were survivors	Qualitative	61 South Sudanese refugees 37 Key stakeholders (NGOs, international/governmental organisations, service providers)	Semi-structured interviews	Participants reported that the criminal justice system failed to provide adequate justice for the refugee survivors of SGBV and torture Lack of access to formal criminal justice processes reported and their

		of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and torture				effectiveness questioned by participants Refugees settled criminal matters within informal community structures Access to justice typically harder for women SGBV viewed simultaneously as a violation of one's body and rights Men less likely to report crimes against them due to stigma and shame
McCallister (2012)	US	To explore the pre, peri and post migration experiences of Mexican refugees fleeing violence in Mexico	Qualitative	22 Mexican refugees Criterion-based sampling	Semi-structured interviews Analysed using the core adaptive systems framework (Silove, 1999)	During the post-migration phase, participants reported an ongoing sense of injustice and mistrust Previous loss of safety and loss of trust in the justice system pre-migration contributed to the ongoing sense of injustice post-migration Majority of participants did not want revenge or retribution for their losses

						Personal safety was important to this group of participants and was the overarching system that was affected by their experiences of violence and adversity
Mura (2015)	US	To explore the signs of distress, explanatory models and views about treatment in a sample of asylum seekers and refugees who have escaped torture and persecution	Mixed Methods	18 West and Central African asylum seekers and refugees Purposive sampling	Semi-structured interviews McGill Illness Narrative Interview Health and trauma questionnaires	Theme of 'chronic adversity' which includes trauma of war, persecution, torture, loss of loved ones etc. and the difficulties of resettlement impacts participant wellbeing Repeated injustices occur from traumatic events through to displacement Loss of agency related to injustice
Nyarko & Punamaki (2017)	Bududuram Refugee Camp, Ghana	To describe experiences of war, atrocities, and losses of young refugees in an African context To explore the meanings, readiness, and preconditions for	Qualitative	13 Liberian refugees	Semi-structured interviews	Justice is necessary to enhance political balance and fairness Participants who were seeking justice felt that imprisonment and bringing the perpetrators into court could alleviate their own pain and suffering as oppressed and humiliated victims, this was seen

		forgiving the wrongdoings of their perpetrators				as a necessary precondition to healing and forgiving
Pavlish & Ho (2009)	Rwanda Refugee camp	Investigating community perspectives on justice and human rights	Ethnographic Study Qualitative	Congolese Refugees (sample size unspecified) 20 Key informants	Semi-structured interviews 6 focus groups	Justice was defined by the participants in examples of human rights abuses and injustices Both participants and key informants indicated that justice is the enactment and enforcement of equal human rights for all persons and groups Cultural ideology is the primary barrier to human rights, especially for womens' rights Power structures and power imbalances are a source of injustice Lack of awareness of Rwandan laws and human rights increase the risk for social injustice and human

						rights violations which affects both the perpetrator and victim
Rees & Silove (2011)	Australia	To explore the phenomenology of 'sakit hati'	Qualitative Study	41 West Papuan male refugees Snowball sampling	Focus groups In-depth interviews Semi-structured confirmatory interviews	Sakit hati refers to the complex psychological state (emotional and physical responses) towards being treated unjustly There are physical symptoms of being unwell associated with sakit hati Sakit hati has a dynamic process, exposure to transgression followed by anger, brooding and resentment, motivation for restitution and emotional relief. If brooding and resentment are not resolved, risk of explosive anger and aggression in response to environmental cues

						Further injustice in a setting where there is no avenue for redress caused the reaction to persist
Tay, Rees, Chen, Kareth & Silove (2015)	Papa New Guinea	To examine the factorial structure of PTSD based on the diagnostic criteria in the DSM and ICD Investigate domains of traumatic events (TEs) and broader psychosocial effects of conflict (sense of safety and injustice) associated with the factorial structures identified	Mixed methods	230 West Papuan refugees	ADAPT model Focus groups Clinical interviews Psychometric tests	162 participants reported a sense of injustice and unfairness as a consequence of past persecution and human rights violations Witnessing murder and the interaction of witnessing murder and injustice were strongly associated with the intrusion and avoidance symptoms of PTSD

Tay, Rees, Chen, Kareth & Silove (2016)	Papua New Guinea	To examine whether a unitary construct of complicated grief could be identified among West Papuan refugees To test two existing models of complicated grief found in DSM-5 and ICD-11 To examine whether traumatic events of conflict and loss and the five ADAPT model indices are associated with the unitary construct of complicated grief	Quantitative	230 West Papuan Refugees Targeted sampling approach	Exposure to conflict and loss-related traumatic events measure ADAPT index of psychosocial impacts of conflict and displacement Complicated grief symptoms	Confirmatory factor analysis found a single higher order construct of complicated grief made up of six factors Traumatic loss and sense of injustice each were associated with the unitary construct of complicated grief and its subdomains

Due to the range of study designs and analysis approaches, a thematic analysis approach was utilised to synthesise the findings of the included studies in this review, and no meta-analysis was conducted. Specifically, Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis was used, following all six steps, and using a deductive coding method. This involved initially becoming familiar with the data in the form of the findings of the included studies, then generating codes which highlight interesting features of the data related to the research questions concerning understandings of systemic injustice and its relationship to wellbeing, collating these codes into themes, reviewing the themes and finally producing a report of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this review, this involved the first author reading each article and highlighting results specifically related to understandings of justice and/or impact of injustice on wellbeing. This then formed the codes which were organised into themes and cross-checked by the second author. The final themes reported were agreed upon by all authors. A realist approach was taken in extracting the codes from the studies, whereby the data was presented as found by the authors.

A quality assessment of included papers was conducted using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (Hong et al., 2018). The MMAT allows for the quality appraisal of different research designs. Quality is assessed based on appropriate research design in relation to the research question, adequacy of data collection, sampling, data analysis and reporting of outcomes.

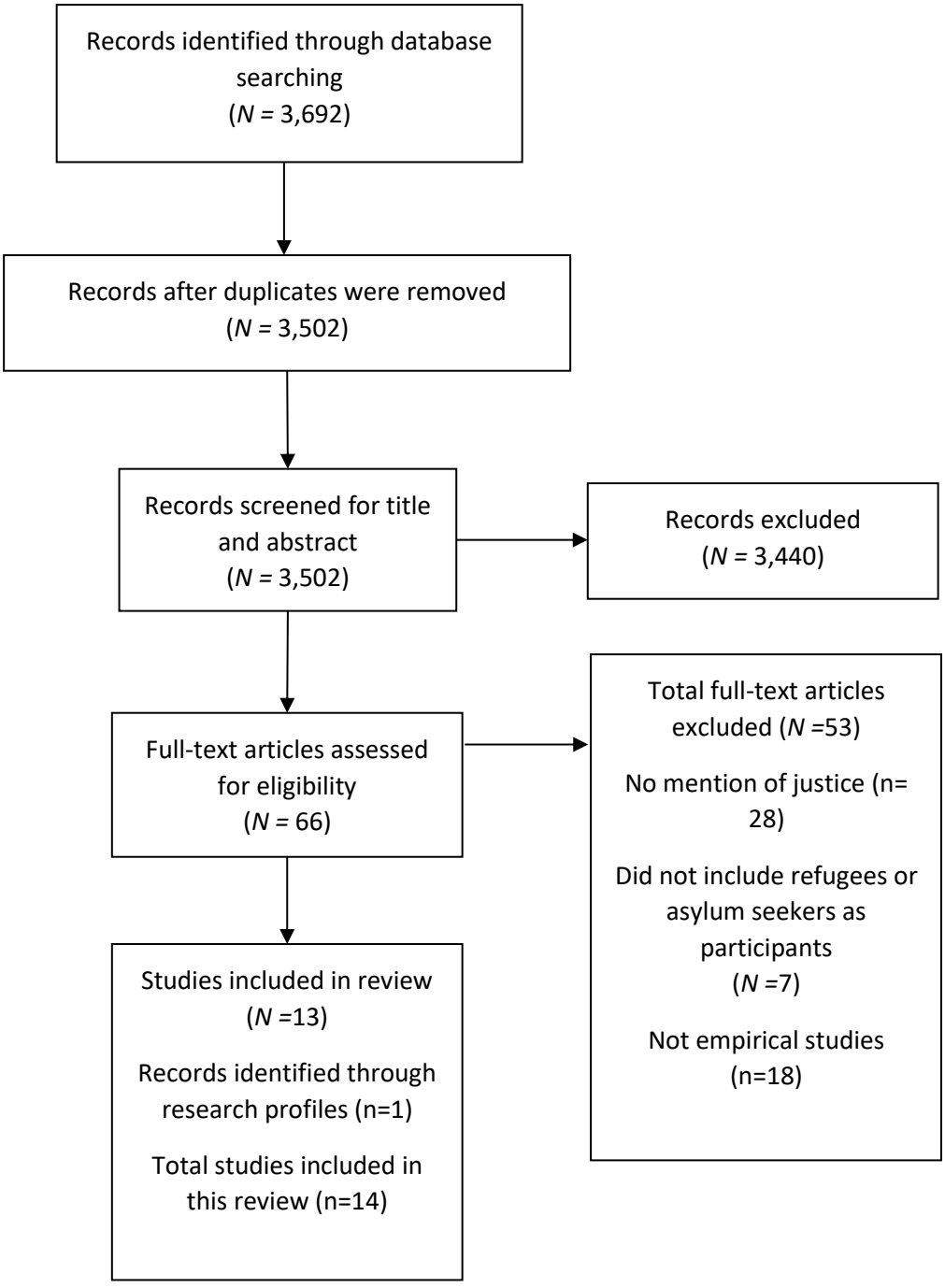
3.6 Results

Summary of Findings

Database searching identified 3,692 records which resulted in 3,502 records after duplicates were removed. The titles and abstracts of all records were screened and

subsequently, 62 articles were selected for full-text review. Of these, 13 were included in this review and 53 articles were excluded. The main reasons for exclusion were: no mention of justice in relation to refugees or asylum seekers (e.g., Deljo, 2000), no empirical data (e.g., McConnachie, 2014) or that refugees or aslyum seekers were not primary participants (e.g., Priebe et al., 2010). One study of relevance was excluded as it was a conference abstract and contained no primary data; authors were contacted for comment but no reply was received (Fischer et al., 2020). The reference lists of the included articles were searched, however the articles of relevance were already found through database searching (see Figure 1). One study was identified through researcher profiles related to refugee and asylum seeker wellbeing (Nyarko & Punamaki, 2017).

Figure 1. Flow Diagram of Database Screening



Altogether, 14 studies were included in this review: nine qualitative, two quantitative and three mixed methods. Four studies were conducted in refugee camps (Holzer, 2013; Liebling, Barrett & Artz, 2020; Nyarko & Punamaki, 2017; Pavlish & Ho, 2009) and the remaining studies were conducted in the countries of resettlement (Alim, Due & Strelan,

2019; Bendjo, Karnilowicz & Gill, 2019; Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Coffey, Kaplan, Sampson & Tucci, 2010; Kira et al., 2006; McCallister, 2012; Mura, 2015; Rees & Silove, 2011). Two studies, also conducted in countries of resettlement, utilised the same sample but reported different aims and results and hence these papers were included individually in the review (Tay, Rees, Chen, Kareth & Silove, 2015, 2016). Two studies were unpublished theses (McCallister, 2012; Mura, 2015).

Quality Assessment

The MMAT includes two screening questions for all studies: (1) are there clear research questions and, (2) does the data collection address the research questions. All 14 studies had clear research questions and aims, and the study design was appropriate considering the aims.

The MMAT domains for assessing qualitative research include assessing the appropriateness of a qualitative approach for the research question, adequacy of qualitative data collection, adequacy of findings in relation to the data, sufficient interpretation of data and coherence between the data collection, analysis and interpretation (Hong et al., 2018). With respect to the nine qualitative studies, all studies had clear coherence between research questions, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. In relation to data collection, all studies had clear descriptions of participant recruitment and demographics with some studies providing reflections on the researcher and participant relationship as per reflexive practice in qualitative research (Bendjo et al., 2019; Chase & Rosseau, 2018; Holzer, 2013; Mura, 2015; Nyarko & Punamaki, 2017). All studies referred to examples of interview questions, and two studies provided the interview schedule (McCallister, 2012; Mura, 2015). Of note, one ethnographic study incorporated focus groups to develop the interview schedule, however the data from focus groups was not analysed separately for the study (Holzer, 2013).

The quality of quantitative studies in the MMAT is assessed based on the sampling strategy and representativeness of the population, the use of appropriate measures, appropriate statistical analyses and reporting of outcome data (Hong et al., 2018). Both quantitative studies reported clear aims, variables, and appropriate measures (Kira et al., 2006; Tay et al., 2016). Kira et al. (2006) used a quota sampling method and acknowledged its limitation in relation to generalisability. Tay et al. (2016) used a targeted sampling method; however the actual details of the sampling strategy were reported in another paper (Tay et al., 2015). Specifically, in the 2015 paper Tay et al., reported that the participant response rate was 92%, indicating low nonresponse bias. The statistical analyses in both studies were appropriate for the research question.

Quality of mixed methods studies according to the MMAT are determined by the rationale for using a mixed methods design, effective integration of different components for the research question, adequate reporting of both qualitative and quantitative results, adequately addressing inconsistencies between the different components and adhering to the quality criteria for both qualitative and quantitative studies (Hong et al., 2018). The three mixed-methods studies included in this review provided a clear rationale for using a mixed methods design (Coffey et al., Mura, 2015; Tay et al., 2015). Generally, the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the studies were integrated effectively in reporting of the results (Coffey et al., Mura, 2015), although one study only provided limited reflection on the qualitative findings (Tay et al., 2015).

In relation to bias and funding across all 14 studies, five reported funding but were all largely philanthropic funds (Coffey et al., 2010; Liebling et al., 2020; McCallister, 2012, Kira et al., 2006, Tay et al., 2016).

The general quality of the included studies was good with each study presenting clear research questions, aims and utilising appropriate methodologies. Most studies were qualitative (nine) and while overall quality was good, future studies could be improved by adhering to quality criteria for qualitative research such as increasing the transparency of how data is collected and used (Tracy, 2010).

Summary of Themes

In relation to the research questions, thematic analysis resulted in five main themes which will be reported in relation to understandings of justice and wellbeing. The themes identified as relevant to the meanings and understandings of justice for participants in the included studies were: 'Justice as human rights and balance in power' and 'Mistrust of the legal system and preference for informal forms of justice'. It was evident that participants viewed justice as human rights and a balance between the perpetrators and victims of systemic injustice. Experiences of systemic injustice often led to mistrust of legal systems to restore justice and participants expressed a preference for informal forms of justice. In relation to justice and wellbeing, the common themes identified were: 'Injustice and wellbeing', 'Sense of agency/control' and 'Anger at injustice'. Experiencing systemic injustice had a negative impact on participants' wellbeing and also diminished a sense of agency and control over their lives. Participants also expressed anger towards injustice.

Justice as human rights and balance in power

In relation to refugee and asylum seekers' understanding of justice, three studies identified that justice was viewed primarily in terms of human rights (Bendjo et al., 2019; Holzer 2013; Pavlish & Ho, 2009). For example, two ethnographic studies (Holzer, 2013; Pavlish & Ho, 2009) set in African refugee camps found that participants understood themselves to be international rights holders, for whom rights such as food, water, shelter and

healthcare ought to be inalienable. However, participants in both studies indicated that they were alienated from the legal institutions in the countries in which they lived and were disadvantaged by power structures and imbalances which prevented them from exercising these basic human rights. These issues were identified as key examples of systemic injustice. This separation and inaccessibility of legal systems was also found in one study conducted in a resettlement country. Specifically, Bendjo et al.'s (2019) study of 12 refugees from Siberia living in Australia found that participants reported feeling powerless to take action against the injustices they experienced due to inaccessibility of legal systems and processes, identified as a form of injustice.

In addition to rights - and given the feelings of inaccessibility of systems found in the three studies above - two studies also identified that justice was viewed as power balance. Nyarko and Punamaki (2017) investigated the experiences of war and displacement among young adult Liberian refugees and their readiness and preconditions for forgiving the transgressions of their perpetrators (*N*=13). Participants indicated that bringing perpetrators (e.g., warlords, people in the Liberian government) to court could alleviate their suffering and create a new balance between themselves and the perpetrators. In this way, participants viewed justice as necessary to enhance political balance and fairness. Similarly, in a qualitative study with Iranian refugees (*N*=7) in Australia exploring the perceptions of forgiveness in relation to systemic injustice, participants reported a restoration of justice was necessary before forgiveness could be considered for transgressions committed by the government as the systemic injustices created an imbalance between victim and perpetrator (Alim et al., 2019).

In general, included studies indicated that there were cyclical relationships and tensions in refugees' understandings and perceptions of justice as it pertained to human rights and power. Specifically, some studies found that refugees felt justice was about human rights,

but that – as refugees – participants did not have access to the types of legal systems required for them to enact those rights. Together with imbalances in power, refugees were therefore locked out of recourse to find justice – which in itself was seen as a form of injustice, further displacing participants' human rights.

Mistrust of the legal system and preference for informal forms of justice

As noted in the previous theme, access to recourses against injustices was itself seen as a form of justice for refugees. However, a second key theme identified in studies concerning refugees' understandings of justice was that refugees generally identified feeling a sense of mistrust in the legal system, an associated unwillingness to seek justice through this system, and a preference for more 'informal' forms of justice.

In the first instance, four studies reported mistrust in the legal system (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Coffey et al., 2010; Holzer, 2013; McCallister, 2012). This mistrust extended across studies in a variety of resettlement contexts, including Ghana (Holzer, 2013), Australia (Coffey et al., 2010), and the United States (McCallister, 2012). Of particular note is the fact that participants felt that there could be retribution from authorities if they sought justice through formal methods (Holzer, 2013), or that seeking justice in such ways would make them unsafe in their new country (McCallister, 2012). Mistrust in the legal system also extended to asylum seekers, with Coffey et al. (2010) and Chase and Rousseau (2018) also reporting similar lack of trust in legal processes among participants applying for asylum and those who have experienced mandatory detention in Australia. In these cases, participants indicated that they believed that the approval of visa applications were arbitrary and not based on any principles of justice (Coffey et al.).

In relation to the second point regarding unwillingness to use the legal system to seek justice, a qualitative study of South Sudanese refugees (N= 61), who were survivors of sexual

and gender-based violence living in a settlement in Uganda, found that participants indicated that they were unlikely to seek formal criminal justice processes due to questioning the effectiveness of such pathways, a perceived failure of the criminal justice system to lead to justice, and difficulties accessing the relevant services (Liebling et al., 2020). This finding was not unique to sexual and gender-based violence, with Bendjo et al. (2019) and Nyarko and Punamaki (2017) also reporting that participants in their studies felt the legal system in their resettlement and home countries had failed to bring their perpetrators to justice. Importantly, participants in Holzer's (2013) study viewed the legal system in Ghana as a lesser form of justice, but of note, they also indicated that they preferred informal or cultural methods to obtain justice for interpersonal injustices within the refugee camp.

Injustice and wellbeing

Four studies found that injustice led to negative effects on wellbeing (Mura, 2015; Rees & Silove, 2011; Tay et al., 2015; Tay et al., 2016), particularly post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For example, experiences of systemic injustice and its impact on wellbeing among West Papuan refugees was the focus of two of the included studies (Tay et al., 2015; Tay et al., 2016). Tay et al. (2015) examined the impact of conflict on sense of safety and justice among West Papuan refugees using culturally adapted measures (N=230). Most participants reported a sense of injustice and unfairness as a consequence of past persecution and human rights violations. Older adults who had migrated from their homeland scored higher on scales of PTSD. Witnessing murder and the interaction of witnessing murder and feelings of injustice were strongly associated with the intrusion and avoidance domains of PTSD. Using the same sample in a different paper Tay et al. (2016) explored complicated grief. Traumatic loss and sense of injustice were found to be key components in the presentation of complicated grief. In particular, conflict and loss associated with feelings of injustice were found to be important for the 'negative appraisals' subdomain of complicated

grief. Other studies included in the review also found negative relationships between injustice and wellbeing across a variety of refugee populations, including fear, anxiety, depression and PTSD (Chase & Rosseau, 2018; Coffey et al., 2010; McCallister, 2012).

On the other hand, restoring justice at the system level was found by Kira et al. (2006) to contribute to positive wellbeing. Specifically, Kira et al. investigated the impact of retributive justice on the mental health of Iraqi refugees living in the United States (N = 501), finding that retributive justice (specifically, the elimination of the oppressive regime in Iraq) was found to have had significant healing effects for victims.

Sense of agency/control

Five of the included articles found that a particular pathway through which injustice affected wellbeing was through agency and control. Systemic injustices often deprived individuals of a sense of agency and control over their lives which was associated with negative wellbeing (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Coffey et al., 2010; Mura, 2015; Rees & Silove, 2011). On the other hand, restoring justice led to a sense of agency, which in turn positively affected wellbeing (Kira et al., 2006).

Specifically, participants in the study by Chase and Rousseau (2018), who were all asylum seekers, reported that the inability to act against an injustice eroded their sense of agency as well as having a negative impact on their wellbeing. McCallister (2012) also found injustice was related to perceptions of threat to safety, particularly in relation to a fear of repatriation. In these two studies, then, justice – here seen as permanent resettlement - was not certain, depriving participants of agency and control over their lives and choices.

Importantly, however, pathways that helped restore a sense of justice for participants had positive effects on wellbeing, often by restoring agency and control. For example, having an advocate to help participants navigate health, immigration and social services was

identified as one such pathway to restoring agency and control, in turn contributing to the protection of justice and positive wellbeing effects (Chase & Rousseau, 2018). Mura (2015) also found that having financial stability and educational opportunities – seen as components of systemic justice in resettlement contexts - helped to restore participants' sense of agency and power over their lives which had positive effects on wellbeing by providing a sense of safety and future. Similarly, Kira et al. (2006) found that retributive justice supported healing in that it increased participants' perceived control, thus leading to more investment in future long-term goals.

Anger at injustice

Anger at injustice was another key theme identified in relation to wellbeing (Alim et al., 2019; Coffey et al., 2010; Rees & Silove, 2011; Tay et al., 2016). However, the relationship between anger towards injustice and wellbeing was complex as it had both positive and negative impacts on wellbeing.

Anger was itself both a negative wellbeing outcome stemming from injustice, as well as a predictor of further distress – for example, feelings of anger were found to cause distress for participants in two studies (Rees & Silove, 2011; Tay et al., 2016). Additionally, anger at injustice was shown to negatively impact interpersonal relationships, a further pathway leading to poor wellbeing (Coffey et al., 2010; Rees & Silove, 2011; Tay et al., 2016). In particular, in the study by Coffey et al., asylum seekers who had experienced mandatory detention (N=17) reported being angry about separation from loved ones and the alienation they felt during detention. Participants feared that the anger they felt would negatively impact relationships with others even after resettlement, often leading to further isolation and poor mental health.

However, maintaining anger at systemic injustice was seen as being important to wellbeing by participants in two studies (Alim et al., 2019; Rees & Silove, 2011). In these cases, expressing and maintaining anger was seen as a sign of solidarity to those still suffering systemic injustice in participants 'countries of origin. Here, anger as a reaction to systemic injustice promoted wellbeing by demonstrating participants' ongoing commitment to overcoming oppression.

3.7 Discussion

Experiencing injustice can have negative impacts on the wellbeing of an individual, however there are multiple mechanisms and pathways by which individuals can deal with the negative feelings that arise from injustice and restore justice (Worthington, 2001). However, for refugees and asylum seekers who are often the victims of systemic injustice, the pathways to restoring justice are complex and refugees and asylum seekers often remain in a state of unresolved injustice even after resettlement. In light of this, the current systematic review sought to explore how refugees and asylum seekers understand justice and the ways in which systemic injustice, that is often unresolved, impacts their wellbeing.

This review found that justice was often seen by refugees and asylum seekers as the enactment of human rights – an important finding given that the population are often denied those same rights through deterrence policies (Bendio et al., 2019; Holzer 2013; Pavlish & Ho, 2009). In addition, justice was perceived as the restoration of a balance of power between the perpetrators of systemic injustice and those that were victims (Alim et al., 2019; Nyarko & Punamaki, 2017). However, the included studies found that both enactment of human rights and balancing power relationships was difficult, with refugees and asylum seeker participants reporting a sense of mistrust with the legal system as a pathway to restore justice. This mistrust stemmed from fears of retribution and fear for safety both in refugee camps and

countries of resettlement (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Coffey et al., 2010; Holzer, 2013; McCallister, 2012). Participants in refugee camps in particular preferred informal and cultural methods for dealing with interpersonal injustices (e.g., theft, domestic violence) (Holzer, 2013; Liebling et al., 2020; Pavlish & Ho, 2009). The studies related to wellbeing highlighted that systemic injustice has direct negative impacts on wellbeing (Mura, 2015; Rees & Silove, 2011; Tay et al., 2015; Tay et al., 2016), as well as diminishing a sense of agency and control (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Coffey et al., 2010; Mura, 2015; Rees & Silove, 2011). Interestingly, restoring a sense of agency and control had positive impacts on wellbeing despite not restoring the systemic injustices experienced by participants (Chase & Rosseau 2018; Mura, 2015). Anger was also identified as a key wellbeing issue in relation to systemic injustice. Anger affected wellbeing negatively as an emotion itself as well as a predictor of other negative wellbeing outcomes (Coffey et al., 2010; Rees & Silove, 2011; Tay et al., 2016), however maintaining anger was also seen as demonstrating solidarity with those still affected by systemic injustice (Alim et al., 2019; Rees & Silove, 2011).

Justice was primarily understood in relation to fairness and equality, with justice often equated with human rights (Holzer, 2013; Pavlish & Ho, 2009). Talking about rights may be particularly salient to refugees and asylum seekers as much of their experience is due to losing those same rights. However, as Hannah Arendt (1998) argues, 'the right to have rights' is not universally accepted, and this was certainly perceived to be the case for participants within the studies included in this review. Instead, the 'right to have rights' was typically dependent upon citizenship which many refugees and asylum seekers lack. Consideration of rights was particularly prominent in the study of Holzer (2013) where participants in refugee camps indicated that they did not enjoy the same rights as those who were citizens. In addition to not being afforded basic human rights, seeking justice is made difficult for refugees and asylum seekers by structural power imbalances that exist between them and the

legal system or people in authoritarian positions – including in resettlement countries (Pavlish & Ho, 2009; Holzer, 2013).

The included studies suggested a cyclical relationship for refugees and asylum seekers and their experiences of systemic injustice. Refugees and asylum seekers experience human rights violations (systemic injustice), they then experience further injustice when they cannot access legal pathways to restore justice and uphold their rights, which creates further imbalance of power between the victims of the injustice (refugees and asylum seekers) and the perpetrators of the injustice (e.g., governments). This cyclical relationship resulted in mistrust in the legal system of resettlement countries (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Coffey et al., 2010; Holzer, 2013; McCallister, 2012), and preference for informal or traditional methods of dealing with disputes and interpersonal injustices (Holzer, 2013; Liebling et al., 2020; Pavlish & Ho, 2009). These findings supports other research, where refugee leaders and culturally sensitive methods in dispute and conflict resolution were shown to have positive outcomes for integration in the host country (Vancluysen & Ingelaere, 2020). Researchers have also recommended that the incorporation of traditional or culturally adapted processes in resettlement countries could improve the access of legal institution by refugee communities (Kate, Verbitsky & Wilson, 2019).

Loss of control and agency was a key factor associated with negative wellbeing in this review (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Coffey et al., 2010; Mura, 2015; Rees & Silove, 2011). When injustice takes place, it violates an individual's personal autonomy and identity as well as a person's belief in a safe and just world (Bandura, 1995; Cassiman, 2006). This supports the findings of Basoglu et al. (2005) concerning the impact of lack of redress on trauma, which also found loss of control was the greatest factor associated with negative mental health outcomes. Control has long been viewed as a social determinant of health (Syme, 1998), and this study adds complexity to this pathway through consideration of justice for

refugees and asylum seekers. On the other hand, processes that restore a sense of agency and control had positive outcomes for wellbeing (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Kira et al., 2006; Mura, 2015).

In addition to agency and control, this review highlighted anger as an outcome of experiencing systemic injustice (Coffey et al., 2010; Rees & Silove, 2011; Tay et al., 2016), mirroring studies in the general population (Mikula et al., 1998). However, importantly, anger at injustice was also seen as having positive implications for wellbeing when it provided a sign of solidarity with those who were still suffering due to systemic injustice (Alim et al, 2019; Rees & Silove, 2011). This has important implications for clinical work with refugees and asylum seekers, as discussed below.

Interestingly, four of the included studies utilised Silove's (1999; 2013) ADAPT model in their analysis (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; McCallister, 2012; Tay et al., 2015; Tay et al., 2016). This model suggests that there are five core pillars which are affected when societies are impacted by mass conflict, (1) Safety/Security, (2) Bonds/Networks, (3) Justice, (4) Roles and Identities and (5) Existential Meaning (Silove, 2013). The pillar of safety and security (McCallister, 2012) and the pillar of justice (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Tay et al., 2015; Tay et al., 2016) were highlighted in the findings of this review. Silove (2013) suggests that preoccupation with past injustices can contribute to maintaining psychological symptoms as a sense of injustice can be understood as a psychological construct as opposed to a human rights or legal construct. Restoring safety and security is necessary to recovery as populations affected by conflict often experience repeated and prolonged threat (Silove, 2013). This was evident in the study by McCallister (2012) where the main concern for participants was maintaining a sense of safety after fleeing violence.

While this study contributes important evidence concerning understandings of justice and the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing, this area of research - and therefore this review - is limited by the small number of studies which have explored this relationship for refugees and asylum seekers. In terms of limitations of this review specifically, inclusion of papers in languages other than English could have returned additional relevant articles which may be published in countries where there are large refugee camps. It was also difficult to make comparisons between studies as the measures used for wellbeing, trauma, PTSD and justice varied across studies. In addition, only three studies in this review included asylum seekers making it difficult to discern differences in the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Coffey et al., 2010; Mura, 2015). We also acknowledge that the approach to data extraction and analysis in this review has the potential of carrying forward bias.

There is an evident need for future research exploring systemic injustice for refugees and asylum seekers; particularly the latter since this group face additional challenges. In this review, only two studies included asylum seekers as participants (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Mura, 2015), and one study reported asylum seeker experiences prior to recognition of refugee status (Coffey et al., 2010). More generally, factors such as length of time after resettlement, country of origin, culture, and experiences in refugee camps or detention centres should all be explored in further detail in terms of the impact these variables have on injustice and wellbeing. Additionally, while the overall quality of studies was good and we recognise the difficulty of doing research in this area, it would be useful for future qualitative research to adhere to best practice in reporting qualitative data (Tracy, 2010).

Bringing together existing literature on injustice and wellbeing has also indicated a number of recommendations for working with refugees and asylum seekers in clinical settings or in terms of case management. In particular, the importance of using culturally

sensitive methods and processes to assist in resettlement processes and improve engagement with legal institutions and other professional services was highlighted – particularly where there may be a power imbalance between refugees and asylum seekers accessing the service and those who are providing it. Services in resettlement processes should be mindful of experiences of systemic injustice and how that may impact refugee and asylum seeker perceptions of people in authority and the barriers this poses to building trust and rapport. Throughout resettlement processes, services and service providers should work towards increasing refugee and asylum seekers' sense of agency and control – such as by educating this group about rights, legal processes, and opportunities for education and employment. Furthermore, advocacy for refugees and asylum seekers should target barriers to justice and work towards policies that increase agency and control, particularly by promoting pathways to permanent residency and limiting the use of detention facilities. In the clinical context, feelings towards experiences of injustice in refugee and asylum seeker populations should be taken into consideration, especially in the treatment of trauma and grief, and clinicians should be mindful of the relationship between anger and injustice.

In summary, this systematic review has brought together research related to refugees, asylum seekers, systemic injustice and wellbeing. Given the significant challenges associated with restoring justice in the case of systemic injustice – which often requires bringing governments to account - the review highlights a number of complexities which should inform future research and practice when working with this population. This includes working to promote power balances where-ever possible in refugee camps or countries of resettlement, particularly in the legal system. Additionally, exploring ways to build trust and rapport between refugees or asylum seekers and the various institutions they encounter is also imperative. In relation to wellbeing, it is important for clinicians to be mindful of the impact of injustice on wellbeing as one ongoing predictor of wellbeing outcomes in the context of

resettlement. Additionally, the complex relationship anger has with ongoing systemic injustice needs to be taken into account. Finally, keeping the voices of refugees and asylum seekers at the forefront of research and policy and practice in any areas related to justice is critical.

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CHAPTER 4. QUALITATIVE STUDY 1

Understanding and Restoring Justice: A Qualitative Study of Uyghurs in Australia

4.1 Preamble

The systematic review highlighted the limited research that had been conducted in relation to understanding justice and the impact of systemic injustice on the wellbeing of people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. Therefore, the first qualitative study in this thesis aimed to bridge one aspect of this gap in research by exploring the understandings of justice and pathways necessary to restore justice in the face of systemic injustice. As a result, this chapter presents the paper that reported on understandings of justice and pathways to restoring justice for Uyghurs resettled in Australia. The paper was accepted for publication in 2022 with *Human Rights Quarterly*. Please note that this paper is formatted according to Bluebook citation format (Harvard Law Review Association) as per submission for publication with *Human Rights Quarterly*. References are presented as footnotes throughout.

4.2 Statement of Authorship

Title of Paper	Understanding and Restoring Justice: A Qualitative Study of Uyghurs in Australia
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Name of Principal Author (Candidate)	Mastura Alim		
Contribution to the Paper	Conceptualised the paper. Conducted data collection and analysis. Wrote the paper and prepared the manuscript for publication.		
Overall percentage (%)	80%		
Certification:	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature and is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in this thesis. I am the primary author of this paper.		
Signature		Date	22/09/2022

Co-Author Contributions

By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

i. the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);

ii. permission is granted for the candidate in include the publication in the thesis; and

iii. the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

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Contribution to the Paper	Assisted with conceptualisation of the paper. Assisted with qualitative data analysis and contributed to organisation and presentation of data and final results. Contributed to editing the draft manuscript.		
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Signature		Date	23/9/22

4.3 Abstract

An abundance of research has sought to understand how people seek to restore justice in the face of injustices. However, there is little understanding of how people with refugee and migrant backgrounds respond to systemic injustice and how this may shape their understandings of justice. This study qualitatively explored the meaning of justice and the pathways to restore justice for Uyghur people resettled in Australia. Twenty-seven interviews were conducted and analysed thematically. The results highlight that justice is understood as equal rights, truth and freedom. Restoring justice included acknowledging injustices, right of return, safety, self-determination and political intervention.

4.4 Introduction

Background

Research shows that people have an innate desire for justice[1], with previous literature documenting the ways that people seek to restore justice after a transgression, both at the individual and societal level. However, there remains very little research concerning the experiences of people with refugee and migrant backgrounds. This is a large gap in knowledge, since people with refugee backgrounds in particular have, almost by definition, experienced systemic injustice, which often remains unresolved. This is particularly the case for the Uyghur people who have experienced systemic injustice for decades, with no resolution to date[2]. Understanding how Uyghur people perceive justice and whether they can reconcile being in a state of unresolved justice will provide important evidence concerning both theories of justice and applied understandings of behaviour and cognition in a previously under-researched area. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the perception of justice among Uyghur people with refugee and migrant backgrounds and their preferences for restoring justice.

Systemic Injustice

We define systemic injustice as those situations where individuals have experienced injustice due to the actions of a system under which they have been living, for example, persecution on the basis of religion, ethnicity or political views. Moreover, it is difficult to identify a single instigator of the injustice as it may be a particular person whose policies have led to the injustice (e.g., a dictator) or it may be a particular party from whom several leaders are responsible, or it could be the actions of more local authorities. In all these instances,

[1] Melvin J. Lerner, The belief in a just world. In The Belief in a just World (Springer US 1980).
[2] Uyghur Human Rights Project, *Who Are The Uyghurs*, (2020), https://uhrp.org/about

victims rarely see justice done (e.g., a dictator tried and sentenced). In effect, victims of systemic injustice remain in a state of unresolved injustice.

In the context of systemic injustice, a key issue is the absence or denial of distributive and procedural justice. Distributive justice is concerned with the fair distribution and allocation of rights, conditions and resources which affect individual and group wellbeing[3]. Three underlying principles of equity, equality and need influence how distributive justice is implemented. Equity refers to the principle of distribution based on input, equality refers to equal distribution regardless of individual input and need refers to distribution based on needs of individuals whereby resources are allocated to those most in need. The application of these principles is influenced by group or societal values. Procedural justice refers to fairness of procedures and decision-making processes[4]. The element of voice, in both distributive and procedural justice, is important to decision making processes and refers to the extent to which people can express their concerns and be involved in such processes[5]. Individuals who have experienced systemic injustice often have no voice in procedures that impact them, and moreover utilising their voice is often a threat to their safety. Other aspects of procedural justice include the consistent application of procedures for all over time without bias and in the instance of procedural injustice, the opportunity to appeal and correct the injustice[6]. Usually, individuals rely on people in authority to implement fair procedures for all, but in the case of systemic injustice - particularly for refugees - those in power may not uphold procedural justice, instead acting with discrimination or persecution. Similarly, appealing and correcting unjust procedures is often not an option for those experiencing systemic injustice due to negative

[3] Morton Deutsch, *Equity, equality, and need: What determines which value will be used as the basis of distributive justice?*, 31 J. Soc. issues, 137 (1975).
[4] Riël Vermunt & Herman Steensma, Procedural justice. Handbook of social justice theory and research (Springer, New York 2016).
[5] Sussana Baldwin, Organisational justice (Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies 2006).
[6] *Ibid*.

consequences (i.e., being sentenced to prison for speaking out against an oppressive government). Finally, people experiencing systemic injustice often face discrimination in the distribution of resources such as access to education, health care and employment, and inequality in rights or freedoms due to identity, political views or religious beliefs. In short, the denial of distributive and procedural justice to victims of systemic injustice contribute to ongoing experiences of systemic injustice.

Responding to Injustice

Typically, when people experience or witness an injustice it elicits strong affective responses such as anger, which is influenced by the moral outrage at the injustice, thus motivating individuals to seek to restore justice[7],[8]. At the interpersonal level, offenders may engage in post-transgression efforts, such as apologizing or making amends[9]. Victims may reduce injustice by punishing offenders[10], an action that is empowering[11]. At the intrapersonal level, negative affective responses can be reduced by simply forgetting the transgression, reframing the transgression and its significance, telling a different story about the nature of people, forbearing (tolerating) or accepting the hurt, or even by forgiving[12] [13]. At the societal

[7] John M. Darley & Thane S. Pittman, *The psychology of compensatory and retributive justice*, 7 Personality & Soc. Psychol. Rev., 324 (2003).
[8] Michael Wenzel & Tyler G. Okimoto, Retributive justice. Handbook of social justice theory and research (Springer, New York 2016).

[9] For example, see Michael E. McCullough et al., *Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships: II. Theoretical elaboration and measurement*, 75 J. Personality and Soc. Psychol., 1586 (1998).
[10] Peter Strelan, *Justice and forgiveness in interpersonal relationships*. 27 Current Directions in Psychological Science, 20 (2018).

[11] Peter Strelan et al., *When transgressors intend to cause harm: The empowering effects of revenge and forgiveness on victim well-being*, 59 British J. Soc. Psychol, 447 (2020).
[12] Michael E. McCullough et al., *Forgiveness, forbearance, and time: the temporal unfolding of transgression-related interpersonal motivations,* 84 J. Personality and Soc. Psychol., 540 (2003).
[13] Everett L. Worthington, *Unforgiveness, forgiveness, and reconciliation and their implications for societal interventions. Forgiveness and reconciliation,* Religion Pub. Pol'y & Conflict Transformation, 171 (2001).

level, people can engage in retributive or restorative justice, work for social justice or pursue successful conflict resolution[14]. In the context of systemic injustice, retributive and restorative justice processes may be most relevant. Alternatively, victims of systemic injustice may forbear the injustices, however it has been suggested that severe injustices may be more difficult to forebear due to the impact it has on an individual's life compared to minor injustices[15].

Retributive justice refers to any negative outcomes imposed on a transgressor in response to the transgression that are deemed appropriate punishment[16]. Punishment can be a material or symbolic loss or suffering which is imposed on the offender either by the victim or another party (e.g., judge)[17] [18]. An important element of retributive justice is that the transgression itself is responded to regardless of the distributive injustice it causes, seeking to deter transgressors from future transgressions[19]. Restorative justice refers to ways in which just relationships are restored between transgressors, victims, and broader community to restore a sense of justice[20]. The retributive or restorative justice mechanisms can involve retaliation or seeking revenge, civil or legal justice pathways, personal restitution, esteem-lowering acts for the transgressor, public ceremonial acts, acknowledging divine justice or belief in karma[21]. Depending on how fair the method is deemed for restoring the scales of justice, negative affect should be reduced if justice is perceived to have been done.

Furthermore, injustices committed intentionally which disregard the victim's rights or freedoms can symbolically place the offender above the victim creating a power imbalance[22]. It

[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Michael E. McCullough et al, *supra* note xii
[16] Michael Wenzel & Tyler G. Okimoto, *supra* note viii
[17] Thom Brooks, Punishment (Routledge 2021).
[18] Ian R. McKee & Norman T. Feather, *Revenge, retribution, and values: Social attitudes and punitive sentencing,* 21 Soc. Just. Res., 138 (2008).
[19] Michael Wenzel & Tyler G. Okimoto, *supra* note viii
[20] Ronald L. Cohen, Restorative justice. Handbook of social justice theory and research (Springer, New York 2016).
[21] Everett L. Worthington, *supra* note xiii
[22] Fritz Heider, The psychology of interpersonal relations (New York: Wiley 1958).

can also disempower victims, negatively impacting the victim's self-determination and sense of control[23]. Violation of norms, laws and values in a community by the transgressor can also symbolically undermine the community's shared understanding of what is fair and just[24] [25]. This can also compromise distributive and interactional norms within a group and pose a threat to social identity[26].

Usually, victims of injustice may engage in restorative or retributive justice pathways to restore their sense of justice. However, this is unlikely for victims of systemic injustice, such as people with refugee and migrant backgrounds. Despite the likelihood of having experienced significant levels of systemic injustice, there is currently very little evidence concerning how refugees and migrants deal with experiences of systemic injustice and how these experiences may change or shape their understandings of justice. Moreover, these groups often have no voice or control over the decision-making processes, laws or systems that contribute to the systemic injustice. As a result, this study seeks to explore how people with refugee and migrant backgrounds perceive justice and its restoration in light of their experiences of systemic injustice. For this study, we explore answers to this question by interviewing a particular ethnic group (that is, Uyghur people) who could reasonably be described as having experienced systemic injustice.

It is important to note that in this paper we focus on systemic injustices that people face prior to displacement and during the process of seeking asylum in another country (in this case Australia), rather than after resettlement, due to the specific experiences faced by the Uyghur

[23] Shane R. Thye et al., *From status to power: New models at the intersection of two theories*, 84 Social Forces, 1471 (2006).
[24] Emile Durkheim, The division of labor in society (Free Press 1964).
[25] Neil Vidmar, Retribution and revenge. Handbook of justice research in law (Kluwer/Plenum, New York, 2000).
[26] Michael Wenzel et al., *Retributive and restorative justice*, 32 L. & Hum. Behav., 375 (2008).

people. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that systemic injustices may occur even after displacement and resettlement.

Context

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) defines a refugee as someone who has fled their country of origin for fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion[27]. A refugee is an individual whose claim to refugee status has been recognised by the UNHCR. A migrant is an individual who has moved from one society to another voluntarily[28]. We prefer to use the term 'migrants and refugees' in this paper to cover all of these migration pathways, although we recognise that not all people identify as a 'refugee' or 'migrant' after resettlement. Moreover, some research indicates people with migrant backgrounds may be leaving similar circumstances as refugees, even though their pathway to resettlement may differ[29] [30]. This is especially the case for Uyghur people residing in Australia, who often enter Australia via tourism or student visas before seeking asylum.

The Uyghur people of East Turkistan (ET) are a Turkic ethnic group located in central Asia, currently under the occupation of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) who refer to the land as 'Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region'. In recent years, news reports and evidence has emerged of China's 'political re-education camps' where an estimated 1.5 million Uyghurs are

[27] United Nations High Commission for Refugees, *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, (1951), https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html
[28] William S. Bernard, *Immigrants and refugees: Their similarities, differences, and needs*, 14 Int'l Migration, 267-280 (1976).
[29] Heaven Crawley & Dimitris Skleparis, *Refugees, migrants, neither, both: Categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's 'migration crisis'*, 44 J. Ethnic & Migration Stud., 48 (2018).
[30] Katy Long, *When refugees stopped being migrants: Movement, labour and humanitarian protection*, 1 Migration Stud., 4 (2013).

being detained at the time of writing this paper[31] [32]. Reasons for detainment include not speaking Chinese, looking at religious materials, studying religion abroad and returning to ET[33]. Children of parents who are detained are also detained in mass boarding schools with similar conditions[34].

Justice, Migrants and Refugees

Although studies have not specifically explored migrant and refugee perceptions of justice and preferences for restoration of justice, some relevant research among migrants and refugees indicates that justice is viewed primarily in terms of human rights and the enactment and enforcement of equal human rights for all persons and groups[35] [36]. Importantly, given this understanding of justice, research indicates that often refugees cannot access legal institutions in host countries in the same way citizens could, and mistrust of the legal system acts as another barrier to achieving justice[37] [38]. Instead, research suggests refugees prefer informal community structures to resolve disputes with lack of trust in formal pathways to achieving justice, an ongoing issue for participants even after resettlement[39] [40][41].

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[31] Zainab Raza, *China's 'Political Re-Education'Camps of Xinjiang's Uyghur Muslims*, 50 Asian Affairs, 488 (2019).
[32] Adrian Zenz, *'Thoroughly reforming them towards a healthy heart attitude': China's political re-education campaign in Xinjiang*, 38 Cent. Asian Surv., 102 (2019).
[33] Arienne M. Dwyer, The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language policy, and political discourse (Washington DC: East-West Center 2005).
[34] *Ibid*.
[35] Elizabeth Holzer, *What happens to law in a refugee camp?*, 47 L. & Soc. Rev., 837 (2013).
[36] Carol Pavlish & Anita Ho, *Pathway to social justice: research on human rights and gender-based violence in a Rwandan refugee camp,* 32 Advances in Nursing Science, 144 (2009).
[37][37] Elizabeth Holzer, *supra* note xxxv
[38] Helen Liebling et al., *South Sudanese refugee survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and torture: health and justice service responses in northern Uganda*, 17 Int'l J. Envtl. Res. & Pub. Health, 1685 (2020).
[39] mccallister
[40] Guy J. Coffey et al., *The meaning and mental health consequences of long-term immigration detention for people seeking asylum*, 70 Soc. Sci. & medicine, 2070 (2010).
[41] Liana E. Chase & Cécile Rousseau, *Ethnographic case study of a community day center for asylum seekers as early stage mental health intervention*, 88 Am. J. of Orthopsychiatry, 48 (2018).

Overall, there is a lack of research dedicated to understanding the justice experiences of migrants and refugees. However, the aforementioned studies indicate that the salient themes of justice (e.g. human rights, safety, mistrust in legal system, barriers to seeking justice) among migrants and refugees is reflective of the challenges these populations face.

Aims and Objectives

Given the gaps in the literature and the specific situation of the Uyghur people, this study aimed to investigate the meanings and understandings of justice among Uyghur people and their perceptions of the processes required to restore a sense of justice. The study focuses on the systemic injustices experienced by participants in ET, as well as those experienced in applying or making the journey to Australia.

4.5 Methods

Procedure

The study was approved by a University Human Research Ethics Committee. Participants were then recruited through flyers that were advertised directly to the Uyghur community via social media platforms. A convenience and snowball sampling method were employed. Written or verbal consent was obtained from all participants.

The eligibility criteria for participation included being over eighteen, having arrived in Australia at least twelve months prior to participation and being a first- or second-generation migrant or refugee from ET. Interviews were conducted in either English or Uyghur as the first author is proficient in both. The reasoning behind the criteria concerning time in Australia is twofold: firstly, for ethical purposes to avoid re-traumatisation, and secondly, to allow some time to have passed between the incidents which had occurred to provide scope through which to consider justice. The semi-structured interviews explored definitions of justice in general, prior experiences of injustice, and the processes to restore justice (e.g., What does justice mean

to you? Can you tell me about any experiences of injustice prior to resettling in Australia? What needs to happen for you to gain a sense of justice?).

Participants

A total of twenty-seven interviews were conducted with seven men and twenty women between November 2018 and September 2020 (see Table 1). Participants were aged between eighteen and fifty years (M = 33, SD = 10.95). Participants had resided in Australia between two and thirty-eight years (M = 14.74, SD = 7.69). One participant was on a bridging visa (BV; a short-term visa provided while claims to asylum are assessed), two were permanent residents (PR) and twenty-four were citizens. Interviews were conducted at libraries, cafes, university offices and community centres and the average interview length was thirty-three minutes (SD = 15.73). All interviews were transcribed and those conducted in Uyghur were translated verbatim into English before analysis. Participants commonly arrived in Australia through one of three visa pathways, (1) student visas, (2) partner or spousal visas and (3) tourism visas. Participants would then apply for a humanitarian visa in Australia followed by permanent residency and eventually citizenship if they were eligible.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Gender	Age	Age of Arrival in Australia	Status
Ali	M	21	11	Citizen
Leyla	F	20	10	Citizen
Arzu	F	44	30	Citizen
Rana	F	30	16	Citizen
Adil	M	41	36	PR
Ahmet	M	27	18	Citizen

Zaynab	F	48	39	Citizen
Maryam	F	50	34	Citizen
Alya	F	42	20	Citizen
Aygul	F	29	27	BV
Aynur	F	32	29	BV
Guzal	F	44	23	Citizen
Rahila	F	46	34	Citizen
Nergiza	F	23	9	Citizen
Reyhan	F	41	30	Citizen
Erkin	M	47	22	Citizen
Alim	M	39	30	Citizen
Abdullah	M	42	27	Citizen
Ismail	M	19	Born in AU	Citizen
Nur	F	46	8	Citizen
Dilnaz	F	28	13	Citizen
Mahira	F	28	13	Citizen
Munira	F	20	Born in AU	Citizen
Zamira	F	20	Born in AU	Citizen
Elmira	F	20	9	Citizen
Dilbar	F	26	Born in AU	Citizen
Subinur	F	18	Born in AU	Citizen

Analysis

The interviews were analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA) which is a method utilised to identify, analyse and report themes or patterns in data[42]. Themes were identified as patterns of meaning which highlight something significant in the data in relation to the research question[43]. The analysis was conducted within a realist framework which reports the experiences, meanings, and reality of the participants directly[44]. A deductive, semantic approach was taken in identifying the themes in which coding focussed on the specific research questions concerning systemic injustice[45]. An audit trail was maintained throughout the study, whereby the first author kept fieldnotes to assist with later analysis and to provide context to interview data. The audit trail provides evidence of development of the research and allows for continual comparison at different stages of analysis[46]. Data saturation, which refers to the point in which collecting new data will not result in the identification of new themes, was reached for all themes[47]. As part of reflexive practice in conducting qualitative research it is also necessary to acknowledge that the first author is a member of the Uyghur community. To reduce bias, all themes were cross-checked by the second and third authors who are not members of the Uyghur community.

4.6 Results

Analysis of the data resulted in several themes which have been grouped under the two research questions of: 1) defining justice and 2) restoring justice.

Defining Justice

[42] Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke, Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners (Sage 2013).
[43] *Ibid*.
[44] *Ibid*.
[45] *Ibid*.
[46] Sarah J. Tracy, *Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research,* 16 Qualitative inquiry, 837 (2010).
[47] Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke, *supra* note xlii

The results related to how participants understood, and defined justice highlighted three themes, (1) orienting to systemic injustice, (2) rights, equality and truth and (3) freedom.

Orienting to Systemic Injustice

When participants were asked to explain what justice "was", they typically responded by providing examples of injustices and violations of human rights, perpetrated both against themselves and those around them. In particular, while asked about justice generally, they oriented to examples of systemic injustice. This included discrimination in the workforce, educational opportunities, religious persecution and being treated as criminals, both prior to migration and during the migration process to Australia.

Several participants recalled incidents and events they had witnessed where Uyghur people had demonstrated against the actions of the Chinese government in ET, including the 'Ghulja massacre' which occurred on the 5th of July in 1997 in the city of Ghulja in the north of ET where the government responded violently to protests from the public. Arzu, aged, forty-four who arrived in Australia fifteen years ago on a student visa, recounted the aftermath of the event and how the lack of action taken, combined with the direct and violent persecution, led to her questioning the existence of justice at all:

> "Then we started learning all the horrible stories about how our neighbours daughter, she was only like fifteen years old I think, they all been taken by the police and they stand on the ice in winter time and the police put water on them, so we heard all the horrible stories and umm a lot of relatives, neighbours, they all lost, they separate into jails…at that time I was thinking oh probably the government will do something, they know the things going wrong and probably they do something but after few months I heard a lot of people been taken to jail, they sentenced to death and very young people even from one family I heard three brothers, they all sentenced to death and killed so at

> that time I learned actually there is not justice there and we are the second citizens of China and they can do whatever they want on us, so yeah, I was always thinking, where is the justice? Why can't we get fair treatment? Why innocent people be killed?"

Similarly, many participants spoke about the 2009 'Urumqi riots' which involved protests in the city of Urumqi where protesters questioned the treatment of Uyghurs in mainland China. The Urumqi Riots led to the tightening of restrictions placed on Uyghur people in ET, including restrictions on travel, cultural expression, and religious practices. Ahmet (aged twenty-seven, who arrived in Australia eleven years ago) recounted what he witnessed:

> "Now Uyghurs cannot live normally, they can't say what they want, can't live based on their beliefs or religion, there is no opportunity for them to live. They instigated Chinese people with their propaganda and the conflict between Uyghurs and Han Chinese escalated and this was brought about by the government itself. They labelled Uyghurs as terrorists. Now there are between one to three million Uyghurs in prisons or concentration camps. They created and brought this about themselves…right now, Uyghurs are on the brink of disappearing…their objective is to wipe out all the Uyghur people or to assimilate them as Han Chinese."

While some participants gave examples of interpersonal injustices perpetrated by individuals in ET, they also noted that systemic injustice – and most notably that committed by the Chinese government - was more pervasive and damaging. This was particularly due to the perceived 'size' of the injustice and the ability for it to be addressed:

> "For personal injustice… definitely, you are in a stronger position to resolve by yourself… but this kind of political and horror caused by government…that's not one individual can handle, there should be a collective effort from different parts of the

> communities or societies or nationalities or…yeah, in our case definitely demands the collaborate effect of the whole world." (Arzu)

Many participants noted that their experiences had rendered the concept of justice meaningless, as noted by Ahmet:

> "If I think about the things I have experienced, I think it is non-existent, justice, equality, truth just doesn't exist, and I've started to not believe it. People are only interested in justice when it benefits or suits them or relates to them, their life, their family or their country. These things are built on benefit, only when it affects or impacts people then they claim justice. That is how I understand it now."

Overall, participants oriented to systemic injustice when providing a response to questions concerning what justice meant to them, with the events being so significant it caused them to question the existence of justice.

Rights, Equality and Truth

As seen in the previous theme, participants oriented to experiences of systemic injustice when asked to explain justice. In addition, at a more conceptual level, justice was often equated to truth, rights and equality. For example, in relation to equality, participants discussed experiences of discrimination:

> "Equality. Equality like, treat everyone the same without discriminating based on their ethnicity, their background, their qualification because all humans have red blood, that's it. Also, I am a scientist, I believe in God and Islam and justice to me is like equality for everyone, we've been taught in any religion, in the Quran or Bible or Torah or in Buddhism that justice is to treat others in peace and equality." (Adil)

Being treated as a second-class citizen was a common expression used by participants and seemed to highlight the experiences of discrimination in ET. As such, being free of discrimination and being treated equally was important to participants' understandings of justice as Alim states:

> "Justice means…hmm it is hard…treated equal like everyone else and just live life like everyone else. No discrimination, no treatment like a second-class citizen, that's what I think justice means to me."

Justice was also often equated to the 'truth'. This may be salient for participants due to the perception of being lied to or mislead by the Chinese government. Zaynab described justice as truth due to her limited understanding of religion and Uyghur history when living in ET:

> "Justice…to me…I understand justice as being and speaking the truth. So, knowing the truth, and speaking the truth without adding any lies, whatever it is, to speak the truth and stand by it, the truth being what is right."

Justice was also thought of by participants as human rights and to be able to exercise those rights freely. Referring to human rights was frequent among participant responses to understanding justice as they reflected on human rights abuses in ET:

> "…everyone has right to live, everyone has rights to speech, everyone has right to do things they want to do but if they are getting abused by people or authority then its injustice. That's how I understand justice." (Rana)

Furthermore, the experiences of discrimination against Uyghurs meant that they were not afforded the same rights as Han Chinese people:

> "The main thing is that there are no Uyghur rights. There might be human rights in China but no Uyghur rights. Like if you're Uyghur that's it, you're seen as a criminal." (Ali)

Freedom

When explaining justice, participants mentioned freedom alongside equality and rights. Justice was understood to be the freedom to make life choices, practice culture and religion and the freedom to travel:

> "When I think justice, the words that come to my head are freedom, freedom, equality, and like protection of the dignity…protection of dignity being how we treat and help the most vulnerable people, giving them respect" (Elmira)

All participants spoke about the absence of freedom in ET and noted that the freedom they experienced in Australia demonstrated to them what a just society is:

> "As someone who came from occupied land who never had equal opportunity before, now living in this country with democracy and freedom, like totally different. Over there we can't even express ourselves freely, but here in Australia I feel like I was reborn. I can walk and talk freely; we can even criticise the government here in Australia and I did. These things were impossible in China." (Alim)

In providing examples of freedom as a component of justice, participants often reflected on and compared their lives in Australia and ET. This included both participants who had migrated as adults and as children. For example, Rana, thirty, reflected that her life trajectory would have been entirely different had she been living in ET. She compared her life to her friends in ET and how her freedom to pursue a career she wanted or start a family would have been entirely controlled:

> "I would be a totally different person. I would be working in a place that I didn't study at, I didn't major at because I used to talk to my friends, and I used to feel so sad for them because one of them did teaching and she sells tickets at the bus stop now and one did engineering and she works in a call centre… and they were forced to do everything in Chinese."

Freedom to travel was important to defining justice for participants and this may be due to the challenges that they faced in obtaining passports in ET. Participants often said that they waited long periods before obtaining a passport and during this time they had to make connections with people in authority and often pay large bribes. For example, Alim explains:

> "I tried to get a passport while I was studying to go overseas but I couldn't because of my ethnicity so I started working and during my working years I tried to obtain passport how many times, but I couldn't. I think it took like ten years to get a passport."

Overall, definitions and understandings of justice mirrors the specific challenges and experiences of participants in ET and during the migration process to Australia.

Restoring Justice

Participants held differing thoughts and beliefs around how justice should and could be restored reflecting the understandings of justice discussed earlier. There was also a notable difference in the views of the younger adults who had lived most of their lives in Australia compared to those who had lived most of their lives in ET. Four themes were identified: acknowledging the oppression, right of return and safety, self-determination, and political pathways.

Acknowledge the Oppression

A common theme identified across all interviews was the need for acknowledgement and recognition of the injustices faced by Uyghur people both from the Chinese government but also globally. This recognition was viewed as important considering the Chinese government's continual denial of the mistreatment of the Uyghurs:

> "We have to call Chinese government out, they keep denying it in every possible way… if they [other governments] think is this really happening or not, because these people are coming to us and telling us this is happening and they are witnessing this and the Chinese government is denying it…" (Rana)

Another step in the acknowledgement of oppression or injustice was a sincere apology. The purpose of an apology was perceived as being an acknowledgement of wrongdoing with remorse or regret:

> "I want to acknowledge the pain; I want everyone to acknowledge the pain…I want them to feel sincerely sorry… I feel like that's the highest level of justice you can get." (Leyla)

Right of Return and Safety

Following the acknowledgement of oppression, participants desired the right to return without fear for their safety and the safety of their loved ones. Acknowledging the injustices would also be an acknowledgement of the Uyghur people's right to their land and thus the right to leave and come back freely:

> "For there to be a true sense of justice, we need to take back our land. China needs to return our land. They have no right to not return it or say they don't want to. I do not accept this autonomous region thing, because this is my motherland, my country and so Uyghur people should govern and own their own country." (Alya)

However, there were also considerations for what would happen after the acknowledgement of right to return and this was mostly expressed from the younger participants who had grown up in Australia. The repercussions of systemic injustice over such a long period of time cannot simply be resolved by independence alone as Zamira, age twenty and born in Australia, explains:

> "Not just speaking of what we could do back in our country to find justice but what we could do in the diaspora, so having more support for Uyghur communities…there are so many issues that we need to deal with…. all the counselling, the therapy sessions, the PTSD even like what everyone goes through in Australia. I can say that nearly every Uyghur person in just our community here, does need some sort of counselling or therapy… So, for it to be a complete sense of justice, a big part would be to focus on mental health in the diaspora as well as our country."

Being safe was important for participants in restoring justice. Participants wanted to feel safe to go back to ET but also simply to be safe to call their families on the phone:

> "Another big one would be communication. I know a lot of people have lost communication with their family and that puts a lot of stress.... since the camps started and the regimes got so much stricter, [communication] was one big thing that was taken away from families and that put additional stress…" (Elmira)

Self-determination

Following the acknowledgement of oppression and the right to return, participants expressed that ET should be an independent country for the Uyghurs as the rightful owners of the land, which would go some way to restoring justice. Guzal, aged forty-four, who arrived in Australia twenty-one years ago compared her experience of going back to visit ET after sixteen

years and describes how much the condition of Uyghurs has deteriorated since she originally left:

> "If we have our own home, if we can go in and out of our country freely and if we have our own leaders there is no need for us to live here…this is what I think about. Because over there right now we have no rights and no authority and no value, no one stops to think hey this is a human and this is their land. There is so much fear, when I went my relatives could not even invite me over to stay at their house out of fear."

Maryam, aged fifty, who arrived in Australia sixteen years ago to be reunited with her family also suggests that ultimate justice would be an independent country and freedom for Uyghurs:

> "If East Turkistan becomes independent and if our country is returned to us. If we have our independence and we have our own government and make our own decisions, that is justice."

On the other hand, Nergiza, aged twenty-three who arrived in Australia at the age of nine, said that return of the land would not be sufficient to restore justice:

> "I think the only thing that keeps them going [Uyghurs in ET] is faith and that justice will be served one day…otherwise what else would keep a person going…they need to be given their land back, their freedom, their rights back and even then it might not make up for all the injustices. I honestly think that justice cannot be served for them in this world like all the injustices, the trauma, what we've been through. I think justice at that point is not possible."

Political Pathways to Justice

Participants suggested political intervention from the Australian government to aid in ending the injustices faced by Uyghur people as a means to restore justice. For example, Adil described:

> "I need two [things], the Australian government to have their voice up and speak out. Really speak out and say to the Chinese government stop what you are doing. I really hope this government follows justice, and then make some government policy to protect us. And here in Australia, I hope the government treat us a bit differently than others like migrants because our situation is very urgent compared to lots of people who have come to Australia. I think they should prioritise our situation."

Ahmet, similarly, expressed a desire for justice in the form of Australian government intervention, especially due to his status as a citizen:

> "For me real justice would be if the Australian government investigated saying that I am a citizen of theirs and what crime has my family committed to be locked up. They should at least take the evidence from me and pass it to higher authorities, and I should at least be able to see my family and hear their voice that would be some form of justice for me."

Younger participants suggested global action, in addition to political intervention, as a pathway to restoring justice and emphasised education around the Uyghur situation as essential to this:

> "Educating the people is important, obviously government support is important… like even my own neighbours, having their support and them understanding what is going on so that in the future when we are at a protest someone is not screaming go back home, like that is the point…like we said in WWII never again, but it is happening

again. We should stop it happening again, not just to the Uyghurs but for anyone else in the world." (Zamira)

Whether it was governmental pressure or global action, participants unanimously expressed that the most pressing concern was closing the re-education camps. The minimum change that participants desired, for some sense of justice, was for the camps to be closed and people returned to their families and homes:

> "I think for me, with my knowledge of what's going on overseas the main priority is definitely around the camps. I think that's where the first basic human rights have been violated." (Elmira)

There were times throughout interviews where participants mentioned that despite their best efforts and desires for justice, the possibility that these pathways would become a reality were bleak. For example, one participant drew comparisons between the Aboriginal people of Australia and the situation of the Uyghur people in ET:

> "…because often what I do now is compare our situation to the Aboriginal people of Australia… they don't want the money, they don't want the housing, they want their spirituality, they want their history, they want to live their own historical life. And I put ourselves into that position and I think if when that time comes and we get our independence, however long that might take, what do we actually want? I feel like what we want then won't be the same when the time comes because so much damage will have been done." (Leyla)

Importantly, many participants acknowledged that the political relationship between China and Australia would mean that Australia alone was unlikely to take concerted political action to resolve the injustices. However, there was a consensus that the government could still help Uyghur people already in Australia. Indeed, gaining protection or permanent residency in

Australia was seen as a key pathway to restoring justice, and to addressing issues of safety noted in previous themes. For example, Alim states:

> "The Australian government can't help us but at least they can help the Uyghur people who are already here and who have applied for the refugee process, speed up their process."

4.7 Discussion

A key finding of this study was that definitions and understandings of justice reflected the specific experiences of injustice among participants, with participants orienting to systemic injustice when explaining what justice meant. Participants perceived justice to be the ability to exercise human rights, to be treated equally, to speak and stand by the truth, and to have the freedom to travel, make decisions, and practice culture and religion, reflecting theoretical understandings of systemic injustice[48] [49], as well as previous applied research[5051]. Speaking about rights is particularly salient to the refugee experience as it is this loss of rights and the disparity in treatment between marginalised groups and citizens that leads to seeking asylum in other countries[52]. Similarly, in terms of procedural justice, the desire to have voice is also highlighted in how participants conceptualised justice, further highlighting how the absence of voice can contribute to ongoing systemic injustices[53].

The examples of injustices, such as discrimination in employment or difficulties obtaining a passport, further highlights the absence of distributive and procedural justice for this group. Participants recognised that the same rules, laws or treatment did not apply to them as it

[48] Sussana Baldwin, *supra* note v
[49] Riël Vermunt & Herman Steensma, *supra* note iv
[50] Elizabeth Holzer, *supra* note xxxv
[51] Carol Pavlish & Anita Ho, *supra* note xxxvi
[52] Hannah Arendt, *The perplexities of the rights of man*, 318 Headline Series, 88 (1998).
[53] Sussana Baldwin, *supra* note v

applied to Chinese citizens and often questioned this[54]. Moreover, participants could not appeal or correct injustice for fear of repercussions, reflecting previous research which has also highlighted power imbalances or political structures which prevent access to justice[55] [56]. Mistrust of authority and the legal system has also been related to barriers to accessing justice for these populations[57] [58] and this may also be the case for Uyghurs.

In relation to restoring justice, the results highlighted complexities in the pathways required to restore justice. Participants felt a key part of restoring justice was the independence of ET and self-determination of the Uyghur people, but many felt this was unlikely given the historical context and the current political climate (specifically Australia and China). All participants agreed that the most immediate course of action to restoring justice was to close the re-education camps, highlighting the impact of intentional injustices on self-determination and control[59]. In a recent study of internally displaced Yazidis and their understandings of justice and preferences for restoring justice, it was found that participants' understood justice in relation to local concerns and issues, self-agency and providing a better future[60]. Furthermore, the participants preferred restorative justice methods as opposed to retributive justice methods[61]. Although there are differences between internally displaced people and refugees, this finding combined with the findings of this study point to the importance of giving voice to those who experience and are impacted by systemic injustices.

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[54] (See also Arendt, for an argument about human rights as actually the rights of citizens, *supra* note lii)
[55] Elizabeth Holzer, *supra* note xxxv
[56] Helen Liebling et al., *supra* note xxxviii
[57] Liana E. Chase & Cécile Rousseau, *supra* note xli
[58] Guy J. Coffey et al., *supra* note xl
[59] Shane R. Thye et al., *supra* note xxiii
[60] Payam Akhavan et al., *What justice for the Yazidi genocide?: Voices from below*. 42 Human Rights Quarterly, 1 (2020).
[61] *Ibid*.

Importantly, having permanent residency and citizenship was viewed as an acknowledgement of injustice and a pathway to restoring justice. This mirrors previous research which has similarly noted the importance of gaining permanent residency for other groups of refugees and asylum seekers, such as in Greece and Turkey[62][63], although the findings that this assists in restoring justice are novel[64]. Participants saw Australian citizenship as affording safety and security as they were no longer under the law of the Chinese government. Emerging literature suggests that safety is an important factor for refugees[65] [66], and is an ongoing concern even after migration and resettlement[67], perhaps due to the pervasive effects of systemic injustice.

While this study provides important new information concerning understanding and restoring justice for a critically under-researched group of people experiencing ongoing persecution, it has a number of limitations. In particular, the study included participants who have been resettled in Australia for decades, as well as those who have arrived in recent years and those who were born in Australia. Although understandings of justice and the processes desired for restoring justice may be shared, there are potential differences within this group as their experiences of systemic injustice differ, which – while some were noted - were not directly explored in this study. This is an important avenue for future research. In addition, future research should explore understandings of justice among refugees and migrants from other

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[62] Kim Rygiel et al., *The Syrian refugee crisis: The EU-Turkey 'deal' and temporary protection,* 16 Global Soc. Pol'y, 315 (2016).
[63] Jane Haggis & Susanne Schech, *Refugees, settlement processes and citizenship making: An Australian case study*, 12 National Identities, 365 (2010).
[64] Mastura Alim et al, *Perceptions of forgiveness in response to systemic injustice among Iranian refugees*, 25 Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 255 (2019).
[65] Andrew Rasmussen et al., *Rates and impact of trauma and current stressors among Darfuri refugees in Eastern Chad*, 80 Am. J. Orthopsychiatry, 227 (2010).
[66] Theoni Stathopoulou et al., *Safety, health and trauma among newly arrived refugees in Greece*, 32 J. Refugee Stud., 22 (2019).
[67] Jana L. McCallister, *Pre, peri, and post-migration perspectives of Mexican national refugees related to experiences of violence, migration, and resettlement along the Texas-Mexico border*, Open Access Theses & Dissertations, 2012.

cultural backgrounds, this would provide important evidence concerning which aspects of understandings of justice are shared across cultures, or culturally specific or are part of the refugee or migrant experience.

In sum, this study provides important insight into the experiences of Uyghur people and the systemic injustices they faced which led to their resettlement in Australia. The voices of Uyghur people are currently missing in research, and this study seeks to lay the groundwork for researchers to investigate the persecution of Uyghurs, including building on the findings of this study concerning self-determination, equality, and freedom to explore ways to ensure the Uyghur people gain restoration of justice.

CHAPTER 5. QUALITATIVE STUDY 2

The Impact of Systemic Injustice on Wellbeing: A Qualitative Study of Uyghurs in Australia

5.1 Preamble

The systematic review in Chapter 3 highlighted that systemic injustice has negative impacts on the wellbeing of people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. However, the research was limited and also conducted across different cultures and different resettlement contexts. Therefore, the aim of the second qualitative study in this thesis was to explore the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing with a focus on Uyghur people with refugee backgrounds resettled in Australia. This chapter presents the paper that reported on these findings. The paper is currently under second round of peer review in *Transcultural Psychiatry*.

5.2 Statement of Authorship

Title of Paper	The Impact of Systemic Injustice on Wellbeing: A Qualitative Study of Uyghurs in Australia
Publication Status	☐ Published ☐ Accepted for Publication ☒ Submitted for Publication ☐ Unpublished and Unsubmitted work written in manuscript style
Publication Details	Currently under second round of review in the journal *Transcultural Psychiatry*

Principal Author

Name of Principal Author (Candidate)	Mastura Alim		
Contribution to the Paper	Conceptualised the paper. Conducted data collection and analysis. Wrote the paper and prepared the manuscript for publication.		
Overall percentage (%)	80%		
Certification:	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature and is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in this thesis. I am the primary author of this paper.		
Signature		Date	22/09/2022

Co-Author Contributions

By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

i. the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);

ii. permission is granted for the candidate in include the publication in the thesis; and

iii. the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

Name of Co-Author	Associate Professor Clemence Due		
Contribution to the Paper	Assisted with conceptualisation of the paper. Assisted with qualitative data analysis and contributed to organisation and presentation of data and final results. Contributed to editing the draft manuscript.		
Signature		Date	27.9.2022

Name of Co-Author	Associate Professor Peter Strelan		
Contribution to the Paper	Assisted with conceptualisation of the paper. Contributed to organisation and presentation of data and final results. Contributed to editing the draft manuscript.		
Signature		Date	23/9/22

5.3 Abstract

This study qualitatively explores the impact of systemic injustice on the wellbeing of Uyghur refugees from East Turkistan currently residing in Australia. Twenty-seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants and the data were analysed thematically. The findings identified that the negative impacts of systemic injustice resulted in widespread psychological distress and impacted participants' interpersonal relationships, particularly in relation to parenting. Participants also expressed anger towards the injustices, guilt and helplessness for being unable to support those continuing to experience injustice. Participants expressed fear for the future, worrying about the loss of communication with people in East Turkistan and fears for their safety in addition to the potential loss of cultural and linguistic identity. Participants experienced a greater sense of agency after resettling in Australia and became engaged in advocacy for the rights and freedoms of all Uyghurs. The findings point to the need to incorporate systemic injustice in our understanding of and in working with wellbeing for refugees.

Key Words: refugee, migrant, wellbeing, injustice, qualitative

5.4 Introduction

Background

Research has shown that justice holds fundamental importance to people (Lerner, 1980; Gollwitzer & van Prooijen, 2016), and experiencing injustice is associated with negative outcomes for wellbeing (Lucas, 2020). Generally, when an injustice occurs, people are motivated to engage in actions to restore a sense of justice, including punishment, conflict resolution, retaliation, and forgiveness (McCullough et al., 2003; Worthington, 2001). However, there is little research concerning the impact of systemic injustices (that is, where victims of injustice have little – or no – means to restore justice) on wellbeing (see Alim et al., 2021 for a review). This is particularly the case for people with refugee backgrounds who have experienced systemic injustice in their countries of origin as well as throughout displacement and resettlement, despite the known high levels of mental ill health in this population (Fazel et al., 2005; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Steel et al., 2009). One key group currently experiencing significant levels of systemic injustice is the Uyghur people. This study seeks to explore the experiences of Uyghur refugees who have experienced systemic injustice. In doing so, the study aims to both provide a case study of the specific experiences of Uyghur people from East Turkistan – a significant gap in the literature – as well as to provide evidence of the relationship between systemic injustice and wellbeing for refugees more generally.

The Uyghur Context

The Uyghur people of East Turkistan located in Central Asia have faced decades of oppression and injustice under the occupation of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) who refer to the region as 'Xinjian Uyghur Autonomous Region' (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2021). The term Uyghur refers to the ethnic and cultural identity of the people as well as the

language, whilst East Turkistan refers to the country itself as well as the nationality of the Uyghur people (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2021). The CCP have implemented policies that limit cultural, linguistic and religious identity and freedoms of the Uyghurs. In recent years, the situation has escalated with reports of 'political re-education camps' where Uyghurs are being detained (Dwyer, 2005; Raza, 2019; Zenz, 2019). Reports indicate that more than one million Uyghurs are detained in these camps, incarcerated or forced into labour (Finley, 2021).

In terms of migration and Uyghur people, to date, there are very few studies exploring the experiences Uyghur people living in the diaspora and none to our knowledge specifically looking at systemic injustice. Research more generally with Uyghur people is scarce, but there is some literature on Uyghur identity in the diaspora, threats to security and safety of Uyghurs and online activisim of Uyghurs (see Bonnenfant, 2018; Koeleman, 2021; NurMuhammad et al., 2016 for some examples of studies). The World Uyghur Congress estimates that there are 1-1.6 million Uyghurs living outside of East Turkistan as reported by Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 2020). It is estimated that the Uyghur community in Australia, where this research was conducted, is between 1500 – 2500 people as of 2011 (Hayes, 2012), with more recent figures difficult to obtain. It is likely that this number is larger as of 2022 when this study was conducted, however official migration statistics often do not identify or categorise Uyghurs as a separate demographic.

Injustice and Mental Health and Wellbeing

An abundance of cross-cultural research has shown that individuals are concerned with justice at the individual, interpersonal and intergroup levels (Gollwitzer & van Prooijen, 2016). When an injustice occurs, individuals are often motivated to restore a sense of justice (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Victims of injustice can engage in various means to restore

justice such as punishing offenders, seeking justice through a third party (i.e. judge) or forgiving (McCullough et al., 2003; Worthington, 2001). However, when individuals cannot work to restore justice, they may engage in cognitive strategies to reframe, deny or minimise the injustice (Reichle & Schmitt, 2002). This may be the only possible avenue for people who have experienced systemic injustice as they cannot access means to recourse against the systems or authorities that commit the injustices. Research conducted with the general population highlights some possible outcomes of injustice on wellbeing, most commonly in terms of emotional responses. Early experimental and exploratory studies into the emotional responses followed by perceived injustice found anger, rage, disappointment, surprise, physical symptoms of arousal, stress, helplessness and, depression as the most frequent responses (Mikula, 1986; Mikula, et al., 1998).

In this study, we conceptualise systemic injustice as an absence or denial of distributive and procedural justice. Distributive justice is concerned with the fair distribution of rights, resources and conditions in a society or group (Deutsch, 1975) whereas procedural justice is concerned with the fairness of procedures and decision-making processes that are used to determine outcomes in a society or group (Vermunt & Steensma, 2016). Refugees can be broadly understood to have experienced systemic injustice as they are often denied both distributive and procedural justice; for example, though denial of access to resources such as food and education, or persecution based on political views or religious identity. Although experiences of systemic injustices towards refugees have been documented in research, the focus often is on the pre and post migration risk factors or trauma (e.g., Chen et al., 2017; Fazel et al., 2005; Murray et al., 2008; Steel et al., 2009) without considering the potential long-term impact of systemic injustice on mental health and wellbeing even once other resettlement stressors such as access to housing or employment have been resolved.

Refugee Mental Health and Wellbeing

This paper refers to refugees as those people who have fled their country of origin due to well-founded fears of being persecuted based on race, ethnicity, religion, political views, or membership to a particular social group (United Nations Refugee Agency, 2006). Notably, many Uyghur people entered Australia via tourism or student visas before seeking asylum, after which they were granted humanitarian visas and then often citizenship; a fact which highlights the overlaps in migration categories and labels (Ludwig, 2016).

We use 'mental health and wellbeing' to include both mental illness as well as positive functioning and adaptive responses to adversity, based on the World Health Organisation (2004) definition as well as additions by Galderisi et al. (2015) to account for situations where negative emotions are appropriate responses, such as in the case of systemic injustice. Wellbeing is used at times for brevity.

Refugees are at a greater risk for psychological disorders than the general population, even several years after resettlement (Bogic et al., 2015). In part, this risk is due to pre-migration traumatic events such as war and conflict (Fazel et al., 2005; Steel et al., 2009) as well as post-migration factors, including marginalization, socioeconomic disadvantage, acculturation difficulties, and loss of social support (Murray et al., 2008; Porter & Haslam, 2005). Ongoing systemic injustice may be conceptualised as part of both pre-migration (e.g., persecution) and post-migration (e.g., detention or temporary visas) stressors for refugees, but has received little attention in its own right, in terms of the specific, complex affect it may have on health and wellbeing above and beyond the array of resettlement stressors faced by all refugees.

A systematic review exploring the relationship between systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers found that anger towards injustice was common. Additionally, the negative impacts on sense of agency and control among

participants in the studies resulted in psychological distress, as well as changes in identity and interpersonal relationships (Alim et al., 2021). Relatedly, pathways that restored a sense of agency and control for participants had positive outcomes for wellbeing (Chase & Rousseau, 2018). Importantly, maintaining anger at injustice was also seen as important to show solidarity to those suffering ongoing injustice, highlighting the complexities of exploring systemic injustice specifically (Rees & Silove, 2011).

Aims and Objectives

Given the gaps in research noted above, this study aimed to understand the ways in which systemic injustice affects the mental health and wellbeing of Uyghur refugees currently living in Australia.

5.5 Method

Participants

A total of 27 interviews were conducted with seven men and 20 women between November 2018 and September 2020. Participants were aged between 18 and 50 years (M = 33, SD = 10.95). Participants had resided in Australia between two and 38 years (M = 14.74, SD = 7.69). One participant was on a bridging visa (BV; a short-term visa provided while claims to asylum are assessed), two were permanent residents (PR) and 24 were citizens at the time. Among the participants, 14 had arrived in Australia as adults aged between 18 and 39, eight participants had arrived as children between the ages of eight and 16 and five participants were born in Australia. Participants had arrived in Australia either on a student visa (N = 3), partner, spousal or family sponsored visa (N = 17), tourism visa (N = 1), or work visa (N = 1), and then applied for a humanitarian visa in Australia. Table 1 contains further information.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Gender	Age	Age of Arrival in Australia	Status
Ali	M	21	11	Citizen
Adil	M	41	36	PR
Ahmet	M	27	18	Citizen
Erkin	M	47	22	Citizen
Alim	M	39	30	Citizen
Abdullah	M	42	27	Citizen
Ismail	M	19	Born in AU	Citizen
Leyla	F	20	10	Citizen
Arzu	F	44	30	Citizen
Rana	F	30	16	Citizen
Zaynab	F	48	39	Citizen
Maryam	F	50	34	Citizen
Alya	F	42	20	Citizen
Aygul	F	29	27	BV
Aynur	F	32	29	BV
Guzal	F	44	23	Citizen
Rahila	F	46	34	Citizen
Nergiza	F	23	9	Citizen
Reyhan	F	41	30	Citizen
Nur	F	46	8	Citizen
Dilnaz	F	28	13	Citizen

Mahira	F	28	13	Citizen
Munira	F	20	Born in AU	Citizen
Zamira	F	20	Born in AU	Citizen
Elmira	F	20	9	Citizen
Dilbar	F	26	Born in AU	Citizen
Subinur	F	18	Born in AU	Citizen

As the participants were experiencing the impact of ongoing persecution in East Turkistan, confidentiality was of critical importance. This was achieved by assigning a pseudonym as is standard practice and ensuring that detailed descriptions of participants that could identify them were not included anywhere in the manuscript (Guenther, 2009; Kaiser, 2009). In addition, as an 'insider' in the Uyghur community, the first author ensured that she was led by participants about their involvement, including where and when research was conducted and how was best to contact them. These challenges maintaining research ethics and project reporting when conducting research in small communities have been well documented previously (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012; Ziersch et al., 2019).

Procedure

The Human Research Ethics Committee at the authors' institution approved the study. A convenience sampling method was utilised for participant recruitment whereby flyers were advertised directly to the Uyghur community in Australia, followed by snowball sampling.

The eligibility criteria for participation included being 18 years or older, arriving in Australia at least 12 months prior to participation (to reduce re-traumatisation) or being born

in Australia, and identifying as Uyghur. Interviews were conducted in either English or Uyghur, as the first author is proficient in both.

The semi-structured interviews explored the impact of injustice on wellbeing. Example questions included: Do you think you have experienced injustice? If so, can you tell us more about some of these experiences? Does this have any affect on your wellbeing? Is so, in what way?). Most interviews were conducted face to face at libraries, cafes, university offices and community centres, while five were conducted online via Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions. The average interview length was 33 minutes (*SD* = 15.73). All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed and those conducted in the Uyghur language were translated verbatim into English before analysis. The first author is proficient in both Uyghur and English which gave participants flexibility to speak between the two languages. Data saturation, which refers to the point in which collecting new data will not result in the identification of new themes, was reached by the 18th interview (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Analysis

Interview data were analysed using Thematic Analysis, which is a qualitative approach used to identify, analyse and report themes or patterns in data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). A realist approach was taken to analysis, which directly reports the experiences, meanings, and reality of the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Following Braun and Clarke (2013), Thematic Analysis involves several stages including transcription, data familiarisation, coding, developing and naming themes and finally producing a written report. In conducting Thematic Analysis for this paper, an iterative approach was taken in which coding focussed on the specific research questions concerning injustice and its impact on the wellbeing of participants as well as interrogation of all the data to explore any further relevant codes.

In terms of ensuring rigour, the first author maintained an audit trail which included field notes to assist with analysis and to provide context to interview data (Tracy, 2010). In relation to reflexivity the first author is an 'insider' to the Uyghur community and conducted all interviews. This positionality was advantageous as it was easier to establish trust and rapport with participants in terms of data collection and to understand their experiences in data analysis, with discussion of results with the other co-authors who are not Uyghurs providing balance.

5.6 Results

Analysis of the data identified five main themes related to the impact of systemic injustice on the wellbeing of participants: 'Psychological Distress', 'Anger, Guilt and Helplessness', 'Fear for the Future', 'Parenting and Relationship Impacts' and, 'Changing Identities: Agency and Advocacy after Resettlement'.

Psychological Distress

When speaking about the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing, all participants indicated that the ongoing systemic injustices either they, their family or their broader community had experienced had pervasive negative effects on their wellbeing, impacting their health, work lives, and social relationships. These impacts were seen as being above and beyond the typical resettlement stressors refugee experience. The following explanation from Arzu, who arrived in Australia as a postgraduate student 14 years ago, is a clear example of the pervasiveness of the distress:

> "From our community, definitely you know since last year people are having a lot of psychological problems and that's obviously, I'm one of them as well. I couldn't sleep at night times…I cannot concentrate at work, when I'm doing things suddenly, I just go back to the internet and search for the news about our situation and yeah,

> that's pretty much where I am now… I become like very distressed person, a lot of times I don't know what I am doing, and I forget things and cry easily, yeah…and yeah shouting, become like very daily thing for me. My kids now they says, oh mum, you should go to psychologist because I shout a lot." (Arzu, 44, W)

Here, Arzu refers to a wide variety of impacts – including concentration, emotional regulation, and forgetfulness, as well as impacts on her parenting (discussed further in the following theme). Importantly, Arzu notes that these impacts result not only from her own direct, lived experiences, but also from the ongoing situation in ET; that is, while Arzu has been in Australia for 14 years, she still experiences distress due to the continuing circumstance of injustice in her home country. This is seen in her reference to both her community and to the events of "last year", which refers to increasing restrictions on Uyghurs living in East Turkistan, the emergence of re-education camps and the loss of communication with family.

Similarly, Dilnaz, who arrived as an adolescent, explained that dealing with stress was a daily struggle. Dilnaz spoke of the added difficulty of experiencing something that others, in the wider community, may not understand and worrying about the wellbeing of family members in East Turkistan:

> "For people who have never experienced that, it is so difficult for them to understand how we feel…not knowing if your loved ones are okay, some days you get up and your whole mood is just ruined because you don't know what to do except pray for their wellbeing…its very stressful. Some days it makes it very difficult to focus at work, or study or anything, which is something we go through on a daily basis. It's very stressful but of course unless someone goes through that, they will never understand how we feel." (Dilnaz, 28, W)

Similarly, Aynur, who was still awaiting permanent residency in Australia, explained that the negative impact on her wellbeing had begun even before leaving East Turkistan:

> "It [injustice] impacts you, you get sick from the inside, you can't sleep, you feel depressed and look down on yourself. It is a huge attack on your wellbeing…. you constantly think about it. This was happening to me before I got here, especially the time I was trying to get my passport." (Aynur, 32, W)

Another aspect of distress participants reported was inability to enjoy peace and safety in Australia whilst family and friends still suffered injustices. Aygul, who also arrived in Australia more recently, highlighted the struggle with moving forward with her life whilst her family was still in unsafe and uncertain conditions in East Turkistan:

> "Our days have become so meaningless; I have no enthusiasm or desires for this life…if your heart is full and at peace you can enjoy living in other countries but when you don't have that you can't enjoy anything. All I want is peace and safety for my family and myself. I worry because we suffered in our own homeland, what if my children suffer in foreign lands? Because ultimately this is not our motherland… Although my dreams have come true and I am living overseas, I don't have peace of mind so even all these things here don't make my heart full." (Aygul, 29, W)

Overall, participants expressed high levels of psychological distress across diverse areas of their lives, associated with the systemtic injustices they had themselves experienced – and in many cases that their family was still experiencing. Importantly, while participants did note that they faced resettlememt challenges and that these were distressing, they saw the systemic injustice they, their families and their communities experienced as causing additional distress.

Anger, Guilt and Helplessness

Apart from generalised, pervasive psychological distress seen in the previous theme, anger, guilt and helplessness were the most frequently reported emotions associated with the injustices experienced by participants. In particular, anger was often directed at the CCP and its policies against Uyghurs:

> "I was very angry, and I felt so vulnerable [with] so many injustice things happening around me I couldn't help. That kind of feeling is so bad, it's now happening to me because what's happening in East Turkistan, we like to do something but couldn't." (Arzu, 44, W)

As can be seen in this extract, anger was also bound up in feelings of vulnerability, often leading to a sense of helplessness.

Similar to psychological distress more generally, anger was often described as pervasive and inescapable. Munira, who was born in Australia, reflected on the time she went back to East Turkistan and witnessed the injustices that Uyghurs faced:

> "…at the time I was really really angry, like the whole three months and a while after…sometimes even just thinking about it makes me angry. And it takes up a lot of brain space, sometimes it affects work and social life and uni and stuff as well. You try to not think about it, but you have to focus on this other stuff but it's always in the background." (Munira, 20, W)

In addition, participants reported feeling guilty that they could not support their families in times of need and questioned whether they had any right to speak about how they might be feeling since they were in the relative safety of Australia, despite experiencing

resettlement stressors. For example, Nergiza, who arrived in Australia 14 years ago as a child, said:

> "Specifically, [the situation in East Turkistan] affected me in a way that I can't have a good time for a long time to the extent that I should be able to. It's just feeling shit and guilty when there are people going through so much. When I think about it, it makes my head go crazy, like what can I do? How can this be happening? But then you can't do anything about it and it's constant guilt." (Nergiza, 23, W)

Feelings of guilt were also widespread within participants who felt that they could not support friends and family in East Turkistan, and felt ashamed for their relatively comfortable lives in Australia. Guilt and helplessness were exacerbated for participants when they considered the current reality of the Uyghur situation, how long the injustices had been ongoing and the fact that they were perceived to be worsening over time. For example, Mahira, who left East Turkistan as an adolescent, described the going nature of injustice, including the imprisonment and torture of family members:

> "My dad's brother is still in prison, he was given a life sentence in 1997…my mum's brother was also in prison for five to seven years and got tortured so much that he almost became paralysed when he left…when they released him from prison…those things they traumatise you although they didn't do anything to me specifically… you think things will get better but they don't." (Mahira, 28, W)

However, some participants also expressed hope for a better future, with hopefulness discussed as important in their everyday lives, often stemming from their faith:

> "…I think the only thing that keeps the [Uyghur people] going is faith and that justice will be served one day…otherwise what else would keep a person going?" (Nergiza, 23, W)

Overall, participants indicated that they felt helpless when considering their situation and the ongoing systemic injustices Uyghur people face, as well as frequent feelings of anger and guilt. However, some participants still maintained hope for the future, expressing a belief in the eventual enactment of justice and using their faith as a coping strategy.

Fear for the Future

While some participants noted that there was hope in the Uyghur community in Australia, others noted that many felt a strong degree of fear for the future. This was expressed at different levels: a fear for the safety and wellbeing of family and the wider Uyghur community in East Turkistan, a fear of being disconnected and unable to return to their homeland and a fear of children and future generations being disconnected from their roots and identity. These are all explored in this theme.

Although the experiences of injustice towards Uyghur people has been ongoing for decades, the complete inability for Uyghur people outside East Turkistan to contact family and friends is a more recent development. This absence of communication with family was particularly concerning for participants and heightened their fears around what injustices their loved ones may be experiencing. This was particularly difficult for those participants who had never returned to East Turkistan since migration, as was the case for Alya, who arrived in Australia 22 years ago:

> "We have no contact with them, we do not know if they are well, or if they are alive or if they have been sent to a concentration camp or incarcerated. We don't know

> anything, we don't know how their children or grandchildren are doing, if they are struggling…last night I dreamt about them and I woke up crying…I wanted to see them in my dreams, but I couldn't reach them and I woke up and cried because I wished that I had at least seen them in my dreams. I tried to go back to sleep to see the end of my dream. I tried to go back to sleep and I tossed and turned for 2 hours, because I was on the way to see them and I just wanted to desperately sleep and see them in my dreams, but I couldn't." (Alya, 42, W)

Due to these developments, many participants said that they took precautionary measures to protect the safety of family members overseas by not making phone calls to their relatives and deleting Chinese social media apps, fearing the potential repercussions to their safety:

> "Because we stopped calling before she asked us to. I remember the last call clearly because I deleted my social media WeChat [Chinese social media app]. My boss he went to East Turkistan, and he said no matter what you do, don't mention religion, don't even say Salam, just say hi and how are you and be done with it. Don't communicate, the government will retaliate. As soon as we had that conversation, I deleted all my social media. I got rid of all my family overseas and on that last call she said "what's wrong? What happened? Why did you delete your social media?" I knew why I did it, I was protecting her." (Leyla, 20, W)

The impact of this fear for family and friends in East Turkistan was described as an "illness of fear" by Aynur, who – as seen in the first theme – discussed issues related to sleep, depression and self-esteem. Rahila also discussed this, saying:

> "There is no such thing as good news for us anymore, we are always on edge waiting for bad news…every time the phone rings just worried about bad news…" (Rahila, 46, W)

Participants who had been able to return to visit East Turksitan noted that there was still a sense of fear for their own and their relatives' safety back home despite returning as Australian citizens. As Guzal mentioned:

> "There is so much fear, when I went my relatives could not even invite me over to stay at their house out of fear." (Guzal, 44, W)

Notably, participants indicated that in the past, having Australian citizenship and a passport afforded some safety and an opportunity to return to East Turkistan and visit family and friends. Participants who were parents viewed this as a link for their children to learn the language, culture, and form relationships with extended family. However, with the worsening situation in recent years, the prospect of travelling back to East Turkistan was diminished for participants and many had not returned since they arrived in Australia. Parents were concerned about their children being disconnected from family. For example, Erkin, who has adolescent and adult children, noted:

> "I cannot take my children back home to see…to show them our culture. I can't see my friends. It's crimes against humanity, so I am very angry and often you know…we should be happy with family, enjoying life, having fun making jokes but I can't see anyone having this kind of fun anymore…its psychological torture and we are suffering." (Erkin, 47, M)

Participants understood the injustices committed by the CCP as a means to eradicate the Uyghur identity, as Ahmet explained:

> "Right now, Uyghurs are on the brink of disappearing. Our country is considered the world's biggest open prison. To my knowledge, right now no foreigner can go in or out of there. This is how severe and strict the situation is. Their objective is to wipe out all the Uyghur people or to assimilate them as Han Chinese." (Ahmet, 27, M)

This theme captures the fears expressed by participants in relation to the ongoing injustices against Uyghurs and the consequences it would have for participants in the future such as being disconnected from relatives and country.

Parenting and Relationship Impacts

As noted above, psychological distress was particularly evident in participants' family relationships. In particular, mothers often reported difficulty managing their own distress and being present with their families; particularly those with young children where discussing systemic injustice brought challenges. For example, Rana, who came to Australia at the age of 16, explained the difficulty of explaining the situation in East Turkistan to her Australian-born children:

> "… I mean, my little one asks me like 'why you crying?' and I can't even say anything to him, like…if I said 'ooh, the Chinese government is doing this' I don't want him to get the wrong impression, I just tell him 'oh, I miss my dad' or 'I miss my family over there' he's like 'aww, why don't we go there' and that all starts again like…it's even such a hard situation for children to explain and our children are going through that with us, you know what I mean, I mean we don't have much family times now. I guess through those mental issues and ….and we used to have a hope that we'll go to Turkistan and then we used to look forward to things, like now, it has to been cut off, there is no looking forward to things." (Rana, 30, W)

The above quote from Rana demonstrates the intergenerational relationship aspects of psychological distress, with parents caught between distress at not seeing their own parents or siblings while simultaneously not being able to explain this to their children. This was also true for Reyhan, who also stated that she found managing her children difficult:

> "As the situation got worse back home I became easily frustrated and took my anger out on my kids and my husband. Then later I regret it. My mood has been under attack. In our family now we just yell, because when we [parents] yell the kids learn that from us and naturally start to yell among themselves. I try to fix that but as soon as I hear news or see photos and videos about the camps and start thinking about what kind of life my sister and brother are living, what they are facing I become angry and frustrated again and yell at my kids, I can't interact positively with them." (Reyhan, 41 years, W)

While participants who were parents commonly discussed challenges with parenting, participants also discussed worrying about their own parents. This was particularly true for adult children who had parents living with them in Australia. For example, Dilnaz highlighted the compounding effect of dealing with one's own distress and the distress of loved ones resulting from systemic injustice:

> "Also, because mum hasn't seen her parents and my grandfather passed away recently and she was unable to see her parents, of course it affects mum a lot and then you see your own mum crying, it hurts your heart as well and you're just like what are we doing…it doesn't only affect one person or two, it affects the whole family. Because you are already affected, you don't know how to emotionally support another person. It's a daily struggle." (Dilnaz, 28, W)

Psychological distress and relationship challenges were present even for participants born in Australia. However, in general, there was a difference among participants who had spent the majority of their lives in Australia and had immediate family members with them as Ali, who migrated at the age of 11, stated:

> "My mum she's really sad right now that she can't even talk to her own mother that's like almost 90 years old and we know that she is alive but we don't know how well she is, you know and she is really sad at the moment. Like for example my parents are here and it doesn't affect me as much as my parents and you know. My dad basically, his younger brother, his younger sister, actually 2 of his younger brothers and one of his younger sisters in a re-education camp." (Ali, 21, M)

Here, participants discussed distress in terms of seeing the impact of systemic injustice on their parents, even though they themselves did not feel as personally affected.

Changing Identities: Agency and Advocacy after Resettlement

When exploring the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing, participants often reflected on how their identity and understandings of justice had changed over time; in particular they indicated that they felt they had more agency in Australia than in East Turkistan. For example, participants spoke positively about the freedom to make life choices in Australia, reflecting on the fact that in East Turkistan life was 'assigned' and people worked in jobs that the government determined. As Rana pointed out, regaining a sense of control and agency over her own life by way of choosing her career, and practicing her religious identity, after resettlement in Australia had a positive impact on her wellbeing:

> "I can be myself in any situation, like I'm not forced to take my hijab off, I'm not forced to study Chinese, and I'm not forced to do a job that I don't want to do. So,

> until now I'm only doing what I want to do in my life and I'm taking control of my own life, basically…and that's what I'm really happy about, and that's what's important for me." (Rana, 30, W)

Additionally, the ability to freely express and practice religion – which was restricted in East Turkistan – was seen as having a positive impact, although some participants spoke about the need to learn about culture and religion after coming to Australia since it was repressed in East Turkistan. For example, Maryam, who came to Australia with her children, stated:

> "I learned [after coming to Australia] that justice exists in this world and things wouldn't always be this bad. I was able to look at the world with a sense of confidence. And the other thing that impacted me since coming to Australia was that I could learn about my own religion, and this was always a great comfort to me. I could have faith in the world and in justice." (Maryam, 50, W)

This sense of having value as a human being, having rights and freedom after coming to Australia were positive contributors to wellbeing for participants.

In terms of managing identity as Uyghurs, most participants were engaged in some form of advocacy or activism for Uyghur rights, and this advocacy was seen as having positive impacts on wellbeing. Many participants expressed a strong desire to 'do something' as a means to deal with the negative impacts of systemic injustice on wellbeing. For example, Adil said:

> "With the mental issue in my homeland, about my family…its affecting all of the Uyghurs. That's why we are fighting, we are doing whatever we can, online or protest or petition. Whatever we can to help our homeland." (Adil, 41, M)

Overall, participants felt a sense of responsibility to fight for the rights and freedoms of those who remained in East Turkistan. Although engaging in advocacy and activism in this way was typically seen as positive for the wellbeing of participants, many also noted that it could be consuming and emotionally draining, as exemplified by Abdullah below:

> "… there has been no attention from the international communities, no signs of ease for the harsh situation and also in the way of the recent virus pandemic, there have been more tightening of control over East Turkistan which means the place we used to call home is becoming a hell under the current situation. Especially with the increasingly harmful policies and practices…All the things I mentioned is only a tiny drop from the ocean, I am only one individual that can explain from the individual perspective …the level of devastation is immense, incomprehensible by general thinking." (Abdullah, 42, M)

As participants engaged in advocacy and activism it was clear that they felt both a sense of responsibility and burden as they were not fighting for themselves and their immediate family members only but rather for Uyghurs as a whole. Subinur, who was born and raised in Australia, explained this concept:

> "We try our best…especially at protests, I see it in people's eyes and in their voices…even though we are directly fighting for them we are all suffering so much. I think we are all in so much pain but we don't talk about it because we think who are we to complain about the pain we are in compared to the pain our people are in…brushing it to the side. The responsibility to do something and all the upset they have is motivated by survivor's guilt." (Subinur, 18, W)

This theme of identity shifts highlights how participants, particularly those who had arrived in Australia as adults, were able to view past experiences with a new lens and

acknowledge the injustices that they had faced. This shift in understanding had mostly positive effects on wellbeing through increasing agency and a sense of doing something for the broader community, although negative wellbeing impacts in terms of the overwhelming nature of this work were also noted.

5.7 Discussion

This study sought to explore the impact of systemic injustice on the wellbeing of Uyghur people with refugee backgrounds resettled in Australia. The key findings indicated that systemic injustice results in significant psychological distress which permeates through all aspects of life and is additional to the general distress associated with resettlement stressors. Guilt, anger and helplessness associated with systematic injustice were the most commonly reported emotions in addition to fear for the future. Psychological distress was also evident in participants' relationships. However, increased agency after arrival in Australia, and engaging in advocacy and activism for Uyghur freedom and rights, were seen by participants as leading to positive wellbeing outcomes. Overall, these findings reflect wellbeing impacts across the micro, meso and macro systems described in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1977). As such, the findings of this study are discussed below in line with this model.

The first three themes map to the micro level whereby systemic injustice can be seen as leading to pervasive psychological distress, most notably anger, guilt, fears for the future, and hopelessness. The nature of this distress was often described as the inability to mentally escape thoughts about the situation in East Turkistan despite physical distance and relative safety in Australia. This is an important finding since it demonstrates that systemic injustice leads to psychological distress over and above the distress commonly found in studies of refugees that stems from resettlement challenges or more general pre-migration trauma (Curry et al., 2018; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013; O'Donnell et al., 2020).

Anger, guilt, and helplessness were the most commonly reported emotions seen as resulting from the systemic injustices participants or their communities faced, in line with early research into emotional responses towards injustice (Mikula et al., 1986; Mikula et al., 1998) and as also found in our previous review of systemic injustice and wellbeing for refugees more generally (Alim et al., 2021). Expressing anger towards injustice was also found to be important in a study of West Papuan refugees (Rees & Silove, 2011). The experience of guilt among participants resembled a sense of survivor's guilt, which has been well documented with refugee populations, including survivors of armed conflict from Syria (Hassan et al., 2016). The inability to help those living in conditions of ongoing injustice was a significant stressor in another study of West Papuan refugees, where participants reported worrying about the safety of those in their homeland (Rees et al., 2013), again mirroring the experiences of participants in the current study.

Despite these negative impacts participants expressed hope in the potential for justice, often stemming from their religious beliefs. Other research has shown that faith, spirituality and coping through religion have positive impacts on wellbeing among survivors of trauma and conflict and this is also documented among refugee groups (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013; Khawaja et al., 2008; Lusk et al., 2021). This study extends this research to demonstrate that hope and coping strategies associated with religion can also be effective in the case of refugees who have experienced ongoing systemic injustice.

The theme of fear for the future encompassed participants' fears surrounding the safety of family and friends in East Turkistan as well as worries about being disconnected from cultural roots and identity. This fear often presented as psychological distress as described in the first theme and was described by one participant as an "illness". Other studies have indicated similar experiences of fear and the negative impact it can have on wellbeing, with loss of cultural identity and fears for safety particularly common in other

refugee groups also (e.g., Khawaja et al., 2008; Nickerson et al., 2009). Again, the present study extends these findings to show that fear for the future is also a key component of the experience of refugees who have specifically experienced systematic injustice in addition to more general stressors.

At the meso-level this study found that systemic injustice has key negative effects on relationships for Uyghur people, particularly in relation to parenting and inter-generational relationships. Research into intergenerational patterns among refugee families has found that navigating displacement and resettlement can negatively impact wellbeing due to accumulated family stressors (Flanagan et al., 2020; Sangalang & Vang, 2017) and challenges to parenting capacity (Mares et al., 2002; Sim et al., 2018). This is in line with our current findings that parents found it difficult to parent whilst also managing their own distress, with systemic injustice adding a cumulative impact above and beyond the more well-established stressors. Previous research has not specifically explored systemic injustice in family relationships, and thus this study points to important considerations around working with refugee families who have experienced – or are experiencing ongoing – systemic injustice, in order to support positive family functioning.

Related to migration, participants in this study reported changes in identity after resettling in Australia, particularly in relation to an increased sense of agency and control and freedom to practice religion which contributed to positive wellbeing. These findings fit into a macro community level of wellbeing where there is advocacy, agency, religion and connectedness. Studies with other refugee groups have indicated that experiencing systemic injustice can have a negative impact on wellbeing by reducing agency and control (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Coffey et al., 2010; Rees & Silove, 2011), and thus restoring agency and control can have positive impacts (Chase & Rousseau, 2018; Kira et al., 2006). Relatedly, participants in this study were actively involved in advocacy for Uyghur rights which

provided some comfort to the feelings of guilt and responsibility to those experiencing ongoing injustice. Engaging in activism was also related to positive wellbeing outcomes such as feelings of connectedness and agency among other refugee groups (Edström & Dolan, 2019; Walther et al., 2021). This supports broader research on diasporic refugee communities and the notion of collective suffering (e.g., Wise, 2004), where collective suffering leads to a shared sense of identity and support (Alfadhli & Drury, 2018). This collective suffering has also been found in the researcher and participant relationship (Ting & Sundararajan, 2018). Overall, these findings suggest that engaging in advocacy and a sense of collective identity after resettlement can be a positive contributor to wellbeing and possibly a means to reclaim the agency that was violated as a result of systemic injustice.

In addition to findings indicating that the impacts of systemic injustice fit an ecological model in terms of wellbeing affects, our findings also fit Silove's (2013) Adaptation and Development after Persecution and Trauma (ADAPT) model, suggesting that this model can usefully help explain the impacts of systemic injustice for refugees. This model has five pillars which are seen as disrupted due to mass conflict: (1) safety and security, (2) bonds and networks, (3) justice, (4) roles and identities and, (5) existential meaning. Particularly relevant are the pillars of safety and security, justice and, roles and identities. For example, participants in our study highlighted that systemic injustice posed an ongoing threat to safety and security even after resettlement – both realistically in terms of the impacts to families and communities who remained in East Turkistan as well as psychologically. The ADAPT model suggests that a violation of safety and security impacts mental health and is linked to posttraumatic stress, which was also found in the current study. Justice is seen as a psychological construct in this model and persisting preoccupation with cumulative injustice can maintain psychological symptoms; although notably anger towards perceived injustice is viewed as a normal and expected response in this model, again

mirroring findings of the current study. In relation to roles and identities, the model posits that mass conflict and displacement can disrupt family and social roles which can in turn interfere with an individual's ability to have a sense of identity and maintain meaningful roles and relationships, with this again evident in the theme of parenting and relationships impacts.

An important contribution of this study is to provide a different lens through which to view and understand refugee wellbeing, via a case study of the Uyghur population in Australia. Specifically, most previous research has conceptualised refugee wellbeing in terms of pre, peri and post migration factors, however systemic injustice cuts across all three stages of migration and clearly has pervasive impacts on mental health and wellbeing. However, systemic injustice has often not been considered among the known stressors at each stage as documented in much previous literature (Fazel et al., 2005, Porter & Haslam, 2005; Steel et al., 2009). As such, professionals engaging with people who have experienced systemic injustice – including refugees – should be mindful of the extensive negative impact it can have on wellbeing. Specifically, professionals should consider that psychological distress and emotions such as anger, guilt and fear may potentially stem from unresolved injustice, while also recognising that these emotions may be adaptive. In addition, professionals should strive to work with the individual and their wider system as systemic injustice not only affects the individual, but their interpersonal relationships and engagement with the broader community (Gerbase, 2018). Furthermore, practitioners and services should continue to advocate for the wellbeing of refugees by supporting policies that promote a sense of justice at least in the countries of resettlement (Kisely et al., 2002). Culturally responsive counselling requires practitioners to be aware of injustices that clients face and be proactive in advocating for clients' rights and wellbeing (Bemak & Chung, 2017). Although systemic injustice has widespread negative impacts on the wellbeing of participants, professionals can work towards engagement and support that allows higher levels of positive wellbeing in all areas of life in

addition to addressing experiences of and concerns around anger and fear. Professionals can support Uyghur people with refugee backgrounds by exploring their future options and assisting in engagement with education, employment, encouraging positive coping skills such as using religious practices and other aspects that help with their resettlement in Australia.

This study is not without its limitations. The participants included in this study range from those who are newly settled to those who have been living in Australia for a few decades. Potential differences between those who are newly arrived and those who have been resettled for several years, such as the impact of or difficulties with acculturation, may not have been adequately captured and could be an avenue for future research. This research cannot completely delineate the impact of the refugee experience and resettlement stressors with the impact of systemic injustice. It is not possible to isolate the different experiences of participants in time and their specific impacts on wellbeing which is perhaps one of the challenges of conducting research in this area. However, the data that came of the interviews in this study specifically asked about experiences of injustice and its impact on the wellbeing of participants.

Furthermore, in relation to recruitment, participants who are younger and more digitally literate with access to social media were perhaps more likely to participate in the research. This is especially the case when considering the research was impacted by covid-19 restrictions and interviews were conducted over Zoom since a level of digital literacy was required. Also, there were more women than men in the sample, and the findings may therefore not fully capture the experiences of men who may face different challenges (Jarallah & Baxter, 2019). Future research into refugee wellbeing would also benefit from considering the impact of systemic injustice among different cultural groups as the Uyghur experience may not be transferable to the circumstances of other groups.

This study is one of the first to research the experiences of, and give voice to, Uyghur people resettled in Australia. More broadly, this study contributes to research on people with refugee backgrounds through considering experiences of systemic injustice and its impact on wellbeing. In particular, the findings highlight the fact that systemic injustice carries widespread negative consequences for the wellbeing of victims impacting their interpersonal relationships, emotions, parenting and sense of safety for their future. Systemic injustice and its impact should be considered when understanding and working to improve the wellbeing of people with refugee backgrounds.

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CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a summary and overview of the findings of the three studies that formed this thesis. Each of the studies is summarised individually and key findings discussed. This is then followed by sections which consider the contributions and implications of these findings in relation to theory as well as clinical practice and service provision for both the Uyghur people in Australia as well as refugees and migrants more broadly. This chapter will also discuss the strengths and limitations of this body of research and directions for future research. The chapter concludes with a review of reflexivity and final comments.

6.1 Overview of Research and Key Findings

Paper 1 – *Relationship between experiences of systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers: a systematic review*

The first study in this thesis (Chapter 3) was a systematic review of literature conducted on systemic injustice and wellbeing among refugees and asylum seekers. This study was conducted to determine the breadth of research in this area and to collate the research systematically to highlight important findings and to also inform the subsequent studies that formed this thesis. Altogether 14 studies were reviewed, and participants included asylum seekers and refugees in refugee camps or countries of resettlement. The first notable finding of this review was the lack of research that had been conducted in relation to injustice and refugee wellbeing; a critical gap in the literature given the importance of focusing on systemic factors in relation to refugee experiences (Hynie, 2018; Li et al., 2016).

Five themes were identified from thematically analysing the findings of the studies included in the review. The first theme, ‘justice is human rights and a balance in power’, demonstrated that while the participants in the included studies recognised themselves as

international rights holders, legal systems and institutions were largely inaccessible to them, which prevented participants from exercising those rights. Notably philosophers and commentators on refugee experiences since the second world war have highlighted the lack of rights held by refugees and asylum seekers, despite the international laws designed to protect them (Arendt, 1973; Hirsch & Bell, 2017). The systematic review found that this remained the case for refugees and asylum seekers, with significant impacts on wellbeing as noted in the later studies in this thesis. This theme of rights and power also highlights that justice was viewed by participants as intricately related to power, in that the systemic injustices experienced by participants created and perpetrated a power imbalance between perpetrators and victims. Importantly, power imbalance was not only the case in relation to the initial injustice that led to someone leaving their country, but also the imbalances of power that remained in relation to visa and protection policies in countries of resettlement. Overall, this theme highlighted that inability to exercise human rights and the imbalances in power prevented participants from access to restoring justice which itself was seen as further injustice.

The second theme 'mistrust in the legal system and a preference for informal forms of justice' referred to participants mistrust of legal systems in refugee camps and countries of resettlement and an unwillingness to seek recourse through this system. Participants expressed fears around safety and retribution from authorities if they sought justice through formal methods. Furthermore, participants were unlikely to access formal pathways to restoring justice as they questioned the efficacy of such pathways and perceived legal pathways and criminal justice systems as having failed them in both countries of origin and resettlement to bring perpetrators to justice. In some studies, participants preferred 'informal' and cultural forms of justice for interpersonal injustices that occurred in refugee camps such as customary courts (Holzer, 2010; Liebling et al., 2020). This preference for cultural

methods lends support to the importance of culture in pathways to restoring justice and such pathways should consider gender roles, shame and stigma around traumatic experiences and cultural beliefs around accessing justice services (Liebling et al., 2020).

The final three themes highlighted the negative impacts of systemic injustice on wellbeing – 'injustice and wellbeing', 'sense of agency/control', and 'anger at injustice'. The first of these themes highlighted that the experience of injustice and having a sense of injustice was associated with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), complicated grief, fear, anxiety and depression across four studies in this review (Mura 2015; Rees & Silove, 2011; Tay et al., 2015; Tay et al., 2016). Interestingly, a restoration of justice was associated with healing effects for victims in one particular study (Kira et al., 2006). The theme of 'sense of agency/control' identified that experiences of systemic injustice also negatively impacted wellbeing by eroding a sense of agency and control as participants were unable or prevented from acting to restore justice which was also linked to fear for safety (Chase & Rosseau, 2018; McCallister, 2012). Importantly, pathways that supported restoring a sense of agency and control in the lives of participants such as having an advocate to help navigate immigration, health and social services were associated with positive effects on wellbeing (Chase & Rosseau, 2018; Mura, 2015). As noted in the review, this supports more general research about the positive mental health impacts of agency and control (Bandura, 1995; Braveman et al., 2011; Maness & Branscum, 2017; Syme, 1998; Tsey et al., 2003). Having financial stability and educational opportunities in resettlement contexts also aided in restoring agency and control as it provided a sense of security for the future, leading to considerations of the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) in Chapter 1.

The final theme of 'anger at injustice' identified a complex relationship between anger at injustice and wellbeing. Feelings of anger towards injustice was associated with distress among participants and associated with negative effects on interpersonal relationships which

led to isolation and poor mental health (Coffey et al., 2010; Rees & Silove, 2011; Tay et al., 2016). On the other hand, maintaining anger towards injustice was important as it expressed solidarity with those suffering ongoing injustice in countries of origin (Alim et al., 2019; Rees & Silove, 2011). It is notable that anger at injustice had both positive and negative effects on wellbeing for participants, highlighting an inherent tension in terms of maintaining anger for individuals who have experienced injustice. This tension was not fully explored in the studies included in the systematic review and was therefore one component that the subsequent qualitative studies sought to explore.

Paper 2 - *Understanding and Restoring Justice: A Qualitative Study of Uyghurs in Australia*

In the second paper of this thesis (Chapter 4) the aim was to explore the understandings of justice and pathways to restoring justice after systemic injustice with a focus on Uyghur migrants and refugees resettled in Australia; a group who, as noted in Chapter 1, have experienced ongoing and sustained systemic injustice and who therefore offer a useful case study. More specifically, the study focussed on the systemic injustices experienced in the country of origin, East Turkistan (ET), and those in applying or making the journey to Australia. The interview data was collected simultaneously for papers 2 and 3 (Chapters 4 and 5) and the themes were divided according to the research questions (namely: How is justice understood? How can justice be restored after systemic injustice?; and How does systemic injustice impact wellbeing?). As noted in Chapter 2, the analysis was conducted within a realist framework with a deductive, semantic approach taken in coding and identifying themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Paper 2 (Chapter 4) identified three themes pertaining to defining justice and four themes pertaining to restoring justice for this group. The first theme was ‘orienting to systemic injustice’ which captured how participants oriented to examples of systemic

injustice when asked to define justice. While this may be unsurprising given the experiences of this group of participants, it is a useful addition to the literature in relation to the (in)justice experiences of refugee and migrant participants. Specifically, participants reflected on the significance of the injustices with some questioning the existence of justice after experiencing or witnessing discrimination, restrictions on religious practices and arbitrary imprisonment of friends and family. In terms of more specific definitions of injustice, participants typically equated justice with the ability to exercise rights, equal treatment and access to the truth which formed the second theme of 'rights, equality and truth'; a finding which mirrored the systematic review in Chapter 3 in terms of justice being associated with rights in previous research. In addition to this, the theme of 'freedom' captured the importance of freedom for understanding justice with participants referring to freedom of religion, travel, making life choices and practicing culture. These definitions of justice directly reflected the areas in which participants experienced injustice in ET with participants often drawing comparisons between ET and Australia. As such, these definitions of justice may reflect the experiences of other refugee or migrant groups who have experienced significant persecution – such as the Rohingya people – but may not reflect experiences of refugees who have not experienced such sustained persecution, a point discussed further in Section 6.6 of this chapter.

In relation to pathways to restoring justice, the first theme was 'acknowledging the oppression' which centred around recognition of, and apology for, injustices suffered by Uyghur people from the Chinese government and global community. This highlights the important role of recognition and apology in restoring justice, as recognised in broader literature (Augostinos, 2011; McNay, 2008; Spinner-Halev, 2012). Another step in restoring justice was the theme of 'right of return and safety', which expressed participants' desire to return to ET without risking their safety and the safety of others. This would also acknowledge the Uyghur peoples' right to their land, and thus builds directly on recognition

but with specific relevance to persecuted communities more generally and Uyghur peoples specifically. However, younger participants expressed concern for the consequences of long-term systemic injustice and that returning to ET or gaining independence alone would not be enough to restore justice. Following this, the theme of 'self-determination' captured participants' desire for an independent *country*, with Uyghurs as the rightful owners of the land and the deciders for the future as another pathway to restore justice. Again, however, younger participants referred to the scale of injustice and trauma inflicted on Uyghur people stating that absolute justice could not be possible which reflects some age-related differences, explored further in Section 6.3.

The final theme related to restoring justice was 'political pathways to justice' which identified political intervention from the Australian government as well as global action as a pathway to end injustices for Uyghur people. Participants called upon their citizenship as Australians to urge the Australian government to act which is something participants could not do in ET. At the very least, participants reported that the Australian government could help Uyghur migrants and refugees living on temporary visas to gain permanency and citizenship in Australia which would ensure some level of safety for them as well as recognition of their experiences of persecution. Younger participants emphasised global action and raising awareness on the injustices faced by Uyghur people. However, at the forefront of concern for all participants was the closure of the re-education camps. Although these themes identified clear, actionable pathways to restore justice, participants' responses were often clouded by the unlikeliness that other governments would take real action and intervene due to political relations with China.

Paper 3 – *The Impact of Systemic Injustice on Wellbeing: A Qualitative Study of Uyghurs in Australia*

In the third paper of this thesis (Chapter 5) using the same sample and data as the previous study, the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing was explored. This paper identified five main themes that capture the ways in which wellbeing was impacted for participants; psychological distress, anger, guilt and helplessness, fear for the future, relationship impacts and changes to identity after resettlement. These themes mirror an ecological systems understanding in terms of the impacts of injustice on wellbeing, with impacts seen at multiple levels including micro-individual level (psychological distress, anger, guilt, fear), meso-level (relationships, parenting) and macro-level (advocacy, agency, religion).

The first of these themes was 'psychological distress' which refers to the pervasive and diverse negative impacts of the ongoing injustices in ET – even for participants who had lived in Australia for many years - as well as participants' personal experiences of these injustices. Participants reported that their health, work and social relationships were all adversely affected which presented as stress, ongoing psychological distress, difficulty managing relationships and being unable to enjoy the relative safety and security of living in Australia. The pervasiveness of psychological distress experienced by participants speaks to the importance of connectedness to country as well as the impact of collective suffering on wellbeing (Alfadhli & Drury, 2018; Wise, 2004). Although participants recognised the psychological distress within themselves and in the community, there were challenges to accessing support such as language barriers; a common finding in the psychological and broader literature (Hynie, 2018; Saito et al., 2021; Watkins et al., 2012). Psychological distress was particularly salient in family relationships which is captured in the theme of 'parenting and relationship impacts'. Mothers with young children in particular reported difficulty managing their own distress whilst also being present with their children. However, this was also true for some participants in terms of the child-to-parent relationship with

participants stating that it was challenging to manage their own distress whilst also trying to comfort their parents. Participants also grieved relationships where the ongoing injustices in ET meant that participants could not communicate, be together with, support or care for family members still living in ET, again reflecting literature for refugees more broadly in terms of family separation (Fogden et al., 2020; Liddell et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2018).

The most commonly reported emotions associated with the ongoing injustice was highlighted in the theme of 'anger, guilt and helplessness'. Participants expressed anger towards the actions of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its policies that allowed the injustices to take place. When participants explained the feelings of anger, it was also related to feelings of vulnerability and helplessness at not being able to take action and being limited in their efforts for justice. Moreover, participants expressed guilt at being unable to support their families in times of need, questioning the validity of their own distress when compared to that of family suffering in ET. Feelings of anger, guilt and helplessness were also pervasive and mentally inescapable. Again, the scale and severity of injustices combined with the ongoing reality for Uyghurs further exacerbated the negative impacts on the wellbeing of participants. Despite this, participants still held hope for a better future and the end of systemic injustices which stemmed from their faith, adding support to broader literature that links faith and religious beliefs with wellbeing (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013; Khawaja et al., 2008; Lusk et al., 2021).

Participants also expressed a strong degree of fear, as seen in the theme of 'fear for future'. This theme found fear was experienced at different levels with participants fearing for safety of their family as well as broader Uyghur community, fear of being disconnected from the homeland and unable to return and finally fear of children and future generations losing their cultural roots and identity. Maintaining a connection with ET was important for the wellbeing of all participants, especially as participants described the actions of the

Chinese government as attempting to eradicate the Uyghur identity. This links to other research regarding fear around loss of cultural and ethnic identity among other cultural and refugee groups (Khawaja et al., 2008; Mortland, 2005; Nickerson et al., 2009).

The final theme in this paper exploring wellbeing was 'changing identities: agency and advocacy after resettlement' which reflected the changes in identity that participants experienced since resettling in Australia. Participants reported having more agency and control over their lives in Australia compared to ET which was associated with positive wellbeing, reflecting findings from the systematic review in Chapter 3 regarding the importance of agency and control. These differences were evident in participants being able to decide for themselves how they would practice their religion, what careers they would pursue and what educational pathways they would take. Participants also reported being able to exercise their rights and freedoms which contributed positively to wellbeing as participants felt valued as people. Most participants were engaged in some form of advocacy and activism which was viewed as positive to wellbeing as a means of dealing with the systemic injustices. However, participants reported a strong sense of responsibility to engage in this work which at times could be emotionally draining. This links to other research with refugee groups which have explored the impact of activism on wellbeing which is further discussed in Section 6.3.

6.2 Understanding Justice Findings

The key findings of this thesis in relation to understanding justice for people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds (systematic review – Chapter 3) and also for Uyghur refugees and migrants (qualitative study – Chapter 4) was that justice is often understood as human rights, balance in power, equality, truth and freedom. There are also barriers that these groups face with respect to accessing justice which include structural power imbalances and

mistrust of legal systems. Restoring justice after systemic injustice, in the case of the Uyghur participants, was multilayered and included acknowledgement of injustices, apology, right of return and self-determination. This section will discuss the contribution of these key findings in relation to broader refugee and justice research and theory.

The first key finding of this thesis with respect to understandings of justice was that justice – across the studies in the review and the perceptions of Uyghur people in the qualitative study - was perceived to be fundamentally about human rights. As noted in previous chapters, understanding justice as human rights directly reflects the experiences of most people who become refugees, whereby human rights are violated (Alim et al., 2022; Bendjo et al., 2019; Holzer 2013; Pavlish & Ho, 2009). Discourse around human rights for refugees is not new and has been a focus of refugee research particularly since the second world war (Arendt, 1973; Hirsch & Bell, 2017). In particular, Arendt (1973) famously argued that although modern societies view human rights as universal and innate to every individual, the 'right to have rights' is in fact not universal, nor guaranteed for all. In particular, Arendt observed that the right to claim and exercise human rights for those who were stateless after the Second World War was dependent upon political belonging (i.e. citizenship); in other words, human rights are meaningless unless a legal or political entity is willing to uphold them. Those who are in reality or in practice stateless, then, are in effect without even human rights; because there is no entity willing to fight for these people. For the refugees of today – particularly those who are the target of systemic injustice from their own nation state, as the Uyghur people are – there is a clear lack of justice and no recourse to claiming it.

Holzer (2013) found similar arguments, with participants, who were Liberian refugees in a refugee camp in Ghana, recognising themselves as international rights holders; but simultaneously unable to exercise these rights freely as they were excluded from legal systems and institutions due to structural power imbalances between legal institutions,

authority figures and participants. The findings of this thesis shows that refugees themselves are clearly aware of this, centring human rights solidly within definitions of justice. This was also found for the Uyghur participants, understanding justice as having human rights and equal treatment to exercise those rights thus supporting the findings of the systematic review. Relatedly, freedom was also important to justice as participants faced restrictions across all aspects of life and freedom to exercise rights would be necessary for justice. This is in line with other research related to understanding justice such as a study of Yazidi women refugees (N = 117) resettled in Germany who understood and defined justice in terms of rights and equal treatment (Pham et al., 2019). Another study of asylum seekers (N = 29) in Australia also noted that participants appealed to their human rights and used rights talk to claim their deservingness of human rights in the face of dehumanising treatment (Hartley & Fleay, 2017). Perhaps, discourse around human rights becomes particularly important when human rights are threatened or violated and claiming human rights is the only means to draw attention to injustices suffered, especially when people are stateless and cannot rely on the rights afforded to citizens of a nation.

While, since Arendt's criticism of human rights, a universal declaration of human rights has been formed (1951 Refugee Convention), those who meet the definition of 'a refugee' still face challenges and barriers to seeking asylum and exercising their rights. In particular, many states use deterrence policies such as the interception of asylum seekers to avoid being responsible and upholding the principle of non-refoulement. Australia was an early example of this, with its use of mandatory detention dating from the 1990's and key examples of boat turn-backs in the 2000's, followed by temporary visas with explicit policies that meant that no-one who arrived as an asylum seeker would be permanently resettled in Australia (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021; Henderson 2014; Newman et al., 2013). Other countries have followed suit, especially following increasing unrest in the

Middle East and Africa, including Italy's forcible return of Somali and Eritrean asylum seekers in May 2009 (Giuffré, 2012), and the United Kingdom's attempted deportation of asylum seekers to Rwanda in 2022 (Kohnert, 2022). These barriers to exercising human rights (in this case, the right of asylum), places refugees and asylum seekers in a continual state of injustice, reflected in the findings of this thesis in terms of participants' perception of justice as a 'balance in power'.

In this thesis, specifically the findings of the systematic review, justice has also been equated with a balance in power. This understanding of justice highlights the power imbalance created between refugees and the perpetrators of systemic injustice (e.g., authority figures, political leaders, governments). The idea that injustices create a power imbalance where the injustice disregards the victim's rights or freedoms and can symbolically place the offender above the victim is not a new idea (Heider, 1958; Okimoto & Wenzel, 2008). As was reviewed in Chapter 1, theories and understandings of justice have often stemmed from research in organisational justice. Organisational justice research has previously shown that power imbalances can influence how employees behave in an organisation and are an important aspect of injustice (e.g., Lam & Xu, 2018; Morrison & Rothman, 2009; Tepper et al., 2009). People's ability to restore a sense of justice (e.g., taking revenge) after perceived injustice is influenced by the degree of power imbalance between themselves and perpetrators (Kim et al., 1998). Research has also shown that restoring the power imbalance should be a key aspect of working towards restoring a sense of justice (Wenzel & Okimoto, 2010).

One such way to restore power imbalance suggested in research is apology (Baron, 1990; Ohbuchi et al., 1989; Robbennolt, 2003). Apology is viewed as a statement of remorse from the perpetrator in which they do not deny responsibility for the injustice they have committed (Okimoto & Wenzel, 2008). There are two ways in which apologies are considered to restore some sense of justice. Firstly, apologies can restore the power

imbalance between victim and perpetrator that occurred due to injustice as the apology can act to empower the victim (Karp, 1998; Wood & Mitchell, 1981). Secondly, apologies can reaffirm and restore shared values of what is considered fair between victims and perpetrators (Bobocel & Zdaniuk, 2013; Shaver, 1985). This is interesting as 'sincere apology' was a theme in the pathways to restoring justice for Uyghur participants. Participants desired an apology from the Chinese government for the systemic injustices committed which would be an acknowledgement of their oppression against Uyghurs. This was also evident in the systematic review whereby participants expressed that bringing perpetrators to justice was seen as necessary for the enactment of justice, as it would restore the power balance between victims and perpetrators and enhance political fairness (Alim et al., 2019; Nyarko & Punamaki, 2017).

Understanding justice as a power balance also highlights the barriers to accessing justice that refugees face such as fear for safety, unfair treatment and mistrust in legal systems which highlight further power imbalances that people with refugee backgrounds experience. This thesis found that mistrust of legal systems stemmed from past experiences of legal systems (in both countries of origin and resettlement) failing to protect refugees and also a fear of retribution from authorities if justice was sought through formal methods. This led to participants often prioritising safety rather than accessing formal justice structures. This mistrust in legal systems is understandable given that the systems (e.g., the government, legal institutions, political leaders) meant to uphold justice and protect rights are often the systems that perpetrate the injustices. Other research has found similar experiences of barriers to justice. For example, in a study of refugees in a refugee camp in Uganda who had experienced sexual violence, participants feared retribution from authorities if they reported crimes to authorities in the camp (Smith-Khan et al., 2015). In this study, lack of knowledge of criminal laws and procedures was identified as another barrier to accessing justice. Even in

cases when legal systems were accessed, there was mistrust that the principles and processes used were based on justice as was the case for asylum seekers in the systematic review (Chase & Rousseau, 2018). This is supported by other research with asylum seekers who faced extensive administrative injustices (e.g., arrests, corruption in administration, lack of information regarding asylum interviews, risk of refoulement) when applying for asylum in South Africa (Amit, 2012). Altogether, these findings indicate the procedural injustices that refugees and asylum seekers face, which provides support for the conceptualisation of systemic injustice in this thesis as an absence or denial of procedural justice.

Mistrust in legal systems also contributes to the preference for informal and cultural methods for restoring justice. In the systematic review, Holzer (2013) and Liebling et al. (2020) found that participants preferred informal and cultural processes to restore interpersonal injustices within the refugee camps in which they were living at the time. However, in another study 'cultural ideology' was seen as a barrier to human rights, especially for women, as cultural ideas about social roles disadvantaged women (Pavlish & Ho, 2009). This also indicates that culture is also an important factor to consider when thinking about pathways to restoring justice alongside education and awareness about rights. Perhaps due to past experiences of legal and formal structures failing to restore or maintain justice, people with experiences of systemic injustice may prefer local leadership and cultural processes to bring perpetrators to justice. Other research has found the inclusion of refugee leaders and culturally sensitive methods for dispute and conflict resolution had positive outcomes for integration in the host country (Vancluysen & Ingelaere, 2020). Such inclusive and culturally sensitive methods could also improve access to legal institutions among refugee communities (Kate et al., 2019). A study of Bhutanese refugees (N = 165) residing in Nepal found that culture plays a role in justice preferences (Laxminarayan & Pemberton, 2012). Participants were surveyed on experiences of crimes such as theft or violence in the

refugee camp. In this study, the membership to a collectivist culture was associated with preferences for restorative justice processes rather than retributive justice, and a decreased likelihood of accessing formal justice systems (e.g., police, courts). Although this study did not look at systemic injustice, it still indicates that considering culture in justice processes is relevant.

Specifically for the Uyghur participants in this thesis, in addition to rights, equality and freedom as being components of justice, truth was also associated with understanding justice. Understanding justice as truth adds an interesting insight to understanding justice for this group and for refugee groups more broadly. Firstly, it may be unique to the case of Uyghurs due to the CCP's continual denial of injustices against Uyghurs. In this way, truth would be an acknowledgement of injustices which also relates to how apology may be important for restoring justice as discussed earlier. However, in relation to broader research around transitional and restorative justice with refugee groups and groups who have faced mass conflict, truth telling (such as in the form of truth commissions) has been shown to be important to justice (Chapman & Ball, 2001; Llwellyn, 2013). In a study of Serbian participants (N = 922) and the ways in which war crimes should be dealt with, it was found that establishing the truth was important for participants (Parmentier & Weitekamp, 2013). This was attributed to past manipulation of facts, public opinion and denial of war crimes. Most participants reported that truth telling was important and should be made publicly. Furthermore, this study highlighted that restoring justice was important and ongoing even 20 years after the conflict had passed. Similarly, the study by Liebling et al. (2020) in the systematic review had shown narration of experiences was a means of achieving social justice. However, truth telling is not necessarily associated with positive wellbeing outcomes for victims, perhaps due to revisiting painful and traumatic past experiences and also practical challenges in conducting the process (Quinn & Freeman, 2003; Twose & Mahoney, 2015).

Nonetheless, recognising or acknowledging the truth may be important as it acknowledges the systemic injustices that have occurred (Pham et al., 2019).

As for the key findings in relation to restoring justice in this thesis, self-determination was highlighted as an important pathway. Self-determination to restore justice for Uyghur participants included a free and independent ET governed by Uyghurs where they would have the ability to make their own decisions. Broader research into what self-determination represents for other groups has found similar desires for self-determination as the Uyghur participants in this thesis, with independent state, self-governing and the ability to make decisions all identified as important (e.g., Kamlian, 2003; MacLeod, 2011). For example, West Papuans pursued their right to self-determination through protesting and establishing movements and organisations to represent their efforts for self-determination (McLeod, 2011). Nonviolent action such as protesting and civil disobedience were also noted in the struggles for self-determination against military occupations and foreign powers among Palestinians, East Timorese and Albanians (Stephan, 2005). However, research into self-determination for conflict affected groups as well as refugees has often focused on discourse around ethnicity and what constitutes the right to self-determination (e.g., Maguire & Elton, 2018; McVay, 2012; Wilson, 1996). Political and legal discourse, although important, does not provide insight into how people with refugee backgrounds understand and seek self-determination as a pathway to restoring justice.

Moreover, self-determination is considered a collective human right in which individuals can freely decide their political status and pursue economic, educational, and cultural development (Maguire & Elton, 2018). The absence of self-determination for refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons leaves them vulnerable to human rights violations whilst also denying them a political voice at the national and international level (Maguire & Elton, 2018). The lack of political representation limits their voices and rights

concerns of vulnerable groups such as the case of Rohingya people (Uddin, 2015). This relates to the earlier discussion of Arendt's argument that unless there is an entity willing to protect the rights of the vulnerable, they are without their human rights and in this case also without their right to self-determination. Understanding self-determination as a right also aligns with the conceptualisation of systemic injustice in this thesis; namely, that denial of freedom to choose and determine outcomes can be understood as denials of procedural and distributive justice.

In this thesis, participants indicated that they often engaged in activism, including attending protests and calling on the Australian government as well as the international community to step in and support Uyghur people's right. This engagement in activism can be seen as steps towards self-determination. In particular, Uyghur participants called on the Australian government and their citizenship as Australians to put pressure on the Chinese government and their injustices against Uyghurs. Younger participants also called on the global community and emphasised education and awareness about Uyghur people. Broader research into attitudes towards justice suggests that there are generational differences in perceptions which leads to difference in suggested action (Sabbagh & Vanhuysse, 2010; Syme et al., 2000). Calling on citizenship to make claims to rights and action again support the earlier discussion of the importance of belonging and citizenship for the ability to exercise human rights. In addition, it mirrors the findings of Holzer (2013) in which refugee participants looked to the international community to support them and claim their rights. Despite calling on their Australian citizenship and the international community, participants in this thesis recognised that China's political relationship with Australia meant that it was unlikely that Australia would make such efforts. Although participants were physically distant from the ongoing injustices in ET, the sense of injustice was maintained in Australia as participants were aware of the minimal action that the Australian government and

international community would take to stand against the injustices. However, participants identified that the Australian government could still provide safety to the Uyghurs by allowing protection and permanent residency to those who had applied for asylum in Australia, further supporting other research suggesting the importance of gaining permanent residency (Alim et al., 2019; Rygiel et al., 2016).

Overall, the findings in relation to understanding and restoring justice indicate that justice is primarily understood in terms of human rights with equality and freedom necessary to exercising these rights. Justice was also understood as a balance in power, highlighting the power imbalances that people with refugee backgrounds face with systemic injustice. In addition, power imbalances also highlighted the barriers to accessing justice which included fear of retribution, risks to safety and mistrust in legal systems. Establishing the truth was also important to justice and related to the importance of acknowledging injustice. Self-determination was an important pathway to restoring justice for Uyghur participants. These findings extend research that seeks to understand the experiences of refugees by highlighting their experiences of injustice, the importance of understanding justice for this group and the potential ways in which some sense of justice may be restored.

6.3 Injustice and Wellbeing Findings

Early justice research has demonstrated that perceived injustice is associated with negative impacts on cognition and emotions among general populations (Darley & Pittman, 2003; Mikula et al., 1998; Wenzel and Okimoto, 2016). Since then, research has also shown that when people perceive they are being treated unjustly they are motivated to engage in actions that restore a sense of justice and this can occur through several pathways (Worthington, 2001; 2006). It was reasonable then to assume that people who experience systemic injustices would experience negative impacts to their wellbeing, especially when

such injustices cannot be easily restored as is the case for people with refugee backgrounds. However, very little research had actually explored how or what aspects of wellbeing are impacted for this particular group. This section discusses the key findings of this thesis in relation to systemic injustice and its impact on wellbeing for refugees and asylum seekers (systematic review – Chapter 3) and also for the case of Uyghur participants (qualitative study – Chapter 5). The findings are structured around the Adaptation and Development after Persecution and Trauma (ADAPT) model and broader literature in the areas of justice and wellbeing.

The ADAPT model (Silove, 1999; 2013) was a key component in four of the studies included in the systematic review (Chapter 3 - Chase & Rousseau, 2018; McCallister, 2012; Tay et al., 2015; Tay et al., 2016). Although this thesis was not formed on this model, after data analysis and writing of the different studies it became apparent that this model was highly relevant to this thesis and much of the findings map well on to the different pillars. The key findings in relation to the impact of systemic injustice and wellbeing are presented here with specific reference to this model. Silove (1999) proposed that the stressors and human rights violations that refugees experience impact adaptive systems at the individual and collective levels. These stressors and human rights violations referred to fit with the conceptualisation of systemic injustice in this thesis as it includes torture, human rights violations, injustices, extensive trauma, loss and displacement that result from persecution and exposure to mass conflict. According to the ADAPT model there are five interdependent, core pillars which societies are built upon and that are disrupted by mass conflict. The five pillars are: (1) safety/security, (2) bonds/networks, (3) justice, (4) roles and identities and, (5) existential meaning. Each of these pillars has informing principles, suggested adaptive and maladaptive responses at the individual and collective level as well as psychosocial responses and clinical principles that can be applied to support individuals and communities. The

psychosocial responses and clinical principles suggested by this model will be discussed in Section 6.5 under ‘Implications for Practice’.

Pillar 1 – Safety and Security

Firstly, the pillar of safety and security in the ADAPT model refers to the importance of sense of safety to mental health and suggests that repeated and prolonged exposure to conditions that threaten the safety and security of conflict affected populations is associated with higher levels of posttraumatic stress, PTSD and other disorders. The suggested adaptive (or normative) response at the individual level is a defensive response and at the collective level it is a preparedness to respond to threat and protect the security of the group. The maladaptive response at the individual level is anxiety symptoms, PTSD and other comorbid disorders and at the collective level it is hypersensitivity and over-reactivity to threat cues in the environment. The findings of the systematic review and qualitative studies especially highlights the maladaptive responses at the individual level as findings demonstrated that people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds experienced high level of psychological distress. More specifically, experiences of injustice among refugees and asylum seekers was associated with psychological distress, PTSD, anxiety, depression, anger and fear as highlighted in the studies reviewed in this thesis (Alim et al., 2021). As the ADAPT model suggests, perhaps the long-term exposure to systemic injustice erodes a sense of safety and security for people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds which then presents as psychological distress. Sense of safety and security was the overarching pillar highlighted in the study of Mexican refugees (N = 22) by McCallister (2012) as restoring a sense of safety was most important to participants after their exposure to violence and adversity and violation of personal safety.

With respect to Uyghur participants, the pillar of safety and security is relevant in that participants did not completely feel safe even after resettlement due to the ongoing injustices in ET and the threat to the safety and security of family members and the Uyghur community. Although physically distant from the situation in ET and relatively safe in Australia, the individual and collective levels of safety for Uyghur people were still under threat. In addition, participants reported negative, pervasive impacts on wellbeing which encompassed their health, work, family and social relationships. Participants spoke of stress, constant worry, difficulty with emotional regulation, struggling with concentrating at their studies or their work, and the inability to enjoy their lives in the relative peace and safety of Australia. Participants attributed the psychological distress to the ongoing situation of injustice in ET and the fear and worry for friends, family and the broader Uyghur community who were in unsafe and uncertain conditions. These findings provide support for the relevance and importance of the pillar of safety and security for Uyghur participants in this body of research as well as an indication of relevance for refugee and asylum seeker groups more broadly.

In a study of Syrian refugees, Yahya et al. (2018) found that ensuring a sense of safety and security, having access to justice and the right of return were important and necessary conditions for participants when they considered returning home to Syria. Participants also highlighted that a sense of safety and security could not be restored without major political change such as ending criminal impunity, inclusive governance, and access to justice. While this highlights the importance of safety and security, it also links to the earlier section on restoring justice where Uyghur participants also highlighted right of return and ensuring safety as key pathways to restoring justice. In another study of refugees (N = 293) resettled in the United States, sense of safety was an ongoing issue in the resettlement context (Shaw et al., 2021). Interestingly, this study found that participants who engaged within their own cultural and religious communities more frequently reported a greater sense of safety,

indicating potential points of intervention in the post-settlement context to help develop a sense of safety in refugees. This is in line with other research that indicates sense of safety for refugees is impacted by their resettlement context as well as enduring pre-migration factors such as high levels of exposure to trauma and lack of sense of safety (Stathopoulou et al., 2019). However, safety from conflict and persecution in the pre-displacement context does not necessarily translate into a sense of safety post-displacement among refugees which again is similar to the experiences of Uyghur participants (Stathopoulou et al., 2019).

Pillar 2 – Bonds and Networks

The second pillar of the model suggests that bonds and networks are important to human functioning and the exposure to mass conflict and displacement can lead to the loss of interpersonal bonds and social supports (Silove, 2013). Separation and loss in the refugee experience are multiple and can include loss of family members, loss of property and belongings, and more symbolic losses such as a loss of sense of belonging, connection with the land and cultural traditions (Eisenbruch, 1991; Silove, 1999). The adaptive response at the individual level is grief (in the cultural context of the individual) whilst at the collective level is group mourning and remembrance rituals. The maladaptive response in this pillar is prolonged grief, depression, somatic complaints and comorbid disorders at the individual level whilst at the collective level it is seen as historical dislocation, preoccupation with the past and being incapacitated by losses. In this thesis, findings such as difficulties with interpersonal relationships and experiences of grief following systemic injustice were noted in the systematic review (e.g. Coffey et al., 2010; Tay et al., 2016) and the qualitative study with Uyghurs, providing support for the importance of this pillar. In the systematic review, anger towards injustice (discussed in the third pillar of the ADAPT model) was also associated with difficulties in interpersonal relationships due to fear that anger would negatively impact relationships (Alim et al., 2021).

Specifically for Uyghur participants, the themes around parenting and relationship challenges highlights the disruptions to interpersonal and family relationships related to systemic injustice. This is also closely related to the ADAPT pillar of roles and identities which suggests that exposure to persecution has consequences on family and social roles. Other research with refugee groups has also identified that displacement, exposure to war and mandatory detention was linked to challenges with parenting capacity (Mares et al., 2002; Sim et al., 2018). This is in line with further research that has shown that experience of extensive trauma impacts an individual's interpersonal and family relationships (Meffert & Marmar, 2009). For example, early research with war veterans found that veterans with PTSD had difficulties with interpersonal relationships, poorer family functioning and were more likely to have children with behavioural issues (Jordan et al., 1992; Kulka et al., 1990; Riggs et al., 1998). Research with refugee groups has also highlighted that displacement and difficulties with resettlement are associated with interpersonal difficulties and conflict between spouses and between parents and children (Meffert & Marmar, 2009; Nickerson et al., 2015; Utrzan & Wieling; 2020). This relates to research which shows that accumulated family stressors are associated with negative wellbeing and difficulty navigating displacement and resettlement (Flanagan et al., 2020; Sangalang & Vang, 2017). Although these findings were not in the context of systemic injustice, they provide an insight into the negative impact of systemic injustice on bonds and networks.

Grief was expressed by participants in the theme around psychological distress which also highlights some of the more symbolic losses that are experienced with systemic injustice. In this thesis, participants grieved the absence of connections with family (such as participants not being able to care for elderly parents and fulfil responsibilities or grieving that their children would never know or meet their grandparents) that they and their children could have experienced if they were not barred from communication due to policies that

perpetuate systemic injustice. There was a difference between the experiences of younger and older adults in that although the younger adults experienced the distress, some felt not as personally impacted as their parents and siblings were with them in Australia whilst for most older adult participants their parents and siblings were living in ET. In early trauma research, loss of social supports and separation from family were found to be important factors that perpetuated psychiatric symptoms of depression and PTSD (Gorst-Unsworth and Goldenberg, 1998; Hauff and Vaglum, 1995).

More recent research into refugee wellbeing has looked into grief related disorders such as complicated grief and prolonged grief disorder (PGD) for people with refugee backgrounds (Boelen & Smid, 2017; Kokou-Kpolou et al., 2020; Maciejewski et al., 2016; Maciejewski & Prigerson, 2017). People with refugee backgrounds or those affected by mass conflict exhibit high levels of disordered grief (Killikelly et al., 2018). In a systematic review of grief-related disorders and mental health outcomes for adult refugees, being of older age and experiencing trauma and multiple deaths of first-degree relatives were the greatest risk factors for PGD and PGD with PTSD (Kokou-Kpolou et al., 2020). Other studies have also found that older adult refugees have higher levels of poor wellbeing, and this is often related to much higher levels of exposure to traumatic events (Craig et al., 2008). Although grief in terms of witnessing death was not specifically explored in interviews with Uyghur participants, reports of grief were mostly from older adults and those who had arrived more recently to Australia. Most of these participants had either deceased relatives or relatives who were imprisoned due to CCP policies. However, it is important to note that experiences of grief and the symptom profiles of grief-related disorders may be influenced by culture, religion, traditions and practices in expressing and dealing with loss and grief (Killikelly et al., 2018; McLellan, 2015).

Symbolic loss was also relevant in the findings around fear for the future for Uyghur participants. The fear for future, safety and loss of cultural identity, similar to those experienced by Uyghur participants in this thesis, was also found in a study of Mandaean refugees (Nickerson et al., 2009) and Sudanese refugees (Khawaja et al., 2008). Fear around loss of cultural identity and disconnection from the homeland may be particularly important in the case of systemic injustice that targets cultural and ethnic identity (i.e., ethnic cleansing, genocide) which is the case for Uyghur people.

Pillar 3 - Justice

The third pillar of justice is informed by the principle that a sense of injustice is a universal response to human rights violations. Silove (2013) suggests sense of injustice can be understood as a psychological construct as opposed to human rights or legal construct. Continuous preoccupation with past injustices has been considered to maintain psychological symptoms following persecution and human rights violations (Silove, 1999; Rees et al., 2013). Anger towards injustice is considered an expected and normative emotional response to injustice (Rees et al., 2013; Silove, 2013). The adaptive response at the individual level is a need for acknowledgement of past suffering and sensitivity to further acts of injustice. At the collective level it can be anger and sensitivity to further injustices as well as advocating for justice.

The systematic review in this thesis clearly demonstrated that a sense of injustice was associated with negative impacts on the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers (Alim et al., 2021). The study by Chase and Rousseau (2018) highlighted the importance of the justice pillar where participants reported a sense of injustice during the asylum process was related to an eroded sense of agency and wellbeing which was further accentuated by the inability to act against injustice. McCallister (2012) found that loss of trust in the justice system and loss

of safety in the pre-migration context led to an ongoing sense of injustice post-migration. Similarly, the pillar of justice is also important in relation to the findings of Uyghur participants as they expressed anger towards injustice, which according to this model is expected and an adaptive response. However, anger towards injustice was seen as having both positive and negative impacts in the systematic review (Alim et al., 2021). In the systematic review, anger was also associated with solidarity with those suffering ongoing systemic injustice. Archer and Mills (2019) suggest that encouraging victims of oppression to let go of their anger after an injustice creates further injustice which Srinivasan (2018) refers to as 'affective injustice'. Encouraging regulating and letting go of anger can be harmful as it can imply ignoring the oppression that was experienced. This has important clinical implications for dealing with anger in cases of systemic injustice as will be covered in Section 6.5.

For Uyghur participants, anger was often directed at the CCP policies that targeted Uyghurs and the CCP was seen as being responsible for the systemic injustices that participants suffered. Feelings of anger was also related to being vulnerable and a sense of helplessness and guilt as participants were unable to take significant action against the injustices or to support their friends and family living in ET. The model highlights that acknowledgement of past injustice is needed at the individual level and this is supported by the earlier discussion of acknowledgement of injustice and apology as a necessary step to restoring justice (Section 6.2).

Early justice research documented anger as the most common emotional response to the perception of justice (Clayton 1992; Keltner et al., 1993; Mikula, 1986; Scher, 1997). Some researchers have suggested that the perception of injustice can lead to anger (Clayton 1992; Mikula, 1986) whilst others suggest that the experience of anger triggers the perception of injustice (Solomon, 1990). Anger is also viewed as legitimising and motivating people to

take action against the perceived injustice as well as garnering support from others (Lind, 2000; Miller, 2001). Chronic anger associated with unresolved injustice has been noted in previous trauma research (Gorst-Unsworth et al., 1993; Ochberg, 1993; Silove, 1999). However, research specifically looking at explosive anger among women exposed to conflict in Timor-Leste found that anger had pervasive negative impacts on health, relationships, parenting and involvement in the community (Rees et al., 2013). Similarly, a longitudinal study of conflict affected individuals in Timor-Leste found that participants experienced prolonged explosive anger which was associated with repeated trauma exposures and an ongoing sense of injustice (Silove et al., 2017). Although these participants were not refugees, previous research combined with the findings of this thesis in relation to anger highlights that anger is an expected response to injustice however ongoing and chronic anger can lead to pervasive negative impacts (Basoglu et al., 2005; Silove et al., 2009; Sonis et al., 2009).

Despite the negative experience of anger, it was also important for Uyghur participants to maintain hope which stemmed from their faith. In early research related to exposure to torture and religious faith, commitment to a political cause and psychological preparedness were found to be protective factors against adverse psychological outcomes (Allden et al., 1996; Basoglu et al., 1996; 1997; Holtz, 1998; Shrestha et al., 1998). Khawaja et al. (2008) also found in a study of Sudanese refugees, reliance on religious beliefs, cognitive reframing, relying on social supports and having future-oriented goals and aspirations were important coping strategies. Support from religious faith was also noted in a study of refugees resettled in Germany (Schlechter et al., 2021). Another way in which participants dealt with injustice was through advocacy and activism which is a proposed adaptive response to injustice according to the ADAPT model. This will be discussed in the

next pillar of roles and identities as it also fits with these findings and as noted earlier, the ADAPT pillars are considered related and interdependent.

Pillar 4 – Roles and Identities

The fourth pillar of roles and identities is informed by the principle that changes in roles and identities is inevitable after exposure to mass conflict and displacement, especially given the challenge of being in prolonged unstable conditions (e.g., prolonged statelessness, confinement in refugee camps or detention centres, living in environments that are hostile towards asylum seekers) (Silove, 2013). In addition, there is the added challenge of establishing meaningful roles in the resettlement context (e.g., finding employment, facing discrimination). At the individual level, the adaptive response is to develop new or hybrid identities that support acculturation in the resettlement context and at the collective level it is adapting to new cultures whilst preserving traditional values and culture. The maladaptive response at the individual level is marginalisation, withdrawal from society, depression and other psychological disorders and at the collective level it is the clash of cultural norms, marginalisation and intergenerational conflict.

The acculturation and integration of participants was not a focus of this thesis, however changes to identity was a key finding in relation to the wellbeing of Uyghur participants. This change was primarily associated with the perceptions of justice after resettlement in Australia. Participants were able to reflect on their experiences in ET and recognise the injustices that they had faced. More specifically, these changes were related to increased agency after resettlement and engagement with advocacy for Uyghur rights. Participants reported that the freedom to practice religion and culture, choose their careers and exercise their rights (things that were all restricted in ET) after resettlement in Australia provided a sense of agency and control which contributed positively to wellbeing.

Justice research has previously established that injustice violates an individual's belief in a safe and just world, their personal autonomy and their identity (Bandura, 1995; Cassiman, 2006). Health research has also identified that control is an important factor in the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) (Syme, 1998; Tsey et al., 2003; Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003). Uyghur participants in this thesis noted that their experiences in Australia helped to restore some belief that justice existed in the world. The importance of having a sense of agency and control for people with refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds was also highlighted in the systematic review which found that experiences of injustice often violated or eroded agency and control (Alim et al., 2021). The inability to take action against injustice and the uncertainty of resettlement (especially fears around repatriation) deprived participants of agency and control over their lives (e.g., Chase & Rousseau, 2018; McCallister, 2012). This supports other research, such as the study by Basoglu et al. (2005), which found that loss of control was strongly associated with negative mental health outcomes among war survivors (N = 1,358). In this thesis, it was found that restoring agency and control was a positive pathway to restoring wellbeing even though it did not restore justice. Examples of such pathways included advocacy and support navigating health, immigration and social services (Chase & Rousseau, 2018) and opportunities for employment and education (Mura, 2015). Kira et al., (2006) also found that restoring a sense of agency and control was a positive contributor to wellbeing as it led to investment in future-oriented goals.

The majority of Uyghur participants were also engaged in some form of advocacy and activism, which had both positive and negative impacts on wellbeing. Participants reported a sense of responsibility to take action and be a voice for the voiceless in ET. Relatedly, engaging in activism was associated with positive effects on wellbeing among other refugee and migrant groups (Edstrom & Dolan, 2019; Lee, 2018; Walther et al., 2021). Specifically, Edstrom and Dolan (2019) found that engaging in activism was both healing and empowering

for their participants who were refugee male survivors of sexual violence. Walther and colleagues (2021) also found that engaging in activism and refugee causes helped promote a sense of agency, meaning and connection among migrant participants. Activism has been viewed in other previous research as a coping mechanism as it helps provide meaning and purpose in the face of suffering as well as building agency as it avoids the role of victim (Lavie-Ajayi & Slonim-Nevo., 2017; Vollhardt, 2009).

An interesting finding in relation to identity among Uyghur participants was the difference between younger and older adults. The younger adult participants noted a unique difference in their experience of identity growing up as an Uyghur in Australia. Due to lack of awareness in the Australian context regarding the injustices faced by Uyghurs, these participants faced difficulties in explaining their ethnic identity as Uyghurs. Furthermore, they could not explain or separate their identity as Uyghurs from the collective suffering and systemic injustice faced by Uyghurs.

Pillar 5 – Existential Meaning

The final and fifth pillar of existential meaning is informed by the principle that world views and belief systems are challenged and disrupted by conflict and displacement and all individuals need to re-appraise or even revise their world views and belief systems (Silove, 2013). The adaptive response at the individual level is to revise, renew or confirm beliefs and values and find new avenues for expression. At the collective level, it is re-establishing institutions and practices that provide meaning whether it is religious, spiritual, political or cultural. However, the maladaptive response at the individual level is alienation and isolation that can lead to depression and suicidality and at the collective level; it is a loss of a meaningful narrative and guiding principles.

As mentioned in the other pillars, Uyghur participants reported changes in understandings of justice after resettling in Australia (e.g., belief that justice existed, recognising past experiences as injustice). Furthermore, faith, religious beliefs (e.g., belief in divine justice) and engaging in advocacy and activism for Uyghur rights were different ways of coping with systemic injustice. Perhaps, it is the meaning making of systemic injustices suffered that allows individuals to continue to move forward in their lives. Again, much of these findings in relation to the pillar of existential meaning have been discussed above, highlighting the interdependency and connectedness of all the pillars in this model.

Summary of ADAPT Pillars

The five pillars of the ADAPT model reviewed above in relation to the findings of this program of research highlights the pervasive impact that systemic injustice has on wellbeing for people with refugee backgrounds and more specifically for Uyghur participants. The impacts are not always clearly negative (as was seen in the complexity around anger at injustice), however the impacts occur at the individual and collective levels. The ADAPT model has several underlying principles, particularly salient of these is the principle that posttraumatic growth or adaptation and maladaptive responses are not mutually exclusive (Silove, 2013). The process from trauma to PTSD or psychopathology is not linear and fixed and there is room for positive adaptation. The boundary between normative and maladaptive psychological responses is fluid and also varies across time, culture and context. This is particularly evident in relation to the findings around anger and injustice. Feelings of anger stemming from injustice was related to distress among participants as well as negatively impacting interpersonal relationships leading to further isolation and poor mental health. On the other hand, maintaining anger towards injustice was viewed as important to wellbeing as it displayed solidarity with those facing ongoing injustice. Taken together, this program of research lends support to the use of the ADAPT model more widely in

understanding refugee wellbeing as well as a research framework in studying people with refugee backgrounds exposed to systemic injustice.

6.4 Implications for Theory

This thesis has several contributions to research and theory in justice and refugee wellbeing. This thesis intended to firstly understand how systemic injustice impacts understandings of justice and secondly, to understand how systemic injustice impacts wellbeing for refugees – and more specifically for Uyghur people in Australia. The findings of this thesis have highlighted several key themes in relation to understanding justice such as human rights, barriers to justice such as power imbalances, failures of legal systems as well as mistrust as was discussed in Section 6.2. In relation to wellbeing, key findings highlighted the psychological distress associated with systemic injustice, negative impacts to relationships and identity, compromised agency and control as outlined in Section 6.3. Overall, these findings indicate broader implications for how justice is studied with refugees and the utility of the systemic injustice conceptualisation.

In Chapter 1, systemic injustice was conceptualised as the denial or absence of distributive and procedural justice. Distributive justice is concerned with the fair distribution and allocation of rights, conditions and resources which affect individual and group wellbeing whilst procedural justice is concerned with fairness of procedures and decision-making processes (Deutsch, 1975; Vermunt & Steensma, 2016). The findings of this thesis clearly show that for refugees, and more specifically Uyghur participants, there is a lack of both distributive and procedural justice. Participants could not access their human rights and faced unequal treatment across resettlement contexts. Participants also expressed a sense of injustice at the unfair application of laws and processes (e.g., applying for asylum) which themselves were seen as unjust. An important principle in procedural and distributive justice

is voice, the ability to have a say in decisions and processes that concern them (Baldwin, 2006). In the case of systemic injustice, it was conceptualised that victims often have no voice and moreover utilising their voice is often a threat to their safety. Furthermore, procedural justice incorporates consistent application of procedures without bias and the opportunity to appeal and correct injustices (Vermunt & Steensma, 2016). Again, for participants in this thesis, the barriers to accessing justice for participants highlighted the lack of voice and the repercussions (e.g., fear for safety, retribution from authorities) they faced if they were to exercise their voice in matters that significantly impacted them. McCullough et al. (2003) suggests that large scale injustices may be too difficult for people to forebear due to the significant impact it has on the person's life. This was again the case for the refugee, asylum seeker and migrant participants throughout this thesis. Systemic injustices were associated with a range of negative impacts on wellbeing that impacted all domains of life (individual, interpersonal, collective).

As such, the conceptualisation of systemic injustice provides a starting point for understanding the extensiveness of injustice experienced by people with refugee backgrounds. What it has clearly underlined is that matters of justice are important for people with refugee, asylum seeker and migrant backgrounds. Incorporating understandings of justice and the voices of these marginalised groups in justice processes is a necessary step to improving conditions for forcibly displaced and persecuted groups around the world. Consequently, this definition of systemic injustice could also be applied to other vulnerable groups such as stateless peoples and those affected by systemic injustice within the countries in which they are living. There are of course differences in these groups (such as uncertainty of resettlement outcomes, displacement) and these differences and their impact on perceptions of justice should also be considered.

Previous justice research and theory has highlighted culture as an important factor in justice perceptions and justice related behaviours. This was apparent in much of the organisational justice research around cultural dimensions (e.g., power distance, collectivism-individualism) (Brockner et al., 2001; Erdogan & Liden, 2006; Farh et al., 1997; Fischer & Smith, 2006) as discussed in Chapter 1. Cultural differences can influence perceptions of justice and responses and behaviours towards perceived injustice. In this thesis there were some findings that indicated culture influences perceptions of justice (Pavlish & Ho, 2009) and justice processes (Holzer, 213; Liebling et al., 2020). Cultural ideas were sometimes seen as barriers to human rights and at times cultural justice practices were preferred to resolve injustice. As for the Uyghur participants in this thesis, it was difficult to discern the role of culture in terms of teasing apart whether understandings of justice were due to systemic injustice alone or whether cultural beliefs, norms and practices have a role. However, based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions (1980) and other research with Asian cultures (e.g., Shulruf et al., 2011; Smith et al., 1998), it would be reasonable to consider the Uyghur culture as being more collectivist than individualistic with higher power distance in hierarchies between individuals and authority figures. In relation to other collectivist cultures, higher power distance has been associated with respecting, showing deference to, and trusting the leadership of authority figures and less likelihood of conflict with authority figures in the case of perceived injustice (Kirkman et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2000; Yang et al., 2007). Again, these findings are mainly drawn from organisational justice research and there is more research required to investigate if the effects of cultural dimensions such as collectivism and power distance still hold in the case of systemic injustice.

Further to understanding justice, this thesis contributes to theory around restoring justice. As was previously reviewed, individuals are motivated to take action to restore justice after perceived injustice (Lerner, 1980). Responding to injustice can occur at the

intrapersonal, interpersonal, and societal levels (Worthington, 2001). In addition, these processes can be built of restorative or retributive justice principles (Wenzel & Okimoto, 2016; Worthington, 2001). The systematic review did not highlight specific pathways to restoring justice as the focus of study selection was on understanding justice and the impact of systemic injustice. However, this thesis does contribute to understanding the justice preferences of Uyghur people and these preferences were predominantly restorative. Participants did not express desire for punishing the CCP or Chinese government, rather they desired acknowledgement of injustice sincere apology and the steps that would allow Uyghur people the right to their land, safety, agency, and self-determination. These processes tend to be more reflective of restorative justice processes, however this may not be the case for all groups who have experienced systemic injustice. In addition, victims of systemic injustice may desire both restorative and retributive justice processes such as in the study of Yazidi women where participants' concern for restoring justice included safety, family reunification, truth telling and acknowledgement of injustice as well as criminal prosecution of offenders (Pham et al., 2019). Other research with groups who have faced systemic injustice have shown a preference for retributive justice processes such as the case of the Argentinian and Chilean people in response to oppressive regimes (Robben, 2010). In both these cases, restorative processes such as truth commissions were established, however research with these groups suggest these processes did not restore a sense of justice as intended (Grandin, 2005; Robben, 2010). Essentially, there is no single best or correct response to restoring justice in the aftermath of systemic injustice and the context, culture and voices of victims need to be considered together.

A final key implication of this program of research for broader theory is that of the inclusion of (in)justice as a Social Determinant of Health (SDoH). The SDoH framework was employed in the development of this thesis as a guiding framework to understanding refugee

wellbeing. This framework is underpinned by distributive justice principles – including health equity (Braveman et al., 2011). Here, health equity and inequity are considered socially produced outcomes due to systematic and social processes that impact the distribution of resources (Whitehead, 1991). The conceptualisation of systemic injustice fits with the underlying principles of SDoH in that systemic injustice is the denial or absence of procedural and distributive justice that impacts the wellbeing of victims. Systemic injustice can also be seen as a social and political factor that impacts the wellbeing of individuals and communities as seen with the participants in this thesis. For example, in relation to refugee wellbeing, this thesis found that systemic injustice impacts a sense of agency and control for participants (such as in the case of asylum seeking process) and in some cases restoration of agency and control had positive outcomes for wellbeing (e.g., education and awareness around rights and support navigating services) (Chase & Rosseau 2018; Mura, 2015). Agency and control have previously been considered SDoH factors as has visa status and the asylum-seeking process, which both have important implications for wellbeing (Hynie, 2018; Syme, 1998). The findings of this thesis add to this conceptualisation to suggest that inclusion of injustice as a SDoH would go even further towards explaining wellbeing outcomes for refugee groups.

6.5 Implications for Practice

This program of research was designed and conducted with a clinical focus in mind and as such it contributes to research providing guidance on working with refugee groups and those impacted by systemic injustices - and more specifically in working with Uyghur people. This is particularly important given the absence of research on Uyghur wellbeing in the literature, the ongoing nature of systemic injustices in ET and the number of Uyghurs resettled in the diaspora (and more specifically in Australia). This section will cover current

best practices and evidence-based treatments for people with refugee backgrounds and then discuss the specific contributions of this program of research to existing guidelines.

In a systematic review of best practice in providing community-based healthcare to people with migrant and refugee backgrounds, Riza et al. (2020) identified several key elements in the delivery of successful interventions. Some of these relevant to mental health care included working collaboratively with members of the target communities (Bhattacharyya & Benbow, 2013; Hamilton et al., 2014), using culturally and linguistically sensitive methods (Fondacaro & Harder, 2014; Hamilton et al., 2014; Khawaja & Stein, 2016 Weine, 2011), advocacy (Goodkind et al., 2014), education of service providers on the needs of the target community (Nadeau & Measham, 2005; Williams & Thompson, 2011) and establishing a sense of trust, belonging and community (Im & Rosenberg, 2016; Nadeau et al., 2017; Sijbrandij et al., 2017). In another systematic review looking specifically at interventions for managing psychological distress in refugee populations, narrative exposure therapy was found to be most effective (Tribe et al., 2019). Efficacy was determined through changes in PTSD symptoms. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) had less supporting evidence. Most studies on interventions with refugee groups employ CBT which indicates the focus on a trauma and western model of wellbeing (Campbell, 2007; Murray et al., 2010; Nicholl & Thompson, 2004). Overall, although there is research to indicate some utility in these treatment modalities, there is a clear gap in culturally adapted treatments for refugee groups and a significant need to develop such interventions (Murray et al., 2010; Tribe et al., 2019).

Researchers have also recommended moving towards psychosocial models or multimodal interventions to promote positive wellbeing and restore a sense of safety, security and trust among refugee groups (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006; Morris & Silove, 1992; Papadopoulos, 2007). These modes of treatment usually incorporate support in the

resettlement process (e.g., advocacy, assistance with housing and employment, access to services, language support) in addition to psychological interventions which can be delivered at the individual, family or community level (Nickerson et al., 2011). Unfortunately, there are very few studies that have evaluated the efficacy of multimodal interventions, and these may be due in part to difficulty of delivering such interventions (Nickerson et al., 2011). In light of the findings of this thesis, multimodal interventions may support a sense of increased control and agency which is associated with positive impacts on wellbeing.

Murray and colleagues (2008) prepared a report for the Australian Psychological Society which includes a section on guidelines for psychologists working with refugees. They also make similar recommendations for using culturally adapted measures in assessments and interventions wherever possible. Furthermore, they suggest that the first priority for assisting refugees should be to establish stability, safety, trust and a sense of control over their lives (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006; Murray et al., 2008). Phoenix Australia (2021) also offers guidelines for the prevention and treatment of PTSD which includes a chapter on working with refugees and asylum seekers. These guidelines are endorsed by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, and the Australian Psychological Society. The guidelines suggest working beyond the assessment of trauma and PTSD and addressing other forms of distress that refugees may face including chronic anxiety, fear, helplessness, anger, guilt and shame surrounding the experiences of traumatic events. In addition, disruptions to family relationships, isolation, grief and separation should also be addressed. Importantly and related to the findings of this thesis, the guide suggests that values and beliefs around human existence, experience of suffering and injustice should be considered as it can be associated with mistrust, sensitivity to injustice and devaluing of others. The Phoenix Australia guidelines also provide a comprehensive

framework for assessing refugee wellbeing which details issues of salience across different stages of resettlement.

In line with the previous discussion of trauma models (Chapter 1), Western models of trauma and diagnosis of PTSD have been criticised for its application to other diverse cultures and societies, as it does not fully capture the complex psychological responses that arise from mass human rights violations (Hollifield et al., 2002; Nickerson et al., 2011; Silove, 1999). This is evident in research conducted with survivors of the Holocaust (Krell, 1997). Furthermore, studies of PTSD among refugees have shown variable rates (Bogic et al., 2015; Fazel et al., 2005; Henkelmann et al., 2020). Others have suggested that PTSD symptoms are not the priority concern for refugees who have other difficulties such as grief, anger over past injustices and the multiple challenges associated with resettlement (Kinzie, 1989; Van der Veer, 1998). This suggests that refugee wellbeing needs a broader framework, which does not just focus on trauma and PTSD but also considers wider, systemic factors such as culture, religion, perceptions of justice, extent of impact of injustice, and involvement in community. The ADAPT model (Silove, 2013) could be a framework that addresses this, and its relevance to this program of research was highlighted in Section 6.3. As a research framework, the ADAPT model provides different but interconnected pillars that may be impacted or compromised due to experiences of systemic injustice. These pillars reflect the different ways in which wellbeing is impacted for both individuals and communities.

The ADAPT model may be a useful tool for practitioners as it provides a framework for taking action to support the needs of individuals and groups that have been impacted by systemic injustice, whether it is at a policy making level or in the planning and delivery of psychosocial programmes and therapeutic interventions (Silove, 2013). In each of the five pillars (safety/security, bonds/networks, justice, roles and identities, existential meaning) Silove has suggested ‘psychosocial responses’ and ‘clinical principles’ that can be applied to

support functioning in relation to each of the pillars. For example, in response to the violation of a sense of safety and security, therapeutic interventions should aim to restore and maintain a sense of security and safety in all interventions. In terms of the violation of the justice pillar, clinicians can explicitly recognise the injustices that clients have faced and validate feelings of anger. In relation to changing roles and identities due to mass conflict and displacement, clinicians can support role transitions and the development of new or 'hybrid' identities whilst valuing and making room for traditions and culture.

In addition to previous research on guidelines and best practices, the findings of this thesis also add to ways in which clinical work can be better tailored to the needs of refugees who have specifically experienced systemic injustice. Firstly, individuals who have experienced systemic injustice may present with distress, anger, guilt, worry, helplessness, difficulties with emotional regulation and managing relationships. Clinicians should explore where these emotions and challenges stem from and consider possible exposure to injustice, conflict or persecution in country of origin and the social supports present in the client's life (i.e., are family members resettled with them or separated by ongoing injustice). Clinicians should be mindful of managing feelings of anger and the extent to which it impacts the individual and their wider system. Anger can be positive to wellbeing as it is an adaptive and expected response to injustice, it serves as solidarity with those facing ongoing injustice and an effort to not forget that injustice occurred. Anger can also be negative to wellbeing if it is leading to angry outbursts, damaging family and social relationships, and leading to isolation. Therefore, it is important to understand that anger can serve different roles and is not necessarily something negative that needs to be targeted in therapy or encouraged to let go of by clients as this may be implied as ignoring or minimising the injustices that occurred.

Additionally, in clinical settings it is important to use culturally sensitive methods in service provision as well as in aiding resettlement and engagement with legal services as

researchers have suggested (Murray et al., 2010; Tribe et al., 2019). The findings of this thesis have indicated that people with refugee backgrounds who have experienced systemic injustice may respond more favourably to processes that are local and culturally informed, as such it is important to incorporate cultural understandings of justice as it can highlight what aspects of justice are significant and where there are potential barriers (Holzer, 2013; Kate et al., 2019; Liebling et al., 2020; Pavlish & Ho, 2009; Vancluysen & Ingelaere, 2020).

In this thesis, justice was also understood as a balance in power as injustice was associated with creating a power imbalance between perpetrators and victims (Alim et al., 2021). This finding may also be important in the clinical setting as managing power is important to delivering therapeutic interventions (Atiyeh & Gray, 2022; Harrison, 2013). It is well known that there exists a power imbalance between practitioner and client, considering the former is considered the professional and expert whilst the latter is in a position of vulnerability whilst they seek support for their needs (Harrison, 2013). This power imbalance may be a barrier for developing rapport and building trust and engagement with clients. It is essential that practitioners are aware of the power imbalance that exists and utilise methods to minimise the effects of this, although it cannot be overcome altogether. This is especially important when working with individuals or groups with refugee backgrounds and experiences of systemic injustice, as power imbalances are associated with injustice, barriers to accessing services and mistrust of people in positions of authority (e.g., Alim et al., 2019; Nyarko & Punamaki, 2017; Pavlish & Ho, 2009).

Considering the findings that systemic injustice can have significant impacts on relationships, it is integral that clinicians understand that in addition to acculturation difficulties and generational differences in families, experiencing systemic injustice can also add another layer of complexity to family dynamics and relationships. As seen in the qualitative studies, systemic injustice can make parenting difficult as parents manage their

own distress around systemic injustice whilst balancing parenting duties. Participants also struggled with managing the distress of other family members. This suggests that working with people with refugee backgrounds may benefit from a systemic or family focused approach. Other research has suggested that exposure to political violence (which fits with the conceptualisation of systemic injustice in this thesis) led to changes in refugee family dynamics such as changes in roles, responsibilities, relationships, and communication (Weine et al., 2004). Previous research has also shown that family therapies for refugee families had positive outcomes as it allowed for consideration of pre- and post-migration factors, changes to identity in different contexts, and culture (Gangamma & Shipman, 2018; Karageorge et al., 2018). Again, as with much of the research related to interventions and treatments with refugee groups, there is a shortage of studies that have reviewed the efficacy of family therapies for this group (Slobodin & de Jong, 2015).

Both researchers and clinicians should also consider their role in advocacy for the communities in which they work. The research can be applied to advocate for rights, change policies, inform clinical treatments, and service provision (Silove et al., 2017). Advocacy can also include not working in conditions that negatively impact the wellbeing of refugees and working to remove barriers to ensure equitable access to care and support services for refugee groups (Fazel & Silove, 2006; Kelaher & Manderson, 2000). The advocacy that clients and participants themselves may be engaged in should be supported as it can contribute positively to their wellbeing and their connectedness to their homeland and those who are still facing ongoing injustice as was seen with Uyghur participants in this thesis. At the same time, activism can be emotionally taxing and contribute to negative effects on wellbeing which clinicians should be mindful of. Furthermore, both researchers and clinicians can work towards supporting and increasing agency and control (as this was found to be an important factor of wellbeing) through education and raising awareness about rights, educational

opportunities, employment opportunities in addition to support navigating the many systems in countries of resettlement (e.g., legal, health).

Overall, when working with refugees who have experienced systemic injustice and Uyghurs, it is important to understand that the impacts of systemic injustice on wellbeing are complex and can have pervasive impacts to the individual and their wider system.

6.6 Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

Using a qualitative methodology and using interviews as the primary method of data collection are considered strengths of this body of research as it allowed for a nuanced exploration of the research questions. Furthermore, with the candidate being a member of the Uyghur community, insider knowledge of the culture and language meant that interviews could be conducted in both English and the Uyghur language, thus allowing participants to express themselves freely in both languages. Without this, or with using interpreters, recruitment would have been limited and would have likely introduced challenges with data analysis (e.g., translating interviews and transcribing). Furthermore, the candidate being a 'cultural insider' helped in building rapport with participants. Nonetheless, it is also acknowledged that although the recruitment process was a strength of this thesis, digital literacy may have limited access to older participants. Towards the end of data collection, due to covid-19 restrictions, some interviews were conducted online through ZOOM. All these interviews were of younger adult participants which may indicate that digital literacy played a role in research access during this period, which has been noted by other researchers as a barrier to accessing older adults (Schreurs et al., 2017).

In terms of limitations, the systematic review findings (Chapter 3) were limited by the small number of studies that had a wide range of research designs. This was a limitation as it was difficult to make comparisons between studies as measures (for wellbeing, PTSD, mental

illness) varied across studies. In addition, there were even fewer studies on asylum seekers making it difficult to identify differences in the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers and this led to the decision to focus on refugees in the qualitative studies. Furthermore, this is an indication for the need to conduct further research into refugee and asylum seeker experiences of systemic injustice and wellbeing that delineates the impact of resettlement (as a refugee) versus uncertainty (as is the case for asylum seekers).

A key challenge with conducting this program of research was deciding on definitions and the focus group for study. There are ongoing issues of definitions around who is a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant which was grappled with in terms of designing this research, recruitment and conducting the analysis. Although there are definitional differences between these categories, it becomes blurred in reality as not all people who would meet the definition for refugee are able to apply for asylum or migrate through humanitarian resettlement programs. Often times, such people may use different travel pathways that would categorise them as migrants as is the case for Uyghur people who often use marital, study or tourism pathways to migrate. Furthermore, although there are differences between these groups, there are also some shared experiences and within individuals they may identify with different groups during different stages of their migration and resettlement. Also, as this thesis was developed and refined, the focus was narrowed from refugees and asylum seekers to refugees only. Later in the qualitative studies, the challenge of definitions presented again when some participants identified as refugees and others identified as migrants. It is necessary to acknowledge that identity is complex and changing and the messiness of trying to fit individuals into labels and categories reflects the real world where individuals do not neatly fit into singular categories. For the purposes of future research, it may be useful to work towards a set of guidelines for identifying different groups in research.

Sample characteristics may have also limited this body of research – particularly in relation to selection bias whereby a range of factors (e.g, knowing the researcher, assumed trust towards the researcher or generally valuing justice more greatly) may have impacted who chose to participate. In particular, this may reflect why all participants in this thesis were involved in activism and advocacy for rights and justice. As such, future research could consider inclusion of others working with refugee groups, such as service providers, to provide some triangulation across participant samples.

Another characteristic of the overall sample that may have influenced the findings of this thesis is the length of resettlement among participants. The participants in the qualitative studies varied significantly in the years of resettlement in Australia, from two to 38 years. There may be differences in those who are more recently resettled and those who have been settled longer term, in relation to perceptions of justice as well as the impacts of injustice on wellbeing. For example, the experiences of systemic injustice may have differed as participants lived through different times or government restrictions in ET. There may also be differences in acculturation experiences that were not explored. There is a need for further research which explores the differences between those who are newly arrived in the resettlement context as opposed to those who have already been resettled long-term in relation to their experiences of systemic injustice and its impacts.

Although generalisability is not a goal of qualitative research, there are aspects of this body of research that may be applicable to other groups who have faced extensive injustice in their homelands as well as groups who are currently facing ongoing systemic injustice (e.g., the Rohingya people, Palestinians). In terms of relevance to Uyghur people in the diaspora, there may be shared experiences between Uyghur Australians and Uyghurs in other resettlement countries. However, there may be also key differences in resettlement processes, pathways to permanency and opportunities for study and work that would provide a

significantly different experience to Uyghurs resettled elsewhere. For example, our findings specific to Uyghurs living in Australia, may be quite different to Uyghurs in other parts of the world where the asylum process or permanency is much lengthier or difficult to obtain. Moreover, Uyghurs in the diaspora are located across the United States, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan some European countries (Bonnenfant, 2018). Although these differences may not impact the situation of injustice in ET, they can have significant impact on wellbeing in resettlement (e.g., having a career, opportunity for education, having rights agency and control in resettlement context) which may impact how they are able to manage the impacts of ongoing systemic injustice. On the other hand, the understandings of justice found in this thesis may not reflect experiences of refugees who have not experienced such sustained persecution, such as refugees fleeing poverty or war more generally (Allsopp et al., 2014; Flegar, 2016).

One area for future research is the role of visa status on the perceptions of justice as well as the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing. The visa or citizenship status of participants in this body of research may be a key factor that impacted the findings most particpants were permanent residents or citizens of Australia. The perceptions of justice and the impacts of injustice on wellbeing may have been different if the majority of participants were on temporary visas. The uncertainty of the asylum-seeking process and the specific policies (which are largely punitive) in the Australian context may have been associated with further negative impacts on wellbeing.

The role of culture is another avenue for further research. As mentioned earlier in Section 6.4, culture may influence justice perceptions and pathways to restoring justice that are important to people with refugee backgrounds. However, in this thesis, the systematic review was limited by the few studies that mentioned culture in relation to justice and for the qualitative studies, the interviews did not focus on exploring the role of culture specifically.

Further cross-cultural studies that explore understandings of justice among those who have experienced systemic injustice may provide some answers. Future research could explore what aspects of justice are influenced by culture and what aspects might be shared experiences of exposure to systemic injustice, displacement, and the refugee journey. This would help delineate the extent to which culture is an important factor in understanding and restoring justice especially for those with refugee backgrounds. Similarly, cross-cultural considerations of wellbeing could have strengthened this thesis. Exploring participant understandings of wellbeing and their ways of defining wellbeing would have provided greater insights into how wellbeing is understood for the Ughur participants and how wellbeing is impacted.

Also, differences between younger and older adults in their experiences of injustice, their perceptions of justice and their suggestions for how to restore justice were noted, however these differences were not explored further. There was some indication to suggest that younger adults expressed different views (e.g., speaking about the history of Indigenous Australians, suggesting global awareness and education about Uyghurs, using language around trauma) to older adults due to the context in which they were raised. Younger adults had lived most of their lives in Australia or had been born in Australia and would have completed their education in the Australian schooling system. These factors may have contributed to the differences, however as they were not the focus of analysis it is difficult to make further claims. New research could explore justice perceptions intergenerationally and identify whether there are notable patterns of difference between generations and the effect of sociocultural context.

This thesis has provided important insights into how justice is understood and the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing. However, this thesis did not explicitly explore how victims of systemic injustice cope or deal with the ongoing impacts of injustice although faith

and hope were highlighted in findings. As such, the role of faith and religious beliefs as a coping strategy to deal with injustices would be another valuable direction for future research. Some research among trauma survivors, conflict affected groups and refugees has shown that faith, spirituality, and religion are used as coping strategies with positive impacts for wellbeing (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013; Khawaja et al., 2008; Lusk et al., 2021). another means to dealing with injustice could be forgiveness. Forgiveness has been considered as a potential response to injustice and only few studies have explored this with refugee groups (e.g., Alim et al., 2019; Nyarko & Punamaki, 2017). There are however tensions in the consideration of forgiveness for systemic injustice in that it may be perceived as inappropriate for large scale injustices or would represent forgetting the injustices or giving up the stand for justice. Nonetheless, this would be a novel area of research and warrants further investigation, perhaps shedding some light on whether or not forgiveness could be a positive contributor to wellbeing after exposure to systemic injustice.

6.7 Reflexivity

Thus far in this chapter an effort has been made to maintain third person and a professional voice, however for this section on reflexivity, I will write in first person as I reflect on the development and completion of this thesis. I will also discuss how conducting this research has affected me and how I have managed my identity as an Uyghur Australian, researcher, student and a member of the community in which I conducted this body of research. As noted in Chapter 2 Section 2.7, reflexivity is an important aspect of conducting qualitative research. As Berger (2015) explains, researchers need to 'better understand the role of the self in the creation of knowledge' in addition to reflecting on the impact of beliefs, biases and personal experiences on the research. Researchers also need to identify the similarities or differences between themselves and the participants (Berger, 2015; Teh & Lek, 2018).

I identify as an insider within the Uyghur Australian community. I acknowledge that being an insider has allowed me to directly advertise my research, recruit participants and have the language and cultural awareness that provided an advantage in conducting interviews. I knew from the initial design of my research and selecting the cultural group to focus my qualitative studies, that the decision to focus on the experiences of Uyghur people was important and meaningful to me as I would be conducting the research as a member of the group with firsthand experience. It became more so important upon finding that much of the research related to Uyghur people was conducted from an outsider perspective often construing the Uyghur situation from a political lens. This led to the desire to represent the voices of Uyghur people in research and report their experiences directly from their perspective.

Another aspect of my identity and training in this program of research that impacted the research process was training as a psychologist. Whilst I am not yet a fully qualified and registered practitioner, the coursework and clinical placements required in this program allowed me to develop interviewing skills and confidence talking about sensitive and difficult subjects, which were beneficial to data collection. On the other hand, working in different areas such as with trauma survivors doing group therapy or with migrant families in family therapy during clinical placements was difficult as I noticed patterns and similarities in the Uyghur community. I could see the ongoing impact of intergenerational trauma amongst clients, and it was disheartening to think that trauma is difficult and challenging on its own for individuals and families without the added layer of ongoing systemic injustice. I also reflected on the importance of becoming a registered psychologist and working towards bridging the gap in services for Uyghur people. Although ethically I cannot work directly with my community providing therapeutic services, I hope to benefit my community through education and awareness about wellbeing, managing distress and relationships and through

informing other service providers and practitioners on ways to serve the Uyghur community and other communities impacted by systemic injustice.

My clinical training has also helped me to recognise and manage my own distress, especially in the stages of data collection and data analysis. Maintaining a reflexive journal was also a crucial part of this process as it allowed me to reflect on my thoughts and emotions and recognise when I was feeling overwhelmed. It was necessary to take breaks away from the analysis and have frequent meetings with my supervisors. Outside of my role as a student researcher, I was also involved in ongoing advocacy work in the Uyghur community which much like the participants included attending protests, speaking to journalists, signing petitions, and sharing news about Uyghurs on social media platforms.

As much as it is important for me to complete my thesis and hopefully publish all my studies, I am also aware that it is important for my community to also see this research completed. Over the course of my studies, I have received a myriad of questions about the progress of my research and studies, when would people be able to read about the research, when would I receive my PhD. The words of support and encouragement from my community served as a reminder that this was not simply an individual achievement but also an achievement for the Uyghur community, especially here in Australia.

Writing this thesis and coming to the end of the discussion reminds me that over the course of my study, the condition of my people has gradually deteriorated. As I summarise my findings, I remember that these are not simply participant experiences that I am reporting for the sake of research, these are real experiences that are ongoing and my experiences and my reality. Ongoing…inescapable...the words of participants echo my own thoughts and the anger…guilt…helplessness mirrors my own emotions. This thesis is coming to an end, however there is no end in sight yet for the injustices faced by Uyghur people. Nonetheless, I

am still hopeful that this thesis and the publications in academic journals will lead to an awareness in the academic and research world about the plight of the Uyghur people. I hope that it also serves as evidence of the existence of the Uyghurs, our struggles, and our hopes for justice.

6.8 References

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Appendix A. Interview Guide

Basic Demographics (age, visa status etc.)

How did you arrive in Australia? How long have you been here?

Have you experienced mandatory detention?

Do you identify as a refugee or migrant? Why?

What does justice mean to you?

Do you think your experiences as a refugee/migrant have contributed to your understandings of justice in general?

Do you think justice is important to people who have been refugees?

Has justice been done in relation to any of your experiences? How does this affect your wellbeing?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about wellbeing for refugees?

Appendix B. Participant Information

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: Injustice and wellbeing: Interviews with refugees from East Turkistan
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2017-122
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Clemence Due
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Mastura Alim
STUDENT'S DEGREE: PhD/ Masters of Psychology (Clinical)

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

The project is about refugees experiences of injustice and its impact on wellbeing among refugees. We would like to ask you to do an interview with us which will take around 1 hour. As part of the interview, we would like to talk about what you think of injustice, whether it is important to you, and if you think injustice is related to wellbeing.

Who is undertaking the project?
This project is being conducted by Dr Clemence Due, Dr Peter Strelan and Mastura Alim, both of whom will be conducting the interviews. This research will form the basis for a PhD in Psychology at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of Dr Clemence Due and Dr Peter Strelan.

Who is being invited to participate?
You are being invited to participate if you:

- Have a refugee background and are from East Turkistan
- Over the age of 18
- Can speak enough English to do the interview in English
- Have been in Australia for more than 1 year

What will I be asked to do?
You will be asked to participate in an interview which will take about 1 hour. We can conduct the interview either face to face or over the phone, whichever you would prefer. If you would like to meet for the interview, we can come to a location convenient for you, such as a park or café, or do the interview in an office at the University of Adelaide. You do not have to answer questions if you do not want to.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?
We recognize that you may feel upset when you talk about some of your experiences. In order to try and help, you will be provided with a list of the contact details of organizations

that can provide some support. We will also offer to call you two days after the interview to see how you are going.

What are the benefits of the research project?
While there are no other direct benefits to you in participating we hope that the research findings will increase understandings of the wellbeing of people with refugee backgrounds.

Can I withdraw from the project?
Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time. We can withdraw your data anytime up until submission of Mastura's thesis.

What will happen to my information?
The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher into a written interview. We will not use your name in the written interview and publications will not contain any information that could identify you in any way. You will be able to read your interview transcript and request changes if you would like to. Only the researchers will have access to the data obtained in the project, and data will be stored for 7 years on a password protected computer and then deleted. If you are interested in the results of the project, we can send you a copy of the results. The findings may be included in a journal paper.

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?
The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2017-122). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. Contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on phone +61 8 8313 6028 or by email to hrec@adelaide.edu.au. if you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant. Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I have questions or want to participate, what do I do?
If you are interested in participating, please contact Mastura (mastura.alim@adelaide.edu.au) or Clemence (clemence.due@adelaide.edu.au or 8313 6096) to ask questions or organize a time for an interview.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Clemence Due
Clemence.due@adelaide.edu.au
8313 6096

Mastura Alim
mastura.alim@adelaide.edu.au

Dr Peter Strelan
peter.strelan@adelaide.edu.au

Support organisations that may be able to assist you if you experience any distress during the "Exploring the perceptions of forgiveness, injustice and wellbeing among refugees" **project**

1. Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS)

   The Migrant Health Service can help with mental health needs in person.
   Phone: 8206 8900
   Address: 81 Angas Street Adelaide

2. Migrant Health Service

   The Migrant Health Service can help with mental health needs in person.
   Phone: 8237 3900
   Address: 21 Market Street Adelaide

3. Lifeline

   Lifeline is a telephone support service, so you can talk with someone on the telephone if you are feeling distressed or upset.
   Phone: 13 11 14
   Website: https://www.lifeline.org.au/

   If you feel more comfortable speaking in another language, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to call Lifeline for you on 13 11 14.

4. Assistance and Crisis Intervention Service

   The assessment and crisis intervention service can help in a mental health emergency.
   Phone: 13 14 65

CONSENT FORM

1. I have read the attached Information Sheet and agree to take part in the following research project:

Title:	**Injustice and Wellbeing: Interviews with refugees**
Ethics Approval Number:	**H-2017-122**

2. I have had the project fully explained to my satisfaction by the research worker. My consent is given freely.

3. I have been given the opportunity to have a member of my family or a friend present while the project was explained to me.

4. Although I understand the purpose of the research project, it has also been explained that involvement may not be of any benefit to me.

5. I have been informed that, while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will not be divulged, unless I specifically request otherwise. I understand I have the opportunity to read over the transcript of my interview and delete any text which may identify me, and this will not be used in any publications.

6. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

7. I agree to the interview being audio recorded:

   Yes ☐ No ☐

8. I would like a summary of the study's results emailed to me upon its completion:

   Yes ☐ No ☐

9. I am aware that I should keep a copy of this Consent Form, when completed, and the attached Information Sheet.

Participant to complete:

Name: _____Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher/Witness to complete:

I have described the nature of the research to

_____

(print name of participant)

and in my opinion she/he understood the explanation.

Signature: _____Position:_____ Date:

_____

Appendix C. Research Summary

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the participants who shared their stories and experiences contributing to our study exploring the understandings of justice and its impact on wellbeing among Uyghur humanitarian migrants in Australia.

Background

Justice is important to people. When an injustice occurs, individuals try to restore a sense of justice (Lerner, 1980; Worthington, 2001), and there are negative impacts on wellbeing when this cannot happen (Lucas, 2020).

People with humanitarian migrant backgrounds have, almost by definition, experienced systemic injustice which often remains unresolved (Alim, Due & Strelan, 2021). This is the case for Uyghur people from East Turkistan (ET) who have experienced systemic injustice for decades under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Uyghur Human Rights Project, 2021).

The aims of this study were to explore:

(1) the understandings of justice among Uyghurs living in Australia

(2) pathways to restoring justice for Uyghurs living in Australia

(3) the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing

Method

The University of Adelaide's Human Research Ethics Committee approved the study (H-2017-122). 27 semi-structured interviews were conducted for this study, with 7 men and 20 women, aged between 18 and 50 years. Participants had resided in Australia on average of 14 years. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Results

In relation to understanding and restoring justice, seven main themes were identified:

1) *Orienting to Systemic Injustice*

When participants were asked to define justice, they often presented examples of systemic injustices they themselves and other Uyghurs had experienced. This included discrimination

in the workforce, educational opportunities, religious persecution and being treated as criminals, both prior to migration and during the migration process to Australia.

2) *Rights, Equality, and Truth*

Justice was viewed as having rights and the ability to exercise these rights freely. Justice was also understood as equal treatment and upholding the truth. This was particularly important to participants due to the perception of being misled and lied to by the Chinese government.

3) *Freedom*

Freedom was also important in understanding justice. Participants often referred to the freedom to make choices and practice religion. Again, this understanding of justice was reflective of the experiences of participants as they had been restricted by Chinese authorities in these areas prior to resettlement in Australia.

4) *Acknowledge the Oppression*

To restore justice for Uyghur people, one of the first steps participants spoke of was the acknowledgement of the oppression and injustices faced by Uyghurs by the Chinese government and also the global community. This was important considering the Chinese government's continual denial of oppression against the Uyghurs. As part of this acknowledgement, some participants suggested a sincere apology and remorse by the perpetrators of the injustices.

5) *Right of Return and Safety*

Uyghur people should have the right to return to ET in conditions that are safe. An acknowledgement of the right to return was seen as important as it would also acknowledge Uyghur people as rightful owners of the land. Some participants expressed concern about what would happen once Uyghurs could freely return to ET and how the consequences of all the injustices could be resolved.

6) *Self-determination*

Self-determination, which includes the restoration of authority back to the Uyghur people and the independence of ET, was seen as important and necessary for restoring justice. This again was seen as recognition of Uyghur people's right to their own land and the right to lead and govern themselves.

7) *Political Pathways to Justice*

Political pathways to restoring justice was also mentioned frequently, including support from the Australian government but also the wider global community. The most pressing issue for participants was the closure of the re-education camps. This theme also highlighted that having permanent residency and citizenship in Australia was important as it provided safety and protection as well as being a recognition that the participants had in fact experienced injustice.

In relation to the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing, five main themes were identified:

1) *Psychological Distress*

The ongoing systemic injustices impacted people's ability to work, study and be productive.

There was widespread psychological distress among participants such as being unable to eat, sleep, having low mood or being unable to concentrate in their work and study.

2) *Parenting and Relationship Impacts*

Participants spoke of the impact of the ongoing injustices on interpersonal relationships. Some participants found it difficult to be present in relationships, manage their own distress and support others, especially in relation to parenting.

3) *Anger, Guilt and Helplessness*

Anger, guilt and helplessness were often mentioned in relation to the impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing. Participants expressed anger towards the CCP and the injustices they committed. Participants felt guilty for not being able to support family in ET. People expressed feeling helpless to take action to stop the suffering of Uyghur people in ET, however this was reported alongside hope that there will be a better future.

4) *Fear for Future*

Participants also expressed fear for the future, especially about the safety of friends and family in ET, being disconnected from the homeland and fear that future generations will be disconnected from their identity as Uyghurs.

5) *Changing Identities: Agency and Advocacy after Resettlement*

Engaging in advocacy and activism was important for all participants and this was seen as a consolation for participants in dealing with the negative impact of systemic injustice.

Participants experienced changes in their identity after coming to Australia which was seen as positive for their wellbeing. Participants were able to exercise rights, have freedom to practice their culture and identity and also make life choices which were previously denied under the CCP rule in their homeland.

Recommendations

These findings highlight the importance of considering the widespread negative impact of systemic injustice on wellbeing when working with people such as humanitarian migrants. It is also important for professionals and services to continue to advocate for the wellbeing of humanitarian migrants by supporting policies that promote a sense of justice at least in the countries of resettlement – for example, in relation to permanent residency.

Contact

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Appendix D. Recruitment Flyer

Researchers from the University of Adelaide are conducting a study called:

Injustice and Wellbeing: Interviews with refugees

We would like to interview you if you:

- Are a refugee from East Turkistan
- Over the age of 18
- Speak English
- Arrived in Australia over 1 year ago

This project aims to consider your understandings and views of justice, forgiveness and your wellbeing in relation to your experiences as a refugee.

We will conduct the interview at a place and time that is convenient for you. Interviews will last approximately 60 minutes.

If you would like further information or to participate in an interview, please contact:

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