**Socially Transformative Resilience:
A Conceptual Model and Research Agenda for a New Construct**

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Abstract

Marginalised individuals face significant and consistent adversities and injustices that their dominant culture counterparts rarely or never face, such as discrimination, low resource access, and violence. These challenges have been linked to poor wellbeing, both empirically and in individuals' lived experiences. An original approach to improving this situation is introduced here via a novel transtheoretical construct: *socially transformative resilience*. Socially transformative resilience is conceived as a type of resilience in which individuals not only improve their psychosocial wellbeing in the face of challenge, but also resist, transcend, and/or seek to change the status quo, increasing their liberation as well. The key components and mechanisms of this new construct are described in detail, drawing on theoretical and empirical evidence. Key propositions of the model include the dual importance of moral and emotional initial responses to stressors, the centrality of a multidimensional reflection process, and the utility of acceptability-control appraisals in choosing which actions and resources to activate in service of wellbeing and liberation. An agenda for future research is presented, including examining and refining the model, developing a measure, creating interventions, and investigating relationships with psychopathology.

Keywords: resilience, social justice, marginalization, model, theory, socially transformative resilience

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Marginalised individuals are disadvantaged by multiple entrenched socio-political inequities and power structures [1]. Many groups of individuals worldwide are marginalised, such as racial and ethnic minorities, sexual and gender minorities, refugees, low-income, and homeless [2,3]. Such individuals face daily challenges that those in dominant cultures rarely face. Compared to dominant cultures, there is a higher prevalence of discrimination, elevated violence, poor access to resources, exploitation, and micro-aggressions within the experiences of those identifying as members of historically marginalised groups [1].¹

These experiences intersect to affect psychosocial wellbeing for marginalised populations [2,4,5]. For example, a recent systematic review of large-scale community-based studies reported that eight out of nine studies identified associations between greater social disadvantage and greater common mental disorder prevalence [6]. This linkage is well-documented among youth and adult populations: for instance, youth facing socioeconomic disadvantage are two to three times more likely than their advantaged peers to report mental health problems [7]. Further, those experiencing multiple forms of marginalisation via multiple types of discrimination (e.g., racism and heterosexism) may face even poorer outcomes. For instance, a systematic review of the association between experiences of multiple discrimination and mental health in the United States indicated that those facing multiple discrimination were at higher risk for psychopathology [8]. This link also goes beyond quantitatively measured associations. As marginalised

¹ Abbreviations used in this manuscript: Model of Psychological Liberation (MPL); Socially Transformative Resilience (STR); Status Quo Resilience (SQR); Systematic Self Reflection Model (SSRM).

individuals describe, the lived experience of marginalisation itself is often inextricable from “despair, pain, being driven mad, and losing the desire to live” [9]. Thus, if we are to consider how marginalised individuals’ lives could be improved, we must consider ways to both improve psychosocial wellbeing and to change the systems causing marginalisation that are detrimental to this wellbeing in the first place.

In this article, we introduce a new approach that has potential to improve marginalised individuals’ lives by improving psychosocial wellbeing *and* liberation from marginalising systems, which we call *socially transformative resilience* or STR. We begin by discussing the synergistic potential of resilience and social justice, which are two key frameworks concerned with wellbeing among marginalised individuals that have not frequently been considered together. We then introduce a transtheoretical model of STR, combining constructs from each of these approaches, and describe its core components. Finally, we provide a set of potential directions for future research on STR.

1 Potential for Integrating Resilience and Social Justice Approaches

Multiple frameworks are concerned with wellbeing for marginalised individuals. Resilience and social justice represent two such prominent frameworks, yet take different approaches [see, e.g., 10–12]. The combination of alignment of goals alongside differences in approach provides potential for synergy, presenting a unique opportunity for each framework to fill key gaps in the other. Examining resilience and social justice together thus could enable generation of a transtheoretical model for improving wellbeing for marginalised individuals.

1.1 Resilience-Based Approaches

Resilience has been described as the ability to “bounce back better” in the face of adversity or challenge [e.g., 13–16]. Though adversities, challenges, and traumas, such as those

faced daily by marginalised individuals, may be risk factors for poor psychosocial wellbeing, there are multiple ways to achieve positive outcomes. The process of achieving positive outcomes despite adversity is often termed resilience. Additionally or alternatively, the positive outcome itself is often termed resilience [e.g., 17–19]. Resilience-based research has identified many protective and promotive factors that potentiate positive outcomes [20], including internal factors such as self-efficacy [21], self-compassion [22], and emotional regulation [23]; and external factors such as peer relationships [24] and presence of mentors [20].

Much resilience scholarship has focused on identifying malleable factors for resilient outcomes [e.g., 20,25], and creating and testing interventions that can improve these factors in a host of populations [26]. Meta-analyses suggest resilience-based interventions can effectively improve outcomes for individuals facing challenges, including behaviours (e.g., substance use), coping skills (e.g., problem solving), and psychosocial factors (e.g., self-efficacy and social support) [27,28]. Resilience-based approaches have resulted in useful frameworks that guide building identified promotive factors to encourage change [29,30].

1.2 Criticisms of Resilience

However, there are several criticisms of dominant conceptualisations of resilience. First, resilience science in particular (and psychological science in general) tends to overstate the importance of internal, individual factors whilst understating the importance of external, structural and societal factors [9,31–33], including marginalisation. Most theoretical models of resilience, as well as interventions built on these models, are largely internally focussed, helping people to build inner skills and strengths to better cope with and handle their situations, with little reference to external factors.

Although external factors such as social context, interpersonal factors, and structural

concerns have been articulated more prominently in recent resilience models [e.g., 32,34–36], this nascent interest has neither been readily matched by interventions [e.g., 33] nor by measures. For example, in a systematic review of resilience measures, Windle and colleagues [37] identified only six of fifteen measures that included a focus on factors beyond the individual, and only one (the Resilience Scale for Adults [38,39]) was rated at the highest quality level.

A second, related concern is that if resilience models and measures fail to take power and marginalisation into account, they may inadvertently reproduce or even support oppressive systems and structures. For example, if resilience-based approaches encourage marginalised individuals to cope with or “bounce back better” from oppression, rather than encouraging them to challenge oppression itself, this might support complacency in face of oppression, thus allowing its continuation [16]. Further discussions of these and related criticisms of resilience as an approach can be found in Atallah et al. [10] and Hart et al. [40].

Atallah et al. [10] describe three waves in resilience research and theory. The first wave encompassed concepts of “bouncing back” and related approaches (helping individuals to return to levels of wellbeing that they had held prior to adversity); the second wave encompassed “bouncing forward” and related approaches (helping individuals to grow, adapt, and build wellbeing, such that they emerge with improved wellbeing relative to states prior to the adversity). Atallah et al. defines the emerging third wave as “centering at the margins” [10]. This includes resilience research and theory that engages with transformational approaches; builds on intersectional, transdisciplinary thinking; utilises approaches from liberation psychology; and aims towards “transforming ecosocial systems toward social justice” [10 p. 20].

Scholars within this third wave have suggested several potential responses to criticisms of resilience as a construct. Traynor [41] described the need to build “critical resilience,” which is a

type of resilience in which individuals are critical of power structures and what it means to be resilient. Alternatively, it has been argued that “resilience is an incomplete intervention” [33]; in other words, that it is incomplete to conduct individual-level resilience programmes without also working to influence structures and systems in individuals’ environments. Others have suggested reconceptualising resilience as “resistance” in marginalised populations [42], proposing advocating for marginalised populations to resist the status quo rather than encouraging them to achieve positive outcomes defined by dominant cultures.

1.3 Social Justice: An Approach Supporting “Centring at the Margins”

Each of these possibilities draws inspiration from social justice approaches. Social justice is another key framework regarding wellbeing for marginalised individuals. However, social justice approaches have historically remained largely separate from resilience models and theories. In part, the separation is due to different approaches in social justice vs. resilience. Rather than taking a largely individual-level perspective, social justice-based approaches frequently set about the issue from the opposite side, taking a societal and structural-level perspective, with less attention to individual, internal factors [43].

Social justice prioritises “the equal worth of all citizens, their equal right to meet their basic needs, the need to spread opportunity and life chances as widely as possible, and finally the requirement that we reduce and, where possible, eliminate unjustified inequalities” [11 p. 13]. Social justice also focusses on several societal ideals, such as distributing goods and power fairly throughout society [e.g., 44,45] and enabling all individuals to develop capabilities allowing them to live their lives with dignity [e.g., 46,47], which aim to contribute to liberating individuals from oppression faced due to marginalisation.

Scholars in fields such as liberation psychology [based on the work of 48], have

identified the need for additional attention to individuals' internal worlds to support liberation and justice, a level of attention that is not frequently included in social justice-based approaches. Despite this need, research on internal processes in liberation is still nascent. It is representative of this gap that although some acknowledge that "individuals and groups may not be readily able to engage with...sociopolitical...change until they have built up [internal] resources, skills, and experiences" [49 p. 97], models of exactly how such internal resources, skills, and experiences should be built, measured, and translated into action are scarce [50]. This missing link could be filled via a focus on resilience.

2 Introducing Socially Transformative Resilience (STR)

Rooted in the third wave of resilience research and deploying critical conceptualisations from social justice, we propose a type of resilience that has not yet been described, delineated, nor developed: Resilience that unlocks, transforms, liberates, and transcends or seeks to transform social structures and systems, which we call *Socially Transformative Resilience (STR)*. In the face of adversity rooted in oppressive systems, one can (a) find ways to handle the adversity better; (b) stop whomever or whatever is creating the adversity, or (c) remove oneself from the situation of adversity. Combining "a" with "b" and/or "c" corresponds to STR (see Table 1). Although processes that include "a" alone may align with previous definitions of resilience, there is lower potential for social transformation. We therefore call processes including only "a" *without* "b" and/or "c" *Status Quo Resilience (SQR)*.

Table 1

Possible Responses to Adversity as Status Quo or Socially Transformative Resilience

Types of Resilience	Responses to Adversity		
	(a) Cope with and/or handle the adversity better	(b) Seek to stop the adversity	(c) Seek to remove oneself from encountering the adversity
Status Quo Resilience (SQR)	✓		
Socially Transformative Resilience (STR)	✓	+	(✓ and/or ✓)

Though the remainder of this manuscript describes a detailed process model only of STR in hopes of closer examination of this type of resilience, it is useful to understand STR by briefly contrasting not only its process but also its outcomes with SQR. In the face of adversity, STR combines simultaneous processes leading towards psychosocial wellbeing *and* liberation, while SQR leads towards psychosocial wellbeing with little to no attention to liberation. Figure 1 depicts outcomes sought via STR and SQR in relation to psychosocial wellbeing and liberation.

Figure 1

Relationship Among Psychosocial Wellbeing and Liberation Outcomes for STR and SQR

Though definitions abound, psychosocial wellbeing is defined here as encompassing emotional and social functioning, competencies, and experiences of satisfaction and wellness for

an individual. This can include life satisfaction, positive affect, social connections and support, and sense of meaning, among other constructs [51]. Liberation is defined here as encompassing not only the degree to which an individual is politically or physically free, but also free from oppression in their thoughts, emotions, beliefs, actions, behaviours, and experienced relationships with social structures and systems. This definition is aligned with that of Banks and Stephens [52], who conceptualised psychological liberation as including “what happens between the process of awakening to oppression and getting free” [p. 102]. Liberation is thus considered an evolving process of transformative yet pragmatic change, rather than a static endpoint.

STR outcomes include both liberation and psychosocial wellbeing outcomes, without one emerging much more frequently than or at the expense of the other. This does not mean that for each response to an adverse situation, STR outcomes always include both liberation and psychosocial wellbeing simultaneously and in balance. However, in examining the outcomes of the STR process, which repeats itself within individuals for multiple stressors over time, liberation and psychosocial wellbeing would both be significantly built and supported via STR.

Psychosocial wellbeing and liberation outcomes do not occur at the expense of one another in STR, however; instead, they are equally valued and mutually reinforcing. Other theoretical models have pointed out that liberation and wellbeing have an integral relationship with one another. For instance, Prilleltensky and Nelson [53] describe liberation as “the process of overcoming internal and external sources of subjugation...and pursuing well-being” [p. 16]. Thus, without liberation, psychosocial wellbeing is impossible to fully achieve. This mutual reinforcement is crucial within STR processes, as building one could have beneficial effects on the other, and vice versa. STR is a process that recognises the power of this leverage, aiming towards a holistic endpoint of outcomes that recognise the importance of experiencing wellness

in relation to one's internal *and* external realities.

2.1 *The Socially Transformative Resilience (STR) Model*

The following sections describe in detail the main components of the STR Model. These main components are also presented graphically in Figure 2, with detail provided in Figure 3. The appendix provides a hypothetical case vignette that shows an example of how the model may manifest. The model begins with a person encountering a stressor within their environment and ends with STR outcomes. Below, we describe processes between these two points.

2.1.1 Intertwinement with Sociocultural Structures and Systems

Sociocultural structures and systems are foundational to the STR Model, as all model components occur within and in relation to these. These structures and systems are foundational to the model in alignment with the Foucauldian conceptualisation that power “produces reality” [54 p. 194]. In the STR Model, all aspects of a person's responses to a stressor, as well as the stressor itself, are intertwined with sociocultural systems and structures with inherent power differentials, in which a person lacks and/or possesses power based on their location within those systems and structures. The importance of these systems and structures is represented by the outer rounded rectangle of “sociocultural structures and systems” in the STR Model, signifying that all model aspects occur within, are influenced by, and influence these.

2.1.2 Initial Response

According to the Systematic Self-Reflection Model of Resilience (SSRM) [55], a person encountering a stressor has an immediate, initial response that occurs largely without conscious premeditation. In the STR Model, two components of this initial response are highlighted: an emotional and a moral response.

Figure 2

Model of Socially Transformative Resilience (key components)

Note.

This depiction of the model provides the model's key components. Figure 3 provides more detail on each of these components.

Figure 3

Model of Socially Transformative Resilience (detail)

Notes. This depiction of the model provides more detail for the key components provided in Figure 2.

1. Strength of emotional responses are hypothesised to have an inverted "U" shaped relationship with STR outcomes: mild and major distress are likely associated with lower STR, while moderate distress is likely associated with greater STR.
2. Direction of moral judgment (whether the stressor is judged to be "right" or "wrong") is hypothesised to have an inverse relationship with STR such that the degree to which a person feels that a situation is "right" is associated with lower STR.

3. Initial response is considered adaptive if supportive of a person's psychosocial- and liberation-related goals.
4. Self-awareness includes awareness of the emotional and moral initial responses.
5. Situation awareness includes awareness of the specific trigger in the situation. The greater the ability to delineate a specific trigger, the more aligned with STR.
6. System awareness includes awareness of relevant oppressive system(s).
7. If aligned with STR, this moral lens is underpinned by a humanist ideology.
8. Self-beliefs include self-concept and self-worth.
9. Aspirations include values and goals.
10. Potential moral, practical, cognitive, motivational, social, and emotion regulatory resources and actions that support psychosocial wellbeing and liberation.
11. Deploying the transformative repertoire (emotion-focused vs. problem-focused strategies) is determined via fit with a person's acceptability-control appraisals regarding the situation (see Figure 4). Appraisals of greater control combined with lower moral acceptability are more STR-aligned.

Though highlighted separately, moral and emotional responses are related. Multiple studies have indicated that a person's emotions influence moral judgments. For instance, one often-cited study asked participants to rate situations' morality while sitting at dirty or clean desks. Those experiencing disgust due to sitting at dirty desks rated morally-ambiguous situations as less moral than those sitting at clean desks [56]. Emotions' importance in moral judgments is also discussed in neuroscience and philosophy [e.g., 57]. However, moral judgments do have elements separate from emotions. For instance, moral judgments can arise via cognitive processes based on social norms that lead people to make moral categorisations [58]. This interrelationship of emotional and moral responses is thus represented in the STR Model via the dotted line between them.

Initial Emotional Response The STR Model's initial emotional response includes experiential, behavioural, and physiological components (following the modal model of emotion) [59]. The SSRM predicts that the intensity of initial emotional response has an inverted "U" shaped relationship with resilience, such that if a person has a "moderate" distress response, this is more likely to lead to positive change in the future vs. mild or major distress. Major distress may lead to feelings of paralysis or inability to reflect, while mild-to-no distress may not provide enough motivation to make changes for the future [55].

This emphasis on the importance of some distress in developing resilience finds synergy with emphases on some dysphoria in liberation processes. For example, Martin Luther King Jr asserted the centrality of being "maladjusted" to oppressive systems and structures as an important component of liberation [60 p. 185]. Combining these theories, moderate psychological distress is hypothesised to lead to STR outcomes, whereas mild-to-no distress and major distress are hypothesised to be less likely to lead to STR outcomes.

The behavioural component of one's initial emotional response also has a relationship

with STR outcomes. How a person initially behaves in response to a stressor may affect the situation, thus feeding into the potential for future changes towards STR outcomes. For instance, initial behaviours (e.g., smiling or crying, leaving the situation or staying) may impact the situation in varying ways. However, a distinguishing feature of STR-aligned behavioural responses is their adaptive function. Here, adaptive follows Barrett and colleagues' [61] definition, whereby a "process is adaptive to the extent that it better enables the person to...*deal successfully with his/her environment concurrently and/or in the future*" (p. 71, emphasis in original).

However, as Barrett and colleagues [61] point out, it is almost impossible to determine in the moment whether a given response is adaptive or maladaptive. This resistance to in-the-moment definition is due to two main reasons: first, that the "success" of the process is hard to singularly define, as individuals' goals are multifaceted, often competing, and contexts complex. Second, the "success" of a process is dynamic, and a response that is "successful" now may have negative consequences later, or vice versa. For instance, a marginalised individual's goals in a given situation might include social wellbeing goals (e.g., maintaining relationships with one's family, friends, or colleagues), psychological wellbeing goals (e.g., wanting one's emotions to feel pleasant), and liberation goals (e.g., overcoming obstacles related to one's oppression). It may not be possible to achieve all goals in the moment, and some goals may be competing. It may also not be possible to maintain in-the-moment success over time.

Despite the challenges with pinpointing, in the moment, whether an individual's response is adaptive or maladaptive, a response is more supportive of STR outcomes if it is more consistently adaptive with respect to more of an individual's goals, both immediately and over time. At minimum, a response is likely to lead to STR outcomes if it supports goals related to

both psychosocial wellbeing and liberation, with at least some success at some point in time.

2.1.2.2 *Initial Moral Response*

A precursor and requirement for any liberatory processes is that a person has an immediate moral response. In the STR Model, moral is *not* taken to mean objectively “good” or “bad” in the ethical sense; instead, it is taken to mean an individual’s subjective sense of what is right and wrong in terms of how they want to ideally live their life, following Kleinman [62]. In response to a stressor, an individual has a moral response on a spectrum from: “this is wrong,” through neutral responses, to “this is right.” In various conceptualisations of liberation, including Banks and Stephens’ Model of Psychological Liberation (MPL) [52], an important component of liberation processes includes awareness and acknowledgement of one’s oppression. However, logically, a person must perceive a situation’s “wrongness” before and/or in conjunction with perceiving that it is a situation of oppression. Therefore, it is hypothesised that the immediate moral response has an inverse relationship with STR outcomes: the more morally “right” a person perceives a situation to be, the less likely they are to move towards STR outcomes.

2.1.3 *Multidimensional Reflection*

Pivotal to the STR Model is that after initial response, reflection ensues. Multiple models of resilience and liberation emphasise reflection (for instance, the SSRM similarly describes reflection immediately following initial response [55], and five of the seven model components of the MPL are reflective [52]). The centrality of reflection in liberation processes is also identified in many discussions of liberation, including in Freire’s concepts of conscientisation and praxis [50,63], and in other related processes or methods such as problematisation, de-habitation, and denaturalisation that support changing consciousness towards liberation [50], underlining reflection’s relevance for the STR Model.

The STR Model expands on ways in which reflection is conceptualised in other models, however, to include multiple dimensions. The processes within STR’s “multidimensional reflection” includes two sub-processes: *multidimensional awareness* and *contemplation*. Progressing from one sub-process to the next is mediated by a person’s *moral lens*.

2.1.3.1 Multidimensional Awareness

Awareness in the STR Model includes four components: *self-awareness*, *situational-awareness*, *system-awareness*, and *interconnectivity awareness*. The importance of awareness in STR rests in part on the centrality of awareness to many psychological processes, described and studied widely via concepts such as mentalisation [e.g., 64–66], metacognition [e.g., 67,68] and attribution theory [e.g., 69]. Luyten and Fonagy’s [66] description of the concept of mentalisation, in particular, aptly describes the level of awareness that the STR Model prioritises: “Mentalizing is the capacity to understand ourselves and others in terms of intentional mental states, such as feelings, desires, wishes, attitudes, and goals” [p. 366]. Accessing this ability to be aware of and consider the self is a key skill underpinning awareness and reflection processes within the STR Model.

The process of *self-awareness* in the STR Model includes being aware of emotional and moral components of one’s initial response. A person’s awareness of their emotions is critical in being able to cope with and regulate emotions [e.g., 70]. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that emotional awareness is significantly and negatively correlated with depression and anxiety symptoms among youth [71]. In addition, in models of moral decision-making, including Rest’s Four Component Model [72], moral awareness (what Rest termed “moral sensitivity”) is key to taking moral action [72–75], which in turn, is central to transforming or transcending oppression towards liberation. Empirical evidence also supports the link between moral awareness and

moral action [73]. Further, logically, it is impossible to contemplate one's responses, which is a key component that follows in the STR Model, without first being aware of them.

The process of *situational-awareness* consists of being able to identify which aspect(s) of a situation triggered one's initial response. "Trigger identification" is supportive of psychosocial wellbeing, as it appears in the SSRM by the same name [following 76,77]. Analogous processes also appear in liberation models such as the MPL by different names, encompassed within "awareness/acknowledgement of impact of oppression on the self" [52 p. 103], suggesting that this process is supportive of both wellbeing and liberation.

The process of *system-awareness* builds on the MPL component "awareness/acknowledgement of oppression" [52 p. 102] and Freire's concept of conscientisation, which has more recently been referred to as critical consciousness [e.g., 78]. In conscientisation or critical consciousness, a person becomes conscious of broader system(s) of oppression, which functions as a precursor to liberation [50,63]. Being aware of oppressive systems is also a key component underlying development of positive self-concept and self-advocacy for those in both marginalised and dominant culture groups [e.g., 79]. Empirically, awareness of oppressive systems has predicted support for and action towards equity. For instance, one study of university students' social media use found that awareness of oppression and privilege predicted support for and participation in Black Lives Matter protests [80]. Awareness of the system is therefore a crucial component in the STR Model.

Finally, *awareness of the interconnections* amongst each of these elements is highlighted in the STR Model, including: awareness of how an oppressive system is related to the specific situation, awareness of how the specific situation relates to the self, and awareness of how the oppressive system relates to the self. Awareness of how each of these components relates can

lead to higher-order awareness underlying possibilities of reflection and action. This interconnectivity awareness can be conceived of as a higher-order or critical thinking capacity (classically understood as encompassing any intellectual capacities related to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation [81]). These capacities are increasingly recognised as important abilities underlying an individual's ability not just to “‘know their place’ but to ‘determine their own position’” in the world via both critical thought and action [82 pp. 359-360]. Cultivating a high level of interconnected awareness and understanding about the self, social structures, and situations is thus an important component underlying the development of STR outcomes.

A process that is more likely to lead to STR outcomes, therefore, would consist of greater awareness of one's emotional and moral responses, what the trigger(s) was/were for these responses, the existence of one or more oppressive systems, and how each of these relates with one another. Being less aware of any of these aspects would be less likely to lead to STR outcomes.

2.1.4 Multidimensional Contemplation Through a Moral Lens

These multiple dimensions, which come to the surface via awareness, are then considered with respect to what we refer to as a person's *moral lens*. This moral lens includes a person's beliefs about and aspirations for their internal and external worlds.

2.1.4.1 Moral Lens

In the STR Model, a person's moral lens consists of their *self-beliefs*, *aspirations*, and *reference group orientations*, which together form a lens through which the person's experience is contemplated. In the STR Model, *self-beliefs* encompass self-concept and self-worth. Self-concept refers to a person's internal representation of who they are, based on an amalgamation of identities [83]. Identities are dynamic and experienced fluidly depending on the situation [84].

Which identities are experienced as the most salient may be those that are targets of discrimination or oppression in a given moment [85]. The identities experienced as the most salient in a given situation are likely to have the greatest influence on contemplative processes to come, thus are the most relevant in the STR Model.

Self-worth refers to how much one values the self. The degree of self-worth one holds has significant influence on subsequent contemplation and behaviour, thus forming an integral component of the STR Model's moral lens. A person's self-worth affects whether they perceive their own behaviours to be acceptable. For instance, a person with higher self-worth may expect to be able to respond to a stressor in a way that feels "good" or "right" to them. In turn, their actual behaviour – in this example, whether they actually did respond to the stressor in a way that feels "good" to them – feeds back into increasing or decreasing self-worth [86]. The degree to which a person's self-worth changes based on actual behaviours is referred to as "contingencies of self-worth" [86]. As individuals move towards STR outcomes, self-worth becomes less contingent on their behaviour in response to systems of oppression. This change follows the importance of components identified in liberation such as "ability to see oppression as separate from self" and "ability to see the humanity in oneself in spite of oppression" in models such as the MPL [52 p. 103].

Aspirations in the STR Model include values and goals, which interact closely with a person's self-beliefs. The values relevant to building STR include those that one holds central to living a moral life. These values are the internal intangibles that guide how one behaves in order to feel that one has lived "right" or lived "well," such as values of kindness, authenticity, love, or openness. Such values have often been referred to as character strengths, and multiple studies have shown clear relationships among these strengths and psychosocial wellbeing outcomes

[e.g., 87]. These strengths or values have also underpinned reflection within models of moral decision making [e.g., 88], thus supporting their importance to liberation outcomes and their inclusion in the STR Model.

In the STR Model, one's goals include what one wants to do or become in life, such as what one would like to achieve in terms of career, family, or personal life. These goals are key in STR, as they "play both a capabilities-selecting and an agency-unlocking role" and influence one's "ability to act or to imagine how to change [one's] life" [89 p. 246]. Holding goals that are not determined by oppressive social structures may particularly predict the possibility for marginalised individuals to change their life trajectories. For instance, one recent study found that for women in Kyrgyzstan, a group which has traditionally faced significant gender discrimination, holding future-oriented goals (e.g., for improved wealth, social status, education, and security) was associated with having more egalitarian gender attitudes, having a greater role in household decision-making, and having a husband with more egalitarian gender attitudes [90].

In the STR Model, one's self-beliefs and aspirations combine with *reference group orientations* within the moral lens to influence subsequent contemplation. Reference group orientations are beliefs about groups with which one identifies, and how one chooses to relate with these groups [91]. A person's reference group orientation includes what they see as the typical values, goals, abilities, tendencies, or preferences of those within a group with which they identify, and how they see themselves in relation to these values, goals, abilities, tendencies or preferences [92]. Reference group orientations have been linked to self-concept and aspirations in multiple studies; for instance, one study that primed women with images of women and men in careers matching traditional gender roles (e.g., a woman as a nurse and a man as a surgeon) increased women's implicit gender stereotypes while decreasing women's interest levels in

traditionally-masculine occupations [93]. Thus, reference group orientations are considered integral to the moral lens through which contemplation occurs within STR.

For an individual who is progressing towards STR outcomes, all aspects of this moral lens – self beliefs, aspirations, and reference group orientations – are likely to be underpinned by a humanist ideology, in the sense of Freire, who put forth that every person’s “ontological vocation is humanization” [63,94]. The degree to which a person believes themselves to be fully human and treats themselves as such via their self-beliefs and aspirations, regardless of the oppression they face, is likely to be more aligned with STR outcomes. Likewise, the degree to which a person believes those in their reference group(s) is/are fully human, and treats them as such, is likely to be more aligned with STR outcomes. The importance of humanism in the STR Model relates to frequently-discussed concepts in social justice literatures, such as Lorde’s concept of radical self-care, whereby prioritising and caring for the self as a marginalised individual is, in itself, an act of liberation [95]. The centrality of humanisation of the self also follows Foucault, who called “care of the self” a “technology of power” [96,97 p. 52]. Thus, supporting humanisation via STR for a marginalised individual can be both an act of liberation as well as an act of self-care. As self-care is also supportive of psychosocial wellbeing [e.g., 98], an underlying humanist ideology is thus a critical aspect of the moral lens in the STR Model.

2.1.4.2 Multidimensional Contemplation

The moral lens then influences contemplation within the STR Model. The contemplation component of the STR Model draws from contemplative psychology in its emphasis on multidimensional, higher-order, complex thought [99]. In the STR Model, contemplation “reflects a fundamental means by which individuals construct meaningful lives” [99 p. 2]. Contemplation in the STR Model also corresponds with the MPL, in which a key component in

the process of liberation is being willing to “notice/reflect on/wrestle with contradictions in real time” [52 p. 104], which could be considered a contemplative process in its emphasis on higher-order complex thinking regarding one’s life.

In the STR Model, contemplation has three main elements: reappraisal, evaluation, and future focus, following similar elements present in the SSRM [55]. The *reappraisal* component of contemplation in the STR Model involves changing how one thinks about a stressor, which changes its “emotional significance” [59 p. 10]. Reappraisal has frequently been identified as related to resilience, growth, and learning in the face of challenges, including in multiple systematic reviews [e.g., 100,101]. Some of the types of reappraisal that have been identified as supportive of psychosocial wellbeing and growth correspond to reframing stressors or situations as providing the potential for growth or learning [102]. In the STR model, this emphasis on growth or learning also encompasses the drive towards creating a new “personal narrative towards liberation,” which is a component of the MPL [52 p. 104]. Creating a new personal narrative towards liberation involves reframing an event as providing the possibility of growth towards “humanizing rather than dehumanizing” self-beliefs, in a manner that “is not in reaction to appropriated oppression” [52]. Thus, reappraising a stressor is likely STR-aligned if it includes that the stressor can help to catalyse growth and improvement in one’s psychosocial wellbeing and humanisation.

The *evaluation* component of contemplation in the STR Model consists of considering whether one’s initial response to the stressor was aligned with how one sees one’s current and future self and others in one’s reference group (perceptions that make up one’s moral lens, described above). Evaluation is closely related to the third component of contemplation, *future focus*, in which one considers whether one’s initial response, including one’s actions, was

aligned with how one would like to respond in the future, and if not, how one would prefer to respond. This future focus, though stemming from the SSRM [55], a resilience model, is also reflective of Freire's conceptualisation of praxis, which emphasises the importance of a sequence of action-reflection-action in liberation and social change [50,63]. Paralleling the STR Model, Freire's first action can be thought of as STR's initial response; reflection then occurs in both Freire's and STR's conceptualisation, with a component of considering future desired actions. This is then followed by further responses and actions in the STR model, as predicted by Freire, as the model progresses.

The emphasis on contemplation within STR is critical, as it is representative of an area in which some theories in psychology have been historically less robust but are lately becoming more nuanced. For instance, models of metacognition in psychotherapy have historically included two main components: (1) *understanding of mind*, or a person's understandings and interpretations of their own and others' thoughts, and (2) *mastery*, or the ability to regulate and manage these understandings and interpretations [103]. However, contemplation is now being identified as a key process supporting mastery [e.g., 104,105], lending support to the idea that one must contemplate one's understanding of mind in order to master it. In the STR Model, this process is paralleled by *multidimensional awareness* leading to the *capacity for STR* via contemplation.

2.1.5 Capacity for STR

The SSRM [55] describes the capacity for resilience as composed of the use of coping resources, emotion regulation, and resilient beliefs, which influence one another. Drawing from this model, the STR model rephrases the capacity for resilience as "capacity for STR," which includes a sub-process involving one's *transformative repertoire* and how it is deployed based

on what we refer to as *acceptability-control appraisals*. In turn, this sub-process forms a feedback loop with the moral lens.

2.1.5.1 Transformative Repertoire

Resilience models have often emphasised “coping skills” or “coping resources” [e.g., 55]; in the STR Model, however, “coping skills” are reframed as the “transformative repertoire.” This language change reflects two conceptual shifts. First, we prefer the word “transform” to “cope,” reflecting that, in STR, coping is not enough. To lead to STR outcomes, a process must go beyond helping an individual regain previous levels of psychosocial wellbeing and liberation and instead to *transform* these. Second, we prefer the word “repertoire” to “skills” or “resources,” as the skills/resources wording implies that external actions that a person takes to change their situation are not relevant. However, actions are critical for the STR Model. One’s transformative repertoire thus includes any of the possible internal or external skills, resources, *or actions* that individuals could utilise to support psychosocial wellbeing and liberation.

The SSRM defines coping resources as “the available practical, cognitive, motivational, and social resources that can help people to cope with stressors” [55 p. 10], which the STR Model translates into the “transformative repertoire” via three main expansions: (1) adding moral resources to the list, (2) integrating emotional regulatory capacities as an important component, and (3) explicitly defining action as a strategy supporting transformation. First, moral resources include moral attributes such as strong moral values, integrity to these values even in the face of risk, and ability to make meaning out of difficult or complex moral dilemmas in one’s life [106]. These attributes are representative of moral assets encompassed in what Young and Rushton [106] call “moral resilience,” which refers to how individuals can navigate morally ambiguous and challenging experiences. As marginalised individuals facing challenges will frequently

encounter morally ambiguous and morally challenging experiences, such assets are critical to STR and therefore added to the list of transformative repertoire components. Second, instead of splitting out “emotion regulatory approaches” from “coping resources,” as the SSRM does [55], emotion regulation is considered a component of the transformative repertoire itself for the sake of simplicity and accuracy [following, e.g., 107]. Finally, action is explicitly included as a potential strategy in the transformative repertoire, because taking action (e.g., against oppression) has significant potential to support one’s STR outcomes. Action is emphasised as key to overcoming oppression in many approaches to liberation, including Freire’s action-reflection-action (or praxis, as described above) [50,63] as well as in models such as the MPL, in which “action to create a new personal narrative towards liberation” and “action to transform broader systems towards liberation” are described as key components leading to psychological liberation [52 p. 104]. Taking action in political spheres or social spheres, such as engaging in activism or collective action, as well as taking other actions such as self-care or actions to resolve a problem, can transform an individual’s relationship with oppression and help to “create a sense of self that is humanizing rather than dehumanizing” [52 p. 104]. Therefore, in the STR model, the transformative repertoire includes: potential moral, practical, cognitive, motivational, social, and emotion regulatory resources and actions that support psychosocial wellbeing and liberation.

2.1.5.2 Deploying the Transformative Repertoire Based on Acceptability-Control Appraisals

It is not possible to deploy all strategies in a person’s transformative repertoire at one time; thus, a person’s capacity for STR is determined not only by their available repertoire, but also by which strategies from their repertoire they choose to activate and use. This process mirrors the “usage of the coping and emotion regulatory repertoire” in the SSRM [55]. If, for

instance, a person can regulate their emotions as part of their transformative repertoire but chooses *not* to activate and use this ability, their capacity for building psychosocial wellbeing in response to stressors (and by extension, their capacity for building STR outcomes) is lower than if they deploy this ability.

However, choosing which strategies to deploy, alone or in combination, which to forgo using, and when, is not always straightforward; this may be especially true in complex, challenging situations, such as those faced by marginalised individuals. Thus, this moment of *choice* is highlighted within the STR Model. It may be impossible (or perhaps even undesirable) for a person to always choose strategies that support the development of both psychosocial wellbeing and liberation concurrently. However, which strategies are selected and when has important implications: As described earlier, a person can choose to work to handle a stressor better, choose to work to change and/or stop a stressor, or combine both strategies (see Table 1), which can have significant ramifications regarding whether oppression continues or is transformed, and whether a person is or is not able to improve their psychosocial wellbeing.

Evidence about and conceptualisations of how people choose coping strategies is useful in elucidating the moment of choice in STR, as “coping strategies” is a related construct to the “transformative repertoire.” Coping strategies have historically been conceptualised as emotion- or problem-focused, following Lazarus and Folkman [108], a conceptualisation with extensive empirical support [e.g., 109–112]. Emotion-focused coping strategies aim to primarily handle emotions better whereas problem-focused coping strategies aim to change the situation. According to the goodness-of-fit hypothesis [108], people may select problem- or emotion-focused coping strategies, which are each more effective if there is a good “fit” with the situation. Problem-focused coping is usually “a good fit” in situations over which a person

perceives they have high control, whereas emotion-focused coping is usually a “good fit” in situations over which a person perceives they have low control. In the goodness-of-fit hypothesis, however, the effectiveness of a coping strategy is assessed by the degree to which it supports psychosocial wellbeing. In the STR Model, by contrast, the degree to which deployed strategies are effective is assessed not only by the degree to which they support psychosocial wellbeing, but also by the degree to which they support liberation.

In order to support both psychosocial wellbeing and liberation, the goodness-of-fit hypothesis thus requires expansion. In the STR Model, we hypothesise that a person’s choice of strategies to deploy is likely to be informed by their perceived control over the situation (as in the goodness-of-fit hypothesis), but also by their perception of the situation’s moral acceptability. In social justice and community organising literature, moral acceptability appraisals of a situation have been described as critical to deciding when, whether, and how to act. For Homan [113], for instance, the degree to which a situation is deemed morally acceptable provides an individual with choices regarding how to respond. If a situation is deemed morally acceptable, individuals often accept the situation without taking action to change it. If a situation is deemed morally unacceptable, however, there are two main options: a person could try to (1) change or leave the situation, or (2) accept or ignore an unacceptable situation. Homan [113] notes that accepting or ignoring a morally unacceptable situation can lead to “demoralized” individuals (p. 108). Integrating Lazarus and Folkman’s [108] goodness-of-fit hypothesis with these observations, Homan’s model could be rephrased as: in morally acceptable situations, using emotion-focused strategies is ideal; in morally unacceptable situations, using problem-focused strategies is ideal.

Thus, based on a person’s appraisals of their control over *and* the moral acceptability of a

situation (what we call their *acceptability-control appraisals*), a person selects what strategies from their transformative repertoire to deploy: whether they will deploy those that aim primarily to support their emotions, primarily to fix the problem, or those that have mixed aims. The fit of their deployment to these appraisals determines their effectiveness in supporting STR outcomes. This relationship is depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Acceptability-control appraisals and deployment of the transformative repertoire

In addition to deployment of the transformative repertoire in a manner that best *fits* a person's acceptability-control appraisals, it is also likely that a person's acceptability-control appraisals *themselves* are associated with STR outcomes. Lower control appraisals are less likely to be aligned with STR, as evidence shows that low control appraisals are more likely for individuals in situations of oppression and marginalisation. Marginalised individuals frequently have a lower sense of control, which in turn is associated with decreased wellbeing [e.g.,

114,115], potentially due to internalised oppression. Thus, it is likely that lower internalised oppression, which would be aligned with STR outcomes, would also be aligned with higher control appraisals. Additionally, acceptable moral appraisals are likely to be less aligned with STR outcomes. Building awareness of a situation's moral unacceptability is a key outcome of denaturalisation, which underpins liberation. Denaturalisation occurs when a person questions whether situations that they previously perceived as acceptable truly *are* acceptable [116], often concluding that certain situations are *not* acceptable. Thus, a process that is more aligned with STR outcomes will include a person appraising more situations as morally unacceptable yet also within their control to change. Greater alignment with STR outcomes is represented by the dotted arrow in Figure 4.

2.1.5.3 *Feedback Loop with Moral Lens*

One's capacity for STR in turn feeds back into one's moral lens via a feedback loop. The ways in which a person acts via their capacity for STR, including how successfully they can modulate their emotions and change their situations, changes the ways in which they view themselves (self-concept), the ways they view the groups with which they identify (reference group orientations), and what they hope to be and achieve (aspirations), which make up their moral lens. This feedback loop has theoretical support, including via the concept of contingencies of self-worth: when individuals assess the degree to which their actual performance has met certain standards or contingencies they hold in different domains, this feeds back to influence their sense of self-worth [86]. How one's strategies worked can also change one's goals or aspirations, as the strategies' success may be interpreted as reflecting whether goals begin to seem more or less attainable. These changes in how one sees oneself can in turn influence the capacity for STR by influencing the ways in which a person may choose to act and

which components of their transformative repertoire they choose to deploy, now or in the future.

2.1.6 STR Outcomes

In the SSRM, the capacity for resilience is iteratively built with each new encounter with a stressor, leading a person to increasingly better outcomes, which are termed “resilient outcomes” [55]. This iterative process as well as the outcome language are mirrored in the STR Model, although in the STR Model, the outcomes sought are “STR outcomes.” As described previously, STR outcomes include both psychosocial wellbeing and liberation, which are iteratively built over the course of the process described here, equally valued, and mutually reinforcing.

3 Discussion

STR is a process by which encountering a stressor can provide a catalyst for progressively better psychosocial functioning and greater liberation over time. Key components of the process include multidimensional reflection on one’s immediate responses, as well as increasing the capacity for STR via deploying the transformative repertoire based on acceptability-control appraisals. STR outcomes include both psychosocial wellbeing as well as liberation, taken as mutually enforcing and equally important. Major areas in which the STR Model furthers scholarship include that its mechanisms are defined at a level of granularity and specificity that is particularly amenable to generating testable hypotheses. It also provides specificity regarding hypothesised characteristics of each component of the process that would support STR outcomes. Additionally, it recognises the catalysing importance of stressors to growth and transformation as humans and societies. Further, it defines the outcomes of this growth and transformation as ideally containing both liberation and psychosocial wellbeing outcomes, rather than prioritising one over the other. Finally, the STR Model integrates what are

likely simultaneous processes (progress towards both psychosocial wellbeing and liberation) that have been artificially kept separate in prior work.

The STR Model is particularly noteworthy given the sheer number of people whose wellbeing is affected by oppressive systems, and who, by extension, could benefit from further exploration of this model. Being “marginalised” should not be conflated with being in the minority, although speaking of “marginalised” individuals as members of “minority groups” is a frequent trope. On the contrary: the majority of the world’s population experiences at least one form of marginalisation. For instance, approximately 7 in 10 people worldwide have a low income or live in poverty [117]. In the United States, nearly 40% of the population identifies as non-white [118]. Women and girls comprise 49.6% of the world’s population [119] and are marginalised throughout nearly all contexts worldwide [120]. These estimates are in addition to the multitude of other marginalised populations such as sexual and gender minorities, religious minorities, indigenous populations, refugees and migrants. These substantial proportions illustrate that marginalisation is not defined by minority status; instead, it is defined in relation to the deep-rooted inequities that limit the representation of certain population groups in key aspects of society. Thus, the STR Model may have critical implications for the majority of the world’s population.

3.1 A Research Agenda for STR

Four potential areas are notable for future research: (1) examination and refinement of the STR Model based on lived experiences and empirical evidence; (2) developing a measure of STR; (3) creating interventions that could support STR; and (4) investigating STR’s relationships with psychopathology.

3.1.1 Examination and Refinement of the STR Model

Although the STR Model has been created with reference to existing theories, models, and empirical evidence, it remains to be seen whether the model is appropriate and accurate when examined empirically and in relation to lived experience within different populations and contexts. Multiple qualitative and/or review studies could be conducted to examine how using stressors as catalysts for improved psychosocial wellbeing and liberation is experienced by marginalised individuals, which would allow the model to be further explored and evolved. Quantitatively, it could be informative to investigate whether assumed pathways in the model are supported empirically, via administering questionnaires measuring each construct within different populations and exploring their associations. Further engaging with other research methods across disciplines, including medical anthropology and cross-cultural psychology, could also allow further unpacking of underlying constructs within the model, such as emotions, contemplation, or the moral lens.

3.1.2 Measuring STR.

To better understand STR as a construct while learning how best to support it, it is important to devise ways to measure it. Measurements should focus not only on STR outcomes, but also on the processes of the model that occur between stressor and outcome. In doing so, components leading to STR outcomes could be better understood and help guide intervention and therapy development. In designing and developing such measures, it will be important to prioritise inclusivity and access, assessing to what degree measures work for different populations, in different languages, among different cultures, at varying levels of literacy, and/or for those with different levels of exposure to research.

3.1.3 How to Support and Improve STR Outcomes.

Interventions and therapies have been successful in building resilience [27,28]; it follows,

then, that interventions and therapies could be successful in building STR. Interventions could be developed based on the components and processes identified in the STR Model, then evaluated, to better understand how to support and improve STR outcomes.

Other research concerning how to build STR could include determining to what extent each of the STR Model components is necessary and/or sufficient to supporting STR outcomes. Although the STR Model is designed with generalisability to multiple populations in mind, some individuals, in some situations, may focus on some of the processes to a greater extent than others. Whether certain combinations of processes are necessary and/or sufficient for change could inform how interventions are designed in the most efficient manner in the future. Which components or processes might be most modifiable and therefore most easily supported via intervention could also be explored and identified.

3.1.4 STR's Relationship with Psychopathology

Differentiating between STR vs. other conceptualisations of resilience could have important implications for mental health of marginalised individuals. Resilience is often targeted to improve mental health; however, STR may support mental health either to a greater extent or in a different manner than resilience as otherwise defined.

Though building STR may be not only better for society than traditionally defined resilience, but also better for individuals' mental health, it is possible that STR has a more complex relationship with mental health. Although resilience is, essentially by definition, supportive of mental health, liberation's relationship with mental health is more complex. Many processes identified as important for STR that come from liberation theories, including the importance of some dysphoria in the process of liberation [following 60], as well as building awareness of the existence of oppression and its impact on the self [e.g., 52], could have a

detrimental relationship with mental health. Indeed, there is evidence that taking action against oppression in the form of activism, which is a potential strategy in the transformative repertoire, has a complicated relationship with mental health. For instance, one study among Black and Latinx college students regarding their experiences of racial and ethnic microaggressions indicated that while Black students who were involved in political activism reported less stress, Latinx students involved in political activism reported more depressive symptoms [121]. It is uncertain, therefore, what relationship STR has with psychopathology, and as such represents an important area for future study.

4 Conclusion

This new construct of STR fills gaps and responds to criticisms of resilience by incorporating careful attention to how individuals relate to unequal power structures and systems leading to and exacerbating poor wellbeing for marginalised individuals. Via STR, individuals facing challenges can be supported to not only live full and thriving lives, building ever greater levels of wellbeing, but to exercise significant agency within their own lives, communities, and systems, working to change these towards more equality, liberty, and diversity. Conceptualising STR as a new construct allows delineation and elaboration of a detailed set of mechanisms that can be measured and supported to achieve these goals. Understanding STR and the mechanisms by which it is developed represents an urgent need, particularly in the current environment of global inequities exacerbated by multiple crises, challenges, and traumas.

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Appendix

This appendix provides an example of how the STR Model could manifest. A starting scenario is given, along with background to contextualise the specific example. Processes that follow the STR Model are then described.

A1 Starting scenario

Scenario: A 14-year-old girl in rural Bihar, India, is in her home with her mother and father. They call her into the room and tell her that they have found her a match for marriage to a man in his 30's. It is considered a good match for the family as it will help them financially, among other reasons. The marriage will proceed within about a month's time, at which point the girl will go to live with her new husband's family and is expected to stop attending school and begin to fulfil her duties as a wife.

A2 Context of the starting scenario

This scenario was chosen due to the multitude of intersecting inequalities faced by the girl (e.g., age, gender, caste, socioeconomic), as well as the many conflicting goals and needs the girl might be considering (e.g., psychological, social, liberation) thus leading to potential for richness in the example. This starting scenario is an amalgamation of scenarios described during previous studies in Bihar conducted by the first author (KL) and colleagues [122,123].

Additional information about Bihar is provided here for context.

Bihar, a northeast Indian state, is India's poorest state, with the lowest per capita net state domestic product in the country [124]. If Bihar were a country, it would be the 13th poorest country in the world, with a GDP per capita between Liberia and Eritrea [125]. Although recently Bihar has seen reduced crime and improvement in a number of human development indicators [126], it has historically been "known for endemic caste conflict, political violence,

and a strengthening Maoist insurgency” [127 p. 298]. Discrimination and marginalisation based on caste and gender remain significant issues. While overall crime has decreased in recent decades, violence against women and those in lower castes continues to increase [126]. One of the ongoing manifestations of this discrimination is child marriage among girls, which, although illegal, is still prevalent, particularly among girls with higher poverty and lower education levels [128,129].

A3 Example of STR Processes experienced

Immediately following the starting scenario, multiple scenarios split regarding the girl’s internal and behavioural responses that help to elucidate the STR Model. We consider a number of these possible scenarios here, considering which would be less or more aligned with STR processes.

A3.1 Initial response

Upon hearing the news from her parents, the girl has some sort of initial emotional response that arises in a manner that feels spontaneous. She may feel highly distressed, not distressed at all, or moderately distressed. She may feel physical sensations as a component of this emotional response, including her heart beating quickly or a dropping sensation in her stomach. She may also have some behavioural/action response as a component of this response. For instance, she may cry, she may leave the room, she may sit quietly, she may smile, or she may almost involuntarily throw something. Each of these responses has an impact on how she is perceived and her potential for future actions to achieve her goals.

The girl’s desires, moral considerations, and goals are important, because if her initial response is in support of these desires, considerations, and goals, she may be more likely to achieve them; if her response is not in support of these, she may be less likely. For example, the

girl may hold a number of goals in this situation, such as social goals like maintaining a positive relationship with her parents; psychosocial wellbeing goals like wanting her emotions to feel “good” to her; and liberation goals, like finding a way through the situation such that she stays in school and avoids marriage, which would not be an expected outcome in this situation for girls in her community.

In this example, let us assume that the girl leaves the room. This may help her psychosocial wellbeing in that it allows her to remove herself from the upsetting situation, and she is then able to regulate her emotions in a manner that she prefers. At the same time, however, her parents may feel that her leaving the room was disrespectful, which may damage her relationship with her parents, thus might be detrimental to her social goals. Over time, this relationship damage may also affect her psychosocial wellbeing negatively. Finally, it may or may not get her closer to her goals of staying in school and avoiding marriage; only time will tell, and the outcome also involves a complex set of interactions among how others react to her response, her emotional state, and other assets and resources in her environment, among many other aspects. However, if this initial response is more STR-aligned, it is more supportive of more of her goals, at the least along both psychosocial and liberation dimensions.

Additionally, the girl has an immediate moral response of: “this is wrong,” or “this is right,” or somewhere along the spectrum in between. If she does not have any moral judgement of the situation’s “wrongness,” it is less likely that she will want to change it. Therefore, if the process is STR-aligned, she is more likely to think “this is wrong” than “this is right.”

A3.2 Awareness

If she notices her dysphoria or her feeling that the situation is “wrong,” she is more likely to desire and act to change and grow. If she is not aware of these, by contrast, her desire to

change and grow is likely to be lower. Therefore, if the process is STR-aligned, she is more aware of her emotional and moral responses.

It also bolsters STR if she is aware of and able to identify which trigger(s) clearly and precisely precipitated these responses. In this scenario, there are many potential triggers: She may have been triggered by the fact that her parents wanted her to get married, or that her parents didn't ask to hear about her wishes about marriage, or by the knowledge that she would be expected to leave school if she gets married. Any combination of these triggers, and many others, could have occurred for this girl in this situation.

Let us assume that the girl identifies that the specific triggers of her response were that her parents did not ask about her wishes about marriage, and that she will be expected to leave school. Being aware of these triggers and their relationship with her response is more aligned with STR; if her process is less aligned with STR, she would be neither aware of her own responses, nor of the specific triggers of these responses.

Additionally, if she is building capacity for STR, she is aware of the existence of oppressive system(s) and its/their relationship with the triggering situation and herself. One example of such a system that may be important, in her case, is gender inequities leading to discrimination against girls and women. She is not only aware of this system itself but is also aware that the triggers she identified are related to this system, and related to her as a person, due to the fact that she identifies as a girl, thus occupying a specific place in that system.

It should not be minimised that there are likely many other intersectional inequalities for this girl as well, including, for instance, inequalities surrounding her being younger than her parents and therefore expected to follow their authority, and/or inequalities that she shares with her parents in regards to her family's financial situation that may prompt her parents to more

readily arrange for her marriage at a young age. These and many other systems, her understanding of how she relates to them, as well as her understanding of how her identified triggers, emotions, and moral responses relate to them, may be active within her awareness. The greater her awareness of more ways that various oppressive social structures are impacting her life, the more her process is aligned with STR.

A3.3 Contemplation

It is then important that the girl contemplates the components of her response, the situation, and the oppressive system(s) of which she is aware, in order to generate insights that could be useful for her for her more conscious short-term and long-term responses to this and future challenges that arise.

This contemplation happens from her own perspective via her moral lens, based on what she values the most in life and how she sees herself: who and what she believes she is and who and what she aspires to become. For instance, she may see herself as a kind person who wants to become a social worker, which would require her to finish school. She may also see herself not “only” as a girl, but also a human deserving of care and equality, regardless of how others may see her.

If the girl left the room although she knows this may hurt her parents, when she contemplates this response, it might feel out of alignment with her self-belief that she is a kind person. If the girl notices that she felt, among other things, a twinge of excitement upon hearing the news, this response might feel out of alignment with her aspiration of finishing school and becoming a social worker. If the girl felt upset that her parents didn’t ask her opinion on the marriage, this may be in alignment with the fact that she sees herself as a human deserving of respect, care and equality. In any of these cases, the girl must be ready to notice how her

response has aligned or not aligned with different aspects of her beliefs and aspirations about herself, noticing especially any internal contradictions, and working towards resolving them.

During this contemplation, the girl may choose to reappraise the challenge and what it means to her at this point. The girl may, if her process is STR-aligned, recognise the possibilities of using this challenge to improve herself and her situation. This type of reappraisal helps her to make meaning out of the situation. Additionally, she likely makes a judgement of whether she is satisfied with her responses from the standpoint of what she believes about herself and what she aspires to be, considering whether she wants to do anything differently in the short or long-term.

In evaluating whether her responses were effective in helping her to stay in school and finish her education, she may decide that her leaving the room was somewhat effective, as it showed her parents she was not pleased, even if it did harm her relationship with them in some ways. She may also decide that although it was reasonable and useful for her to feel upset, her emotions would feel better to her if she thought of the situation as something that could help her grow and change the situation for herself and perhaps even for others.

If aligned with STR, these evaluations and reappraisals have a clear sense of looking to the future and how she wants to act, feel, and behave in the short and long term. For instance, she may decide that she would like to do something differently or additionally in the future, such as to go speak with a sibling, friend, or other ally who might support her in finding a way to stay in school, or to spend some time with her friends, joking around about other things, to lift her mood.

4.1 *Capacity for STR*

Given that the situation has brought up a nearly automatic moral and emotional response for the girl, and she has reflected on her responses, she is likely to want to respond more

deliberately as well. She has a certain repertoire of potentially transformative strategies upon which she could draw. She could utilise strategies that help her to handle the situation by trying to solve the problem or change the situation, such as finding a way to stop this marriage. She could also and/or alternatively utilise strategies that focus mainly on changing her emotions through other means, such as by distracting herself, writing, listening to music, exercising, or speaking with a friend. Although she has many possible strategies that she could deploy, she will make a choice about which strategy or strategies to put into practise in this situation.

Depending on how she sees the situation, she is more likely to utilise different strategies. Let us assume that this girl sees the situation as morally unacceptable, at least to some degree; thus, she is more likely to try to solve the problem than if she feels that the situation is morally acceptable, in which case she may try to focus mainly on changing her emotions through other means. Additionally, the girl is likely to make a choice about which strategy/strategies to use in the situation depending on how much she feels she can effectively change the situation. For the sake of the example, let's say that she thinks she might be able to avoid marriage, but that it will be quite difficult, and she's not sure if she will be successful. She is therefore in a middle-range of perceived control over the situation. She is therefore less likely to act to change the situation than someone who believes that they have high control over the situation, and more likely to act to change the situation than someone who believes that they low control over the situation. She therefore may choose to utilise a mix of strategies that both support changing her emotions as well as changing the situation to the extent she feels is possible.

Let's imagine that she first chooses to sit quietly to calm and clear her head, and then chooses to talk to her brother about the issue and try to recruit his support in approaching her parents to negotiate a way that she can stay in school. These strategies are then either successful

or not in helping her to feel better and to improve the situation. Their success then feeds back into how she sees herself as well as how she sees others whom she believes share similar identities. For instance, if her parents agree to delay the marriage or agree to some arrangement in which she can stay in school, this may help her to see herself as having a greater ability to change this and similar situations in the future. If sitting by herself to calm down and clear her head was successful for her, she also becomes more likely to see herself as having the ability to handle difficult emotions. These successes also may help her to believe that girls in her community are able to change this and similar situations while finding ways to handle their emotions. Her beliefs about herself and others who share the identities she ascribes to herself will feed back into her likelihood to deploy certain strategies towards transformation in the future. As she chooses and acts on these coping strategies, her capacity for achieving outcomes that feel good for her emotionally while improving her life by changing oppressive situations will increase; thus, increasing her capacity for achieving STR.

4.2 *STR Outcomes*

If the outcomes of the process are STR outcomes, the girl might feel happy, centred, worthy, connected, and/or otherwise psychosocially well, while also having increased her sense of liberation, at least internally, but also potentially externally. This may include that she feels proud and worthy of her efforts and has more awareness of how systems of oppression affect her. Other STR outcomes may also include that she still has maintained a positive connection with her parents while finding a way to stay in school, despite their initial desires. These outcomes may happen all at once, but more likely, given the complexity of the situation, they will happen in fits and starts, over time, with different aspects prominent in her experience at different moments. However, if the process is aligned with STR, the psychosocial outcomes do not take

priority over liberation outcomes and vice versa; they are equally valued. As they are enacted, they come to support one another.