Exploring Iranian Political Refugees' Experiences in Britain

The Phoenix Rises from the Ashes

An existential-phenomenological study

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctorate in Existential Psychotherapy *&* Counselling by Professional Studies

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Author's statement

Armin Hamid Danesh is the author of this dissertation, which has ethical clearance from the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling and the Psychology Department of Middlesex University. It is submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements of the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling and the Psychology Department of Middlesex University for the Degree of Professional Doctorate in Existential Psychotherapy and Counselling. This thesis is the author's original work except where otherwise stated and has never before been submitted for appraisal with respect to any kind of academic qualification. The author has no conflicts of interest to report.

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I will never forget my 97-year-old mother's enthusiasm and concern as she followed each stage, step by step. She recently insisted on hearing me present my viva to her, and fell fast asleep.

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My nine participants' names could not be disclosed, but I acknowledge and appreciate their generous help and their transparency during my research.

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Finally, I thank Professor Morwenna Griffiths. In 2012 when I discussed with her how I would like to bring the human rights discourse together with psychotherapy, she thought carefully and then responded, "That is an amazing idea. You have to do it."

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Preface

I am honoured and moved by my nine participants' generosity, trust and honesty in this research. Their humanitarian values inspired my work. I was aware that the project would be challenging and demanding, but I could not have foreseen the changes it would bring about in my personal and professional life. I carried this project in my mind for a long time; I wanted to give voice to their experience.

They were rejected and misrecognised in their homeland. Why was their existence under threat? How did they cope with all the risks they took? This human journey gave rise to many other questions – physical, psychological, social and spiritual. My passion was to find answers. I searched every corner of this unknown. My participants' journey helped me also to understand myself.

By the end of the project I felt my nine participants - representing many others - had risen from the ashes, reminding me of the symbolic Phoenix which calls to everyone: change is possible, if you want it.

Why did I choose this symbol for the title?

The Phoenix was not initially my idea. It arose at the initial stage, when I presented my research in the Programme Planning Module meeting with Professor Emmy van Deurzen, Professor Digby Tantam and some potential supervisors. I had about 20 minutes for my presentation. At the end, I received very encouraging feedback. In particular, Professor Van Deurzen said, "This is like the Phoenix rising from the ashes!"

This resonant image caught my imagination and grew organically through my early writing on the project. It was then verified through Sina's lived experience in the pilot study and throughout the project.

The Phoenix symbol has an integrative meaning for me personally. Some years ago it inspired me to found 'The Phoenix Aid Centre' - a charity providing

therapeutic services to refugees and others in need. For me, it symbolizes the power to overcome barriers, to face and regenerate oneself, to bring about change. As Darius, one of my participants, said, "We can make a change if we want." This was corroborated by other participants. However, I am aware that some political refugees, as Sara and Karimi mentioned, failed to adapt themselves to the new environment and committed suicide.

Some political refugees were able to take opportunities to develop new meaning in their lives. Their outlook was future focused.

All my participants had moments when they lacked a sense of self or control over what might happen to them in the escape process, and also "Phoenix moments" when they arrived. Sina, said: "here in fact in London, it is a different world. For me it was a new start. It was a new birth… It wasn't just a feeling. You can see it, you can start again … It was a discovery for me, that refugeeing brings a new birth and a new life, not necessarily physically". (Sina, 278, 281-283). Lida echoes that: "this was like a new birth for me. The very day of my birthday I received my leave to remain…" (Lida, 318-320, 331-332).

This research gave me personally many Phoenix moments: "Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall" (Goldsmith, 1825: 26).

Abstract

The refugee issue is as old as human history. Today the spiralling crisis for host countries and for the refugees themselves needs to be addressed psychologically, as well as politically and sociologically.

This study focuses on the lived experience of nine Iranian political refugees in the UK. My main sampling criterion is the willingness of participants to discuss in depth their lived experiences. I chose Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to carry out the investigation. My literature review developed as themes emerged from the participants' data, which I collected through semi-structured interviewing. Following IPA criteria, five super-ordinate themes developed: Violation of human rights as a threat to the self; their value system and commitment; Taking risks to create possibilities ; psychological rebirth and overcoming obstacles ; and finally their sense of self and cultural adaptation. Within these super-ordinate themes were twenty-five sub-themes.

Recognising the value of reflexivity, I asked an IPA researcher to interview me twice: once before commencing my research and again after completing the data analysis.

My research showed my nine participants' capacity to overcome extreme crisis. Through a challenging and painful process, they created a new life in the UK. This research enabled me to recommend a therapeutic model for working with political refugees in particular, and with all others who face traumatic upheaval.

Keywords: political refugees; lived experience; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA); human rights violation; adaptation; challenges; freedom; meaning; future; culture; trauma; existence; reflexivity; assumptions and bias.

Introduction

> *"When I arrived here, the first thing I saw was the symbol of here, that double decker red bus! Without knowing about my future or what might happen to me, I felt comfortable and relaxed. This was only a symbol, but I felt comfortable, I felt relaxed, and I felt safe and secure" (Sina, 2015).*

This existential-phenomenological study examines the lived experience of nine Iranian political refugees before and after moving to the UK. For confidentiality, I invited them to choose pseudonyms. Touching upon my project's potential as a whole, I set the scene for my research criteria and strategy by highlighting the historical and cultural background.

What is a political refugee? Existentially, these people seek freedom to exercise their life's meaning, to function as responsible persons, and to survive. Under the regime in their country their existence was under threat. This unbearable situation forced them to escape; to take responsibility to free themselves and others from that restricted environment.

In most texts, a refugee is defined on legal grounds, based on the 1951 UN Convention of Refugees. Most of the available literature focuses on loss and on experiences of torture, trauma, homelessness and high rates of emotional distress and mental disorder (Alayarian, 2007; Ahearn, 2000; Bemak et al. 2003; Bhugra et al. 2010; Blackwell, 2011; Colin, 2011; Espin, 1999; Papadopoulos, 2002; van der Veer, 1998). I began to ask whether this gives us a complete picture of their situational reality? In the light of phenomenology, how do refugees perceive themselves? How do they describe their experiences? What was it like for my participants – four women and five men - before they left their homeland? How did it feel when they first arrived in the UK, and what did they think their way of life might be? How would they describe their present situation, and what have they learned? What do they hope for, in the years to come?

Refugees in general seek safety from a dangerous situation by crossing international borders. I asked myself: What differentiates political refugees from

those forced to take refuge from war-zones or religious persecution, as in the case of 'Islamic State' in the Middle East and in the rest of the Arab world as well as, for example, in parts of Africa?

My participants clarified that political refugees take a stand in many different ways against injustice. In each case, they had made a conscious choice to oppose inequalities, repression and religious dictatorship in their country of origin, aware of the risks. They all faced the challenge of translating their values, philosophy and politics into their new circumstances in the UK. They had to cross cultural boundaries which distanced them from their inbuilt life patterns. They were subjected to stress and disorientation while seeking asylum. For them, asylum represented recognition, protection, respect and identity, enabling them to find themselves, to work and to integrate within the new society.

Much research has been carried out on refugees' issues from sociological, political and anthropological perspectives. My study focuses more on psychological aspects. I investigated the possible impact on my participants' psyches in the light of Van Deurzen's (2009) four dimensions – physical, social, psychological/personal and spiritual - and whether they need to rediscover meaning.

Refugees are usually labelled as victims of circumstance. Rather than focus solely on their problems, I set out to study my participants' experiences as a whole, positive or negative, destructive or productive, traumatic or transformative.

I was passionately motivated to conduct this research. From the beginning, I had to recognise the potential influence this might have on the entire research process. In the following four ways I hoped to access their lived experience more objectively.

Firstly, I reviewed my own personal background, to identify my assumptions, and to bracket my bias. Secondly, I monitored my own history's potential impact

on my participants' stories, and throughout the research process. Thirdly, I met my research supervisor regularly, to monitor my bias. Finally, I arranged for an IPA researcher to interview me twice, at the outset of my project and after completing the data analysis to examine the process, evolution and impact of the project as a whole. I also hoped to gain my participants' feedback on the findings.

In my view, life has purpose. My world-view – in which the ontology, epistemology and methodology of my project are rooted - shapes all aspects of my life, my existence and my actions, including my decision to study philosophical psychotherapy and counselling. Engaging with contemporary European philosophers such as Nietsche, Kierkegaard, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponti, I also studied the Persian philosophers: Avicenna, Gazzali, Rumi, Sopraverdi and Mullah Sadra. These interactions bridging different ideas enriched my theoretical and philosophical foundation. Clarke wrote: as Richard Bernstein (1991: 93) put it at an East-West philosophy conference, 'it is only through an engaged encounter with the other that one comes to a more informed, textured understanding of the traditions to which we belong' (Clarke 2002: 11).

After studying various qualitative methods such as narrative analysis, grounded theory and heuristic, as well as IPA. I chose Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to carry out my investigation. IPA explores human interactions while preserving a lived relationship with reality (van Kaam, 1969).

After the programme planning module, I began my literature review. I read articles and books about refugees, political refugees and psychotherapy for refugees, to develop my proposal. The literature review evolved from the basis of the emerging themes in my pilot study. For example when Sina described his ethnicity, I started to read about ethnicity: similarly, when 'recognition' emerged.

One of my main sampling criteria was the willingness of participants to discuss in depth their lived experience. Another was the homogeneity of those who found the research questions meaningful. Finding participants for my study was challenging. It is common to find amongst Iranian political refugees, major issues of mistrust. During the interviews, all of them mentioned their concern about regime spies' activities in this country. Their suspicion regarding a fellow Iranian whom they did not know, was natural. Over about a year, the process started to snowball, as they recommended me to others. Considering the issue of trust, prior to the formal interviews I arranged to meet them informally. When their trust was established, they became extremely open and helpful, and unanimously offered me more of their time. This enabled me to access rich data.

Using semi-structured interviewing as my method of data collection, I elicited detailed accounts, thoughts and feelings from participants. The interview schedule developed for this study followed up four primary domains: their life in Iran prior to their escape; the escape process; experiences of adaptation and resettlement in the UK, and finally, how they see their current situation and their future plans.

Each transcript, with one exception, was translated from Farsi to English. Eight of the participants decided that although they had fluent English, they would feel more relaxed talking with a fellow Iranian in their native language. The ninth, himself a skilled translator, preferred to give the interview in English. I transcribed his recording, and got his approval as well as those of the other eight. My translations of the other participants although time consuming, enabled me to engage more deeply with them.

After collecting the data, I used the IPA method to analyse it. The result was the emergence of five super-ordinate themes: threat to their existence; their value system and commitment; creating possibilities and escaping; psychological rebirth and overcoming obstacles ; and finally their sense of self and cultural

adaptation. These super-ordinate themes were developed from twenty-five sub-themes.

The research is being conducted through critical, self-reflexive enquiry. My reflexivity as a dynamic process began from commencement of the research, in particular working to bracket my bias and assumptions. In this respect I benefited from two interviews by an IPA researcher, before meeting the participants and after the data analysis. Furthermore I attended the IPA International Conference (18- 19th May, 2017, at Glasgow Caledonian University). I engaged with over twenty presentations at doctoral level, and took the opportunity to present my own, and to discuss it with other researchers. This not only developed my understanding of IPA, but also confirmed my own research process and its coherence, rigour, evolution and impact. The final process in my reflexivity was to present my project to the director of a therapy organisation for refugees, and to two of my participants whose feedback is described in chapter six.

The subjective nature of qualitative data led my purpose, not to form a generalized conclusion, but to open up rich fields. To assess the quality of my research, I followed Yardley's criteria as Smith et al. (2009) suggested, which presents basic principles: Sensitivity to Context; Commitment and Rigour; Transparency and Coherence; Impact and Importance. I monitored my participant's psychological state throughout, from our initial contact until the end of our working association. I provided each of them with a debriefing sheet containing relevant contact sources and information about therapeutic support. Each of my nine participants on finishing the interview, mentioned that it was therapeutic in itself. I kept in touch with them afterwards, to offer further assistance if needed.

My research showed that the physical and psychological existence of all my participants had been under threat. Under religious dictatorship they were committed to their value system and ideology. They created possibilities and

took risks to escape from an unbearable situation in Iran. On arrival in the UK, they all experienced a strong self connection, a sense of new life and safety. They could exercise their freedom and autonomy. They all faced new challenges in the adaptation process. All of them felt happy to be in the UK, and optimistic for the future.

This research suggests that existential phenomenological psychotherapy can generally help those who face extreme crisis such as trauma and in particular offers an effective way of working with political refugees and refugees in general. Existential phenomenology (EP) recognises and takes special interest in individual diversity. In this way, we can exercise our freedom to work with them creatively.

Refugees might have a problem confronting the perception of themselves as foreign in the eyes of others. Existential Phenomenology's validation of our cultural diversity should allow them space to develop their identity in the new environment. These are fundamental grounds for refugees' integration within the new society.

Working through cultural differences enables us to understand ourselves. Likewise, refugees may be enabled, by interacting with a new culture, to better understand their own. One of my participants told me about his improved command of his native language since he came to the UK. He is free here to exercise his intellect, exchange ideas and connect with his own culture. Although one cannot generalise for all refugees' circumstances, my aim was to investigate this process openly.

In Chapter One I describe the background and preparation to the research: who are refugees and who are political refugees? I highlight my life story, my experience as a political refugee, my previous studies and academic qualification, and my work as a therapist at the Refugee Council. Chapter one continues with the preparation stage, programme planning, advanced research seminars, PAP viva, ethics boards, reflections on the preparatory stage, and will

summarise my interview conducted by an IPA researcher. Chapter two focuses on the literature review. In chapter three I discuss my research strategy: ethics, sampling and recruitment. This is followed by my worldview, ontology, epistemology and methodology, and continues with my participants' demography, transcripts, data collection and analysis with extracts. In chapter Four I explore and discuss my findings. Chapter five includes clinical relevance and research dissemination. The final chapter covers my reflexivity on the entire project and its impact on my life, a summary of my second interview with an IPA researcher, validity and reliability, limitation, further study and future plans. I conclude with a summary of my research journal since 2014.

I hope this study may shed some light on refugees' issues and their existential struggle in the psychological context. I hope also, to assist those who work with refugees in various ways.

Chapter One

Background and preparation

In order to structure my research plan, I followed the conventional concept of 'refugee'. This guided my sampling and recruiting procedure, although I was aware it gave an incomplete picture. My findings offered a deeper understanding of my nine participants' lived experiences.

My story is summarised in this chapter, as it touches on the historical background and my passion for the research topic. For me, this process will enhance awareness of my own perspectives and experiences. This will help to differentiate them from those of my participants.

My research as a whole passed through several stages, each with its own merit The project was initiated through my ideas; to materialise them I needed to fulfil various academic requirements. The process for me moved from the world of ideas into realisation. It challenged me like mountain climbing. To reach the peak was not a straightforward path; often I had to descend into the valley and find another route. I had to adapt, to develop new skills, and to face the real difficulties raised. This chapter continues with my reflection on the preparatory process. For the reflexivity I asked my supervisor, who is competent in IPA research, to interview me and examine my readiness to enter my participants' world.

Who are refugees?

War, natural disasters, religious and political persecution and poverty have forced people time after time to flee across the borders of their homeland to find a safer environment abroad. Hannah Arendt wrote in 1943, refugees "driven from country to country represent the vanguard of their peoples" (Arendt, 1943). Since the creation of the state system at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648,

refugees remained a central feature of world politics. As world politics changes, so too the common understanding of who exactly is a 'refugee' has changed.

The First and Second World Wars dislocated many millions of people. After the Second World War, the United Nations recognised the emergency and tried to coordinate an international response to the refugee problem. The outcome of this development was the 1951 UN Convention of Refugees, which defined a refugee as: "a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear of persecution, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or return there" (the 1951 UN Refugee Convention).

In recent years, the demand for political change in some Arab countries has created millions of new refugees. Thousands of human rights activists and scholars have worked on this important issue, but mainly by politicizing it. This is because refugee movements play their part in international politics. My research humanized the refugee crisis by concentrating on deep individual experience, with the main focus on political refugees. The findings travel beyond the surface concept, and offer an improved understanding.

Who are Political Refugees?

The 1951 UN Refugee Convention defines political refugees legally, as those who are persecuted for their political opinion and activities opposing a non-democratic regime. Responding to refugees is a challenge to world order and justice. The Convention as a legal tool was designed to address the rights of refugees and international obligations towards them. My study focused on the personal dimension of those who made the voluntary choice, and the risks they took for their integrity and devotion to justice and human values.

From my work with thousands of refugees since 1981, I found that most political refugees took a conscious stance, with an awareness of the great risk to

themselves, their loved ones and families. However, in conducting my research, I remained open to the fact that others' findings might not always confirm my own.

I was aware also, that the optimistic outlook of the people I recruited was what made them willing to participate. Otherwise they might not have come forward.

My life story

I was born in 1958 in Tehran, and educated at Esfahan and Tehran Universities. In my final school year, I rose to be head student and was offered a scholarship to attend a private school. This helped my preparation for further education. Winning my place at Esfahan University was a great triumph for me and for my family. At 23, I obtained a Doctorate in Pharmaceutical Science and Pharmacology. My interest in the human psyche led me to study child psychology, where I also obtained a Diploma and taught it for six months. At university I met my first wife: a committed political and human rights activist.

My early background played a considerable part in focusing my attention on human rights and working for others. During the time of the Shah my father was imprisoned for two years for his political activity. His influence and his imprisonment inspired me to support his views.

At the age of 17 I became one of the founders of the student human rights movement and was elected as my group's main representative. Our aim was to help those in the poorest parts of Tehran and Esfahan who couldn't afford to go to school. We were also responsible for organizing and monitoring our university's active protests against the Shah.

After the Shah was overthrown, I was elected to the university's governing body, and I joined a political organization with progressive aims. In 1979, however, Khomeini came to power with his version of Islamic fundamentalism. We extended our activities by organizing surgeries in the poorest areas of Tehran

and Isfahan. It soon emerged that the mullahs' attitude violated basic human rights, especially where women and girls were concerned. Our desire to defend human rights values and democracy put us automatically in a difficult position.

Since those days, more than 120,000 people have been executed and over 800,000 imprisoned and tortured for supporting free speech and political change. Among them were two of my brothers, my first wife, and my sister, along with thousands of colleagues, friends and fellow students.

My experience as a political refugee

From 1979 I joined a Resistance movement. Our aim was to change the political situation. My commitment to the movement meant I left my job, my belongings and my family.

In 1981 the regime in Iran became very aggressive towards its political opponents; a period of bloodshed began. In June that year, I lost my connection with the Resistance (my own party), and joined its branch in Kurdistan for four years. I then joined its headquarters in France, spending the next three years or so moving between France and Kurdistan. Eventually I was sent to the UK. Although my formal political refugee status enabled me to stay in Europe, I remained within the Resistance movement and within our community. In other words, my experience is different from that of a refugee having to escape from his homeland directly to a safer place.

Since 1981 I worked with political refugees and their major issues. My personal commitment to this cause was ploughed into the psychotherapy and counselling I have been involved with.

My Previous Studies and Academic Qualifications

I obtained a Doctorate in Pharmaceutical Science at the Isfahan University in 1981, when I was 23. My deep interest in new ideas brought me into contact with stimulating companions from all walks of life. Finding an opportunity to

resume my studies, I obtained a Masters degree in Human Rights and Social Justice from London University (2007). Furthermore, I founded and am the director of a human rights organisation in the UK. As I planned to develop a counselling unit within it, I studied for four years to obtain my Certificate, my BACP Accredited Advanced Diploma and my Diploma in clinical supervision.

To develop my humanistic existential approach, I engaged deeply in this new direction, and organised a charity to offer therapeutic services to those unable to pay for their counselling. At the surgery, where I have been responsible for therapy for the last eight years, I have worked over a thousand counselling hours and supervised the work of 15 supervisees.

Seeing the beneficial impact on my work inspired me to further my learning and engagement within the existential therapy world. The work environment in the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling (NSPC) fascinated me. The quality of relationships between faculty directors encouraged me to enrol. Although my wife – a Professor of Philosophy – at first disapproved of the course, and I had to defend it, our discussions reinforced my self-knowledge and my determination to go right through the hurdle. My wife was eventually convinced.

Working as a Therapist at the Refugee Council

The Refugee Council (RC) is the UK's largest organisation working with refugees and asylum seekers. It provides them with support and advice and supports other organisations with similar objectives.

I worked as a volunteer counsellor within the Specialist Team at the RC for about one year. I used this opportunity to learn about the RC and to familiarise myself with its ideas, projects, methods and criteria within the various departments.

I chose to work at the RC because I was all too familiar with many of the issues, which the organisation handles, and my natural interest motivated me strongly. I wanted to help them and make use of my three decades of personal experience

in this way. I also learned from other refugees not to generalise or categorise their circumstances; each individual's experience is unique.

The Specialist Team worked closely with the health policy adviser, who advises health practitioners from the voluntary and statutory sector working with refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees are referred to the Specialist Team by RC staff and by external Primary Care Trusts.

While at the office, I usually spent an hour in the day centre talking to refugees from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kurdistan. The RC organises many events and lectures. Andy Keefe whom I had met in the past, gave a lecture at Gresham College on 19 October 2010. He had worked at the RC for 10 years. The topic was "Why do we hate, why do we help? Asylum seekers and ambivalence in Contemporary Britain". During our short conversation, he said the RC's unique approach, called the 'Therapeutic Casework Model', combines advocacy for refugees' practical needs with counselling skills and therapeutic care. Many at the RC believe this is the most effective model to work with vulnerable people, giving them real hope that they can cope and build a new life. However, this approach has not been validated by BACP or UKCP.

I learned a number of important things while I was working in the RC, but can outline only some of them here. RC members in general tried to create a friendly and supportive environment for clients. However, according to the BACP ethical code of practice, in therapeutic aspects of their activities they did not follow the same criteria. For example:

Most staff members and volunteers belonging to the specialist therapeutic team had no therapeutic training; even the manager of that team had no basic knowledge of therapy.

Confidentiality was not systematically a matter of concern. All members had access to all clients' personal information.

I spent much time challenging their system and was able to bring about some changes in the specialist team. I presented two papers while working there: the first one was on cultural diversity in counselling and the second was on domestic violence and counselling. At the General Meeting with the Executive Director of RC I learned that 62% of their funding had been cut. Later, I organised fundraising on their behalf and happily I was able to raise £5,000.

My personal experience working as an executive director of two NGOs, charities and voluntary organisations gave me a better understanding of RC's strengths and weaknesses. I had several meetings with trustees on the future of therapeutic services and fundraising. They agreed that these areas need to be fundamentally changed.

Working for RC proved invaluable. It enabled me to further enhance and mature my counselling skills. The complex crisis overwhelming most RC clients, required a profoundly skilled response. I observed, working with many of them, that the refugees felt removed from their culture, separated from those who spoke their language, and cast adrift. Most of them were in danger of losing their sense of identity. Added to that, many suffered from shock related to various traumatic experiences.

On one occasion of crisis, an Afghan client stabbed himself and police were involved. He spoke no English, and there was no interpreter available. I spoke to the manager and the police and offered my help. They allowed me to go and talk to him; I was able to calm him down. Since then, they referred complicated cases to me.

The Refugee Centre used the psychodynamic approach in some of their cases, but accepted my presence there as an existential counsellor. I was permitted to work outside their parameter and to separate therapy issues from general welfare issues.

Programme Planning

The Programme Planning Module, a one-day session, was the first step into my doctoral research project.

The day began with a general workshop on the regulations in programme planning as applied to our research topics. Lectures were given on ethics governance and how to select a research supervisor. Each of us was given about twenty minutes to present an outline of our project, and an opportunity to receive feedback from students and lecturers. After I presented my project, Emmy responded very positively, saying, 'This is like the phoenix rising from the ashes!' and she later encouraged me to use this phrase in the title.

I was considering Dr Rosemary Lodge as a potential supervisor. Later I approached her. On 30 April I received an email from her agreeing to supervise my project. She was my first choice. She pointed out that she is not experienced in the political field, and I replied that this is for me not a problem but a positive factor, and I looked forward to working with her. I then asked Dr Chloe Mitchell to become my secondary supervisor and she accepted. From about this time I began to work on my literature review. I also wrote down my ideas and philosophical background, and began to develop my proposal for a pap viva. I additionally gave some thought to how I might recruit my participants.

Advanced Research Seminar

In the Advanced Research Seminar, we worked on our research proposals, and I presented my proposal to the group and received very constructive feedback and encouragement from other students. We also looked at the Middlesex university ethics forms for submission to the ethics board, the participants' 'information sheet', the informed consent, the 'debriefing sheet', the 'PESC application form' and the 'risk assessment'. I wrote a brief 1000 word essay on disseminating my research, before submitting my proposal to the ethics board.

Pap Viva

On 29 December 2014, I submitted my proposal for pap viva, and it was approved subject to meeting conditions and recommendations. It was considered 'a fascinating and important piece of research on a topic of great human importance'; however, I should formulate my assumptions more clearly, explain my choices in the sampling criteria, and specify which demographic information I would collect. My formulation of the heuristic portion of the study needed clarification, in order to understand my potential impact on participants. I was also asked to clarify my recruitment strategy and how I would avoid recruiting people I already knew. I was asked why I increased the number of participants in my study, and was recommended to reformulate my interview questions in the light of the Four Worlds, in order to obtain this data. I was asked to work with my supervisor on proof reading and other technical points.

Ethics Board

Having met these conditions, I faced the next challenge: the ethics board committee, which did not approve my application. The board recommended that I should enhance my reflexivity section to show possible alternative versions of a refugee's experience. I should address how I would bracket my own experiences in order to be open to the participants' and amend the tone of the documents to reflect this. I should use the openness of my interview questions as a guideline for setting the tone. The ethics committee also suggested I consider amending the title of the research to allow for alternative viewpoints, which might or might not arise in the voices of participants.

Both my supervisors told me this was a natural development, and were encouraging. I realised after serious reflection, that the first point referred to statements that I had made about refugees, that might be too general. For example, the fact that although it is extremely likely that refugees would be moving from the familiar to the strange, it was not necessarily true of all cases.

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The idea was that my work needed to be open enough to encompass the potentially varied voices of the participants.

I should also take care how things were phrased so that the voices of my participants would emerge, rather than my being too emotive. The reader in the ethics committee, felt that my interview questions did reflect this more open tone, and that I could use this as a baseline for the rest of the documentation.

I had initial concerns about my own experiences causing bias and particularly lest my passion for communicating the issues lead some examiners to think that I might be making too many assumptions or shaping the project's outcome. When I was questioned in the pap viva however, it was clear to them that I was not making assumptions. The panel had felt confident in my openness, and approved the project.

I fulfilled the conditions carefully, and on 17 July 2015 I received a letter from the chairperson of the ethics board, approving my application.

A good trust and rapport developed between my primary supervisor and myself. She felt we had developed a firm foundation for the project.

Part 1 Research

The online part-1-research module which I took in the autumn term of 2015, was designed to help students to conduct their pilot study. The main focus was on research strategy including methodology. As we worked on different stages of our pilot studies, we gave feedback to each other's work. At the end of the module we gave presentations of our pilot studies. Here also I received a positive response from lecturers and from other students.

In the middle of this module I received an email from Rosemary. She told me that as she had left NSPC she could no longer supervise my project. She offered to help me out until I could find a replacement. This was rather challenging for me, as we had developed a good relationship. It took about a month to find a

new primary supervisor. I felt as if I had to start all over again. It was a painful process.

Reflection on the Preparation stage

I examined life, death and meanings, existentially. Psychological flexibility was required, to keep those meanings fresh – particularly concerning the vital awareness of death, attitudes and experiences of death, and what human strengths and qualities are most likely to survive imprisonment under brutal regimes. Those who survive have an inner life, which is rich in meanings – the ability to connect and to contact, to be spiritually in touch with their internal resources, and through this, with the world.

What qualities helped other refugees to survive, and to re-connect to life? How did they rise from the ashes?

Summary of the first interview conducted by an IPA researcher

I requested this interview from my supervisor, an expert in IPA methodology , as a means of further reflection on my work. I sought objectivity and wished to develop our working relationship. She prepared a number of questions: for example, my motivation; and did I wish to give voice to myself or to my participants? and to find out if I was able to stand outside the topic, consider it objectively and bracket my assumptions. She probed my open frame of mind while interviewing my participants, my expectations, and identifying my bias. She wanted to know if I could differentiate my experience from that of my participants, and to assure herself of the rigorous process of my research, its transparency, coherence and journal. She also wished to know my matters of concern. In fact from the beginning I knew it would be difficult for me to recruit participants, because of the crucial issue of trust. By then, I had recruited two. She asked what my expectations were, of my research's reception in the academic world. Would my therapeutic skills while interviewing my participants, enable me to focus on their lived experience rather than on their ideas? How

would I ensure the translation's accuracy, and as a therapist, stay in the role of a researcher. How would I handle participants in distress or danger, or pleas for help or legal support?

At the end of the interview, my supervisor said, "You are in a different place from when you started. There is clarity and openness. I feel you are ready to jump in."

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

There are around 18 million asylum seekers and refugees worldwide, mostly (approximately 86%) in developing countries, many of them in refugee camps. Some 2% reside in the UK - just 0.27% of the UK population (UNHCR, 2014).

The world is now experiencing its biggest refugee crisis in recorded history (Chanoff, 2016). The Middle East and North Africa region has become the focus of some significant intersecting topics in the contemporary scholarly discourse about refugees and their rights (Ullah, 2014). In Britain the debate about asylum seekers and refugees is at the centre of political concerns (Papadopoulos – 2002; House of Commons, International Development Committee, 2016).

In much of the literature, the terms "asylum seeker" and "refugee" are used interchangeably. An asylum seeker has crossed international borders to seek safety and applies for refugee status under the 1951 UN Convention. A refugee is a person whose application has been successful (McColl, McKenzie & Bhui, 2008).

This chapter offers a critical evaluation of the available and relevant literature with reference to Iranian political refugees' experiences in Britain.

I began by asking: What is a political refugee? What has been written about his or her experience? My initial intention was to study the literature in relation to four defined stages of my participants' experiences: life in Iran prior to their escape, the escape process, adaptation to resettlement in Britain and finally their current situation and future plans. However, after extensive search I was unable to find any academic study about Iranian political refugees' lived experiences in

Britain. I therefore opened up my reading to include the experience of Iranian political refugees in other countries and refugees more generally.

My main emphasis was on the psychological aspect of their overall experience.

Does the available literature give us a clear picture of the actual conditions for political refugees? In the light of phenomenology, how do they perceive themselves? How do they describe their experiences? What was it like for Iranian political refugees before they left their homeland? How did it feel when they first arrived in the UK, and what did they think their way of life might be? How would they describe their present situation, and what have they learned? What do they hope for, in the years to come?

Being a political refugee myself, my study was conducted as an insider, and involved my participants' subjective experience. In the literature most research studies are conducted from outside.

My literature review evolved with the research process itself. For example the pilot study stimulated my curiosity and prompted further investigation.

The literature selected for inclusion in the review comes mainly from academic books and journals. Their particular relevance is based upon credible research.

My review of the literature covered a range of broad search terms including, but not limited to, the following:

- Historical background;

- Iranian politics;

- Iranian political refugees;

- Women's rights and identity;

- Universalism and cultural relativism in Iran;

- The women's movement in Iran;

- The discriminatory gender attitude of the Iranian regime;

- Refugee and family;

- The moral dilemma of defending human rights with risk to family;

- Concept of political refugees;

- Refugees' psychology;

- Trauma, PTSD and refugees;

- Torture of political prisoners;

- Positive capability versus the impact of traumatic experiences;

- Identifying therapeutic issues;

- Ethnicity and cultural diversity

- Trust;

- Psychology and politics;

- Feelings of guilt;

- Recognition;

- Language;

- Adaptation.

Historical background

As the activities and beliefs of political refugees have usually been central to their identity, it is useful to have some background knowledge of their homelands' politics and political history (Blackwell, 2005; Taylor, 2015). What might I discover in the literature concerning the human rights situation in Iran?

Mass movements of Iranian refugees have been recorded for many centuries. The best known of these was the Zoroastrian community's arrival in Gujurat in

India following the Arab invasion in A.D. 936. (Boyce 1986: 157,166.) Another collective group persecuted for their beliefs was the Babis who fled to Turkey in the mid-19th century (Kasravi, 1943: 33-40; Browne, 1959: 111-12, 226,352).

Since the 1979 Revolution, which ended over 50 years of the Pahlavi regime, around four million Iranians - mainly intellectuals, well-educated professionals and human rights activists - were forced to escape their homeland (Eilk, 2012). This has continued up until the present day and is comprehensively documented within the social-political context. To what extent has this phenomenon been studied from a psychological perspective?

Most of the existing literature not only fails to recognise different types of refugee, but also conflates those who have left Iran without differentiating refugees from emigrants (Morrice, 2011; Aidani, 2007).

For example, many who left their country were not necessarily motivated to change the political situation. Many intellectuals and professionals seeking a more congenial environment for their work were able to leave the country legally. The IMF in 2009 reported the world's highest rate of brain drain from Iran: an emigration of 180,000 educated skilled individuals (Varasteh, 2013; Sohrabian and Sohrabian, 2014; Hakimzadeh, 2006; Zdanowski, 2014). It has been suggested that, following the Revolution, political factors contributed greatly to this brain drain (Torbat, 2002).

What impels such a large number of people to flee from Iran?

Two principal aims of the 1979 Revolution in Iran yet to be realised are "Independence" and "Freedom" (Semati, 2007) and to establish human rights and social justice for all people (Ehteshami and Molavi, 2012). The vast majority of authors within the literature, despite different emphasis, take the view that the regime failed to implement these principles (Afshari, 2011; Ehteshami &

Molavi, 2012; Esfandiari, 1997; Ganji, 2002; Gheissari and Vali Nasr, 2009; Hooglund, 2002; Mohaddessin, 2001; Pahlavi, 2001; Varasteh, 2013)

Within weeks of Khomeini's founding the new regime, his supporters and clerics took control of administrative, police and judicial functions in the cities and in the state. For this he had developed his own religious theory '*Velayath el Faqih*', which derives its justification and theoretical basis from fiqh (jurisprudence) encompassing all aspects of individual and social life (Adib-Moghaddam, 2014). Executions of high-ranking army officers and civilian officials from the Shah's regime began.   This period saw the first waves of refugee exodus, mainly to the United States.

Those who played a significant role in the Revolution against the Shah faced persecution. Two weeks after the overthrow of the Shah and only one day before International Women's Day, Ayatollah Khomeini proclaimed that women must observe his interpretation of Islamic dress criteria. This was the first indication of the regime's views about women (Maloney, 2008).

During the second year of the Islamic regime, the Iran-Iraq war began in September 1980 and lasted 8 years, the longest conventional war of the 20th century. Mobilisation for the war and other related emergency measures increased the undisputed dominance of Khomeini and helped firmly establish the new regime, which hoped by persistently pursuing the war to export the revolution to neighbouring Muslim countries. The results were 680,000 dead and missing, more than 1.5 million wounded, nearly 2 million refugees, enormous loss of property and complete disruption of the economy (Razouk, 2015). International writers very extensively document this.

Over 30 years, hundreds of thousands of political and human rights activists were imprisoned and tortured; they included students, writers, journalists, teachers, lecturers, workers, clerics, artists, filmmakers and members of religious and ethnic minorities. Their families were harassed, their properties confiscated and pensions suspended, leaving them destitute. It has become

routine for people to be put behind bars without charge and without the right to defend themselves before a proper court of law. The number of persons executed for their political beliefs totals more than 120,000, by conservative estimates. Public floggings, stoning to death, cutting off of fingers and the gouging of eyes are commonplace in the country (Ganji, 2002). Millions of Iranians have therefore risked their lives to escape from Iran and to gain freedom.

Although the United Nations, Amnesty International and the foreign ministries of European countries document these human rights violations, I found insufficient coverage of the experiences of individual victims.

Women's Rights and Identity

We learn from our reading about Iran that the people would go to almost any lengths to bring about democratic change in their country, and Iranian women have a significant role in this respect (Pahlavi, 2001; Mirsepassi, 2010; Varasteh, 2013; Rieffer-Flanagan, 2013) which is borne out by their history.

In April 1912, William Morgan Shuster (1968: 191) wrote about the role of women in Iran's constitutional revolution at that time: 'The Persian women since 1907, had become almost the most progressive, not to say radical, in the world. The women did much to keep the spirit of liberty alive.'

Women played a decisive role in all three major movements against dictatorship in Iran since the 19th century, but the present regime completely ignores the historical evidence (Esfandiari, 1997; Kinzer, 2011). Even now, the ruling regime in Iran denies women their proper human identity. Effectively, the mullahs manipulated Islam to repress women, whose insubordination poses a major threat to them. By regarding women as inferiors and the embodiment of sin, fundamentalism in the name of Islam practices the worst form of misogyny (McKinnon, 2007; Rajavi, 1995).   Women's situation in Iran is also well documented by organisations such as the United Nations, Amnesty International

and national and international women's groups, and through considerable studies carried out in this area, in anthropology, sociology, political and feminist research. Again I found insufficient enquiry into the psychological impact.

Universalism and Cultural Relativism in Iran

What can we learn from the literature about the human rights situation in Iran? What role does religion play in the discourse? Many scholars debate the notion of universalism versus cultural relativism (Taylor, 1992; Nussbaum, 1999; Poya, 2000; Assiter, 2003; Calder, 2006; Arendt, 2013; Donnelly, 2013).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins: '...recognition of the inherent dignity and equal inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world' (UDHR, 1948).

With its strategic location, natural resources, and historical and cultural role, Iran occupies a significant historical position in the Muslim world. Nowadays, discriminatory practices towards women are built into its Constitution. This marks the difference between the nation's cultural tradition and values, and those represented by the present regime. Since 1981, the Iranian regime has led a struggle to modify the UN Declaration of Human Rights, on the grounds that it is a secular interpretation by the Judeo-Christian tradition. The regime rules that Muslims cannot accept this above "the divine law of the country" (Littman, 2003).

From a historical perspective, the roots go back to the first centuries of Islam. In modern times, weaker fundamentalist movements sprang up in different parts of the world. But what we now call Islamic fundamentalism emerged with the Khomeini's rise to power in Iran in 1979 and began to impact on the Middle East and the world. Iran's unique position in the Muslim world provides the fundamentalists with inspirational, political, regional, and international support (Mohaddessin, 2001).

Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-89) was the first ruler of a Muslim state since 1258 - the year of the conquest of Baghdad by the Mongol ruler Hulagu Khan - to wield both political and religious power. He made a breakthrough with his claim that only those most learned in Islamic law can rule (Mohaddessin, 2001). Since no existing state had such a ruler, Khomeini's doctrine sought to overturn every extant form of authority and replace it with rule by Islamic jurists (ibid).

In 1984, the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that 'Iran would not recognize the validity of any international principle that was contrary to Islam' (Freeman, 2005: 48). The founder of the Iranian regime, Ayatollah Khomeini, declared that 'what they call human rights is nothing but a collection of corrupt rules worked out by the Zionists to destroy all true religions' (Rieffer-Flanagan, 2013).

According to UN records since 1979, the Iranian regime has been condemned 62 times by the UN General Assembly. The regime's version of Islam is a political movement conceptualised by Khomeini's own interpretation of the Qur'an (Mohaddessin, 2001). His cultural relativism argues that there are no universal human rights; rights are culture-specific and culturally determined. This remains a formidable and corrosive challenge to women's rights to equality and dignity (Assiter, 2003).

In his book, 'Tahrir-al Vasileh', Khomeini (1963: 305-6) states unequivocally that … 'women are sinister creatures. If a woman refrains from providing a favourable atmosphere to please her husband, he has the right to beat her, and he should make her submit by beating her more every day … A wife should not go out of her house without her husband's consent, even if she wants to visit her family or her father or to attend a funeral.'

In this medieval atmosphere, women are of scant human value. Married women require their husband's permission to apply for a passport, and there is no legal protection for victims of domestic violence, which is difficult to escape through divorce (Erturk, 2005). Is the suffering inflicted on the women and girls of Iran "cultural" or "criminal"?

The Women's Movement in Iran

The Shah's (King of Persia, overthrown in 1979) regime tried a subtly destructive approach to the women's rights issue. By imposing Western culture on them, the Shah's regime tried to conceal its denial of their genuine political, social and cultural rights. Victory in the 1979 Revolution against the Shah was made possible only through the active and large-scale participation of Iranian women. On 7th March 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini decreed that Iran was now an Islamic state so that women must observe the Hijab dress code (Fast, 2005). Women were preparing to celebrate their international day and Khomeini's statement was politically timed: the first indication of the regime's views. Having hitherto participated in the Revolution as members of different political and social forces, they now found themselves targeted specifically as women. Yeganeh and Tabari (1982: 35) said: 'Since the Revolution, and the first Government attack on women's status and the women demonstrating against it, the 'women's question' came to the forefront, to be considered, discussed, defended or rejected'.

The Discriminatory Gender Attitude of the Iranian Regime

In Iran, gender inequality and the suppressions of women's rights are systematic and legal. Rafsanjani stated (1986): 'One of the mistakes that Westerners make is to forget that the difference in the stature, vitality, voice, development, muscular quality and physical strength of men and women shows that men are stronger and more capable in all fields. Men's brains are larger' (Motlagh, 2004).

A husband can deny his wife any profession or job which he considers would run counter to the interests of the family or the wife's dignity (Mansouri, 1997). Child custody laws are blatantly discriminatory (Constitutional Articles 1180 and 1043) and marriage for girls is conditional on the 'consent of the father or grandfather'. In his book of views and *fatwas, 'Tahrir-ol Wassila'*, Khomeini carefully degrades women to a level lower than that of slaves. He sanctions "temporary marriage,"

legitimising prostitution, specifying that a sum be paid to the woman for use of her body. (Khomeini, 1963: 289, 313.) Polygamy is legal, with men permitted to have four wives and an unlimited number of temporary wives. Men make all family decisions, including those governing the movements of women and custody of children. The Deputy Minister of Education for Women's Affairs, Fatemeh Tondgouyan, said that 20 people attempt suicide daily in Iran, and almost half of them succeed in taking their lives. They are mostly young girls ... the rate of suicide in Iran is three times the international average... (Hughes, 2000). Although there are by now very extensive academic resources for the study of the women's situation in Iran in the sociological and political context, it is difficult to find evidence of their experience of discrimination.

Refugee and Family

Is an Iranian refugee's experience of family life accommodated by the Western concept of family?

The nature of the family unit in the West has changed considerably over the centuries. I have found that in the literature, the unit which we call 'family' is not easily defined. Foley wrote the following: 'The UN Human Rights Committee recognises that the concept of the family may differ both between and within states and therefore it is not possible to give a standard definition of the family' (Foley, 1995:150). Diduck and Kaganas, in their book 'Family Law, Gender and the State', say: 'there is no statutory definition of family, and there is really no common law definition either (Diduck and Kaganas, 1999: 19).

In an encyclopaedia, I read that 'a family consists of a group of people typically affiliated by birth or marriage, or by comparable legal relationships. This includes domestic partnership, adoption, surname and in some cases, ownership as occurred in the Roman Empire. Minuchin describes family as 'a group of people, connected emotionally and/or by blood' (Munichin, 2006: 33). However, many anthropologists have argued that we must regard the notion of "blood"

metaphorically, and that many societies understand "family" through concepts other than genetic. Fineman suggests, from a feminist perspective, that the notion of a family should rest upon a mother–child relationship. She is careful to say however that 'men as well as women could perform the mother role' (Hague and Malos, 1993: 11).

Bowen defines family as a system. A change in any part of the system has a knock-on effect. He considers 'the family as a combination of emotional and relationship systems' (Bowen, 1978: 155, 158). Samasundaram says 'family is central to traditional collectivistic communities … there are strict hierarchical roles and obligations that emphasise harmony and support to each other during difficulties' (Samasundaram, 2010: 77).

Within Iranian culture, a family is considered a nuclear unit consisting of father, mother and children. In my study I will adopt this traditional definition – a form which may or may not have existed historically in a majority of households in the West, but nevertheless is presented as something universal. Minuchin draws our attention to the way traditional concepts of 'family' bring exceptions to mind, such as a childless couple, with a long and devoted marriage, or a mixed family with remarried parents and step-siblings (Minuchin, 2006).

Within this common ground, we may observe that the texture of meanings within a family is richly expressed through shared language and codes. A family has a commitment to its shared history, consolidating mutual behaviours and 'the way we look'. Emotional bonds may also be antagonistic or hostile. Family members appear in our inner world – we 'knew them always'; this human landscape is familiar territory. A family is likely to share a strong ethical basis, sense of dignity and value system. In the case of a refugee's family, we should consider cultural differences from the host country's set of meanings, behaviour norms and values. Refugee families face also that which is different from their own ethnicity. The self-identity has to confront and adapt to a new environment.

Concept of Political Refugees

"What does 'foreigner' mean? Who is foreign? Who is the foreign man,
who is the foreign woman? What is meant by 'going abroad', 'coming from
abroad'?" (Derrida, *2000b)*

Human individuals and groups have always moved to other lands to seek safety, food and shelter for children or family, for ideological or religious freedom, or to escape war, political persecution or torture.

Most of the literature applies the general concept of "refugee" to those who cross international borders to seek safety and survival from dangerous situations and human rights abuses (Great Britain, House of Commons - Home Affairs Committee 2013-2014; Betts & Loescher, 2011; van der Veer, 1998; Papadopoulos, 2002). Probably all refugees escape from a familiar environment to a strange one (Van Der Veer, 1998 and Banks & McGee Bank, 2001). However, in Betts and Loescher's view, the term 'refugee' means different things in different contexts (Betts & Loescher, 2011).

In the existing literature it is not easy to find a specific focus on political refugees. In most texts, the definition of any refugee is based on the 1951 UN Refugee Convention (Frelick, 1988; Linesch, 2013; Bhugra et al. 2010; Papadopoulos, 2002; van der Veer, 1998). This is basically a legal definition.

Such definitions are inadequate to identify the levels of distress and psychological needs (Hollifield et al. 2002).

Bhugra wrote how a refugee is conceptualised: 'The definitions are often complicated and dictated by the legal system of the new country' (Bhugra et al. 2010: 1).

In Zetter's view, 'refugee' refers to the result of arbitrary administrative and political decisions. 'Refugees' do not conform to a simple, universal idea, but

often resist and resent the labels and policies of those who seek to help them (Zetter, 1991).

The social anthropology discipline gives a perspective on the individual within an encompassing social system, such as kinship, economics, marriage and politics.

Loizis suggests that it might be helpful to understand refugees through social capital theory (Loizis, 2000). The theory argues in favour of a dependable environment, consisting of a stable social network, shared values and community commitment. This includes access to reliable information.

It is generally assumed that a refugee is traumatised by the experience of forced migration: a helpless and dependent person; socially isolated; will have difficulty in adjusting to life in a new country because of 'cultural differences'; and needs across-the-board support (Papadopoulos, 2002). All these views give a general picture. How should we define refugees phenomenologically? I could not find any definition from the refugees' own perspective.

Trauma, PTSD and refugees' psychology

In the extensive literature, the main emphasis concerning refugees' psychological state is on trauma. It is said that most refugees suffer trauma (Reyes and Jacobs, 2006). Since 1990 in many Western host countries, 'trauma' has been considered synonymous with the refugees' experience (Overland, Guribye and Lie, 2014). Traumatic episodes threaten an individual's physical and psychological integrity, triggering reactions of terror, paralysis and helplessness whenever they are recalled (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Lodrick, 2007; Rothschild, 2000).

In Sadavoy's view, trauma increases sensitivity to one's own mortality (Sadavoy, 1997). Many existential therapists consider that some individuals are able to use this crisis as an opportunity for transformation and to define themselves at a deeper level of meanings, values and life purposes (Jacobsen, 2006; van

Deurzen, 1997; Park et al. 1996; Frankl, 1969; Yalom, 1980). Some scholars comment on the imposition of Western ideas on the theory of trauma (Summerfield, 2008; Pupavac, 2004b).

Critics have debated whether the Western concept of traumatic stress can be applied to refugees from other cultures. Pupavac argues that individuals' and communities' unique experiences cannot be homogenized. People experience traumatic events differently and individual needs should not be aggregated to the societal level (Pupavac, 2004b). She says that modern "Western" culture has an individualised conception of the self: valuing individual feelings, lacking ties to a broader community or communal identity, framing social issues within emotional terms, and disposed to introspection (ibid).

A key criticism is that the word 'trauma' is loosely used, without regard to collective and communal responses to hardship and the potential to adapt (Wilson and Drozdek, 2004; Summerfield, 1999). Eyber and Ager state that the Western approach to trauma counselling might be ineffective unless it takes account of the cultural matrix (Eyber & Ager, 2002).

Conversely, for Papadopoulos as a clinical psychologist and systemic therapist, the core condition shared by refugees and all immigrants, is the uprooting of their home, and the challenge to create a new one. 'Loss of home is the only condition shared by all refugees: not trauma' (Papadopoulos, 2002: 9). They must face uncertainty and the new culture's dissonance with their own, and cope with economic and prejudicial stress (ibid). However Papadopoulos also failed to address refugees' own experience.

What is home? What does it mean for the refugee? The home can also be viewed in the psychological dimension. All human beings have the sense of home and the combination of feelings associated with it, regardless of the actual home's shape or style. Perhaps if an inner sense of home is existentially strong, the trauma of losing it or dislocating can be better withstood. How do refugees regard their sense of home?

In my reading I found a tendency to modify traditional therapy to fit refugees' specific needs, such as housing, finance, employment and the legal position. This is also reflected in some psychoanalytic and psychodynamic circles. Papadopoulos uses the term 'therapeutic care' rather than psychotherapy and states that in order to assist refugees, therapeutic care brings a wider application to the psychotherapeutic principle. It can be applied to 'their housing, educational, medical and financial needs' (ibid: 4). What would a refugee actually expect from therapy? Is the need for therapy imposed upon them, or is it their own request?

Papadopoulos has also argued however, that to assume most refugees suffer from a 'wound which will not heal and that they need specialist support is to underestimate the capacity of people to successfully heal themselves, or to gain the support from those who lived through similar events' (Papadopoulos 2002: 44).

The complexity of trauma has prompted a variety of scholarly responses. In her extensive study of Middle Eastern refugee children, Edith Montgomery found that they were mainly traumatised by violence in camps outside their home country (Montgomery, 1998).

In the literature, much attention has been given to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related to natural disasters and war, and usually individual-focused. PTSD as defined by the *American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in 1980, categorized by four symptoms: intrusive re-experiencing, avoidance, hyperarousal, and hypervigilance, with general symptoms of anxiety and dysphoria in addition (Ford & Courtois, 2009). According to DSM, the traumatic event must produce a significant level of stress and also to be defined universally (Joseph et al. 1997). However, cross-cultural applicability and universal characteristic of PTSD prompted significant debate within field of psychosocial programming as well as in psychology, psychiatry and anthropology (Hinton and Lewis-Fernández 2011).

This claim to universality and cross-cultural applicability of PTSD has prompted significant debate within the field of psychosocial programming and more broadly in psychology, psychiatry and anthropology. The May 2013 publication of the new *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-V) also prompted heated debate about the nature of psychiatric diagnoses, including the cultural value of PTSD in particular (Hinton and Lewis-Fernández 2011).

Researchers tend to neglect the collective parameters of the experience as well as its wider social-political context. Extensive further study was undertaken about the advantages and disadvantages of this classification, as well as about the limitation of its applicability cross culturally.

A systematic review of refugees' resettlement in the West found that 10% experienced symptoms consistent with PTSD (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005). This makes it difficult for asylum seekers to organise specific memories of their personal past (Graham, Herlihy and Brewin, 2014) in the process of their application to the Home Office.

Herman emphasises that disempowerment and disconnection from others characterise the core of psychological trauma. In her view recovery is impossible in isolation, but can be achieved only through relationships (Herman, 2001).

In the last three decades, humanitarian programmes have increasingly sought to address psychological needs and to promote social wellbeing (Ager 1993; Miller and Rasco 2004; van Ommeren et al. 2005). This growing prioritisation of psychological issues in humanitarian settings can be seen in the development of new types of assistance efforts, described by the umbrella term "mental health and psychosocial support" (MHPSS) programmes. However, the MHPSS field is marked by intense debate and is frequently grounded in Western understandings of mental health and wellbeing. (Ager 1993; Angel et al. 2001). Ingleby (2005) argues that "Western cultural norms" are not a static but a discreet set of values and practices, that can easily be exported and imposed on "non-Western" culture.

Ahearn brought together some eminent researchers in refugee studies from various disciplinary backgrounds to examine how they met the cross-cultural challenges in their research. Ahearn and his associates, while recognising the focus in most of the literature upon symptoms of stress and trauma, used the term "wellness". They aim in their study to avoid depicting refugees as psychiatric patients, victims, emotional cripples or as always dependent and helpless (Ahearn, 2000). By around 1996, the WHO had coined the phrase, 'psychosocial well-being of refugees'. However, I find that although some research has been conducted on a psychoanalytic or psychodynamic basis, there has been little study based on existential and phenomenological principles, and a definition for therapists to use in their work with refugees has yet to be found.

What does a refugee's political stance and identity really mean to her or him? What is the impact of their value system and cultural attitude in their experience of trauma? The legal definition misses that sense of self-identity, which is crucial for therapy.

Positive Capability versus Traumatic Experiences

A refugee's psychological state may be influenced by the choices he or she has made: to keep silent, to fight or to escape. For instance, a woman activist under Iran's misogynist regime is not allowed to visit her father without her husband's permission. What psychological and cultural barriers did she already overcome, to define herself as an activist? This factor has not been addressed.

Another aspect is the focus on loss and on experiences of torture, trauma, homelessness and high rates of emotional distress and mental disorder. Many books on the subject identify refugees as persons who have lost their home, livelihood and social identity (Bhugra, 2010; Papadopoulos, 2002; van der Veer, 1998; Colin, 2011). Labelling them in that way gives an incomplete picture of their situation or reality. Papadopoulos says, "being a refugee is not a pathological condition". However, the complexity of working with refugees

caused him to ask: "how can we respond to their undeniable suffering without pathologising it?" (Papadopoulos, 2002: 36). Most writers address this suffering, but tend not to specify the capabilities of political refugees. In their native land, they might already have made a significant change in their lives. This should be recognised in therapeutic work. Traumatic events do not by themselves define refugees; they may be scarred from these events, but not incapacitated or disabled (Papadopoulos, 1999b, 2001a).

Within the trauma literature are examples of such individuals whose resilience enabled them to transform their traumatic experiences positively (Herman, 2001; Papadopoulos, 2002; Splevins et al., 2010; Joseph & Linley, 2005; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).   The change enhanced their interpersonal relationships and their self-awareness. In many cases, their world view, attitude and philosophy of life evolved.

Identifying Therapeutic Issues

I have found very little in the literature about the spiritual crisis of refugees who have experienced defeat or removal from the front-line of battle. Their friends have been tortured or executed; reaching safety in Europe, they might suffer survivors' guilt. Political refugees who came to the Medical Foundation expressed their feelings of guilt about the fate to which they may have abandoned their friends and families, who may be targeted by the regime because of their escape (Blackwell, 2005). There may be issues with the host country's attitude towards the regime they opposed; the host country is often inhospitable.

Political viewpoints and belief systems in both client and therapist may challenge the therapeutic relationship and its neutrality. Additionally, therapists in the UK unaccustomed to the acute political concerns of those who have suffered under other regimes may find themselves under scrutiny from their clients. Also, refugees unfamiliar with the culture of psychotherapy are confronted with the uncharted complexity of a therapeutic relationship. If they find someone they

trust, they mostly need to express their political views. Their first concern is whether or not the therapist is their ally against the regime. This is the environment in which they move and function physically, emotionally and spiritually. Might their political conscience and activities form an immediate barrier to interaction with the new society? (ibid)

Similarly, would a therapist working with refugees unfamiliar with psychotherapy need particular expertise, skill and knowledge to create an acceptable therapeutic environment? There is insufficient literature on how to develop this skill. Some organizations such as The Medical Foundation, Refugee Council and Therapy for Refugees have made a significant contribution to therapeutic work with refugees. However, these organizations' charitable status brings an additional complexity: to gain enough support, they might tend to maximize refugees' vulnerability. For example, the Refugee Council has developed a new method known as 'therapeutic casework' to provide housing, practical help and medical support for refugees. But does it meet therapeutic standards? Some counsellors may even undermine their own professionalism in order to represent their situation to funding bodies.

Conversely, Blackwell has also suggested that some of their clients may use therapy as a means of gaining citizenship and acceptance in their new country. The realities of torture, killing and oppression can be overwhelming to an inexperienced therapist (Blackwell, 2005). Do people working with refugees need personal therapy themselves to cope with the emotions aroused? Should an intelligent framework be developed to protect the therapist?

Ethnicity and Cultural Diversity

Psychotherapists in general acknowledge cultural issues when working with refugees (Dana, 2000; Espin, 1999; Ahearn, 2000; Colin, 2011; Vera, 2012; Sue, 2015). Burnett and Thompson (2005) point out how cultural viewpoints with their own criteria for crisis handling or seeking help may differ in

interpreting psychological health. Not much has been written about the uniqueness of political refugees' individual experiences or recognising these within their wide ethnic and cultural variety. The belief is held in some cultures that misfortune, including psychological disorder, befalls those who are victims of their own past bad actions which turn back on them, or of spirit possession. Some scholars point out that Western countries interpret mental illness and emotional distress differently from other cultures (Ahearn, 2000; Burnett and Thompson, 2005; Gregg, 2005; Laungani, 2006; Li, 2012). A generalised comparison between cultures fails to address refugees' personal experience of their culture. Insufficient phenomenological study has been done in this respect.

With political refugees in particular, we need some understanding not only of their history, background and culture, but also of the politics of their home country (Blackwell, 2005). Those working with refugees should be able to grasp their clients' core political beliefs, and root-feeling for their homeland. The more oppressed they are, the stronger these beliefs and feelings are likely to be.

Their motivation to come to the UK, their family situation, the traumatic events they have experienced, their social class, their level of political activity in their homeland and their need for safety and confidentiality are conditions requiring specific therapeutic knowledge and skills. We researchers and therapists should set aside our notions of their cultural ethnicity in order to learn and be open to their lived experience.

Bemak, Chung and Pedersen developed a multi-level model (MLM) of psychotherapy with refugees: therapists must develop cultural sensitivity to individuals' and families' world-view and try to understand their socio-political and historical backgrounds. However, they state that 'in the Asian culture, direct eye contact is intrusive and offensive (Bemak, Chung and Pedersen, 2003: 47). By generalising about Asian culture, the multi-level model fails in practice to recognise refugees' unique experiences. Ethnicity or culture should be learned about from the participants' viewpoint, across the customary definitions.

Reviewing the literature, I find culture and ethnicity are regarded as significant parameters in working with refugees in research or therapy, but that refugees' lived experiences are not taken into account. Ethnicity and culture are sometimes interchanged.

Ethnicity is fundamentally about the drawing and re-drawing of boundaries, the nation's borders, as well as the immigration of minds and community (Cottle, 2000). Our approaches to ethnicity focus on the common bonds of language, myth and habit, which bind members of an ethnic community together. Ethnicity may be defined as the cultural collective memory that ethnic communities hold dear.

Wen-shing Tseng is founding President of the World Association of Cultural Psychiatry. In his view, culture is not static but dynamic, referring to a set of beliefs, attitudes, and value systems which derive from early stages. They develop through enculturation, to become an internal mode of regulating behaviour, action, and emotion (Tseng and Streltzer, 2001). Thus culture changes continuously across generations, responding to ever-changing environmental demands. Tseng regards culture as specific to each individual. The understanding and interpretation of phenomena such as flashback or certain aspects of traumatic experiences depends on the patient's and the therapist's cultural background. Does culture affects construction, expression and treatment of disease and shape illness categories?

Trust

In the literature, I came across the issue of trust. It is difficult to discover the lived experiences of political refugees in this respect. Have they lost their ability to trust others? Have they had to be mistrustful in order to protect themselves in a dangerous situation? Can they trust others, in a new environment? 'Trust is a psychological state, an attitude' (Castelfranchi and Falcone, 2010).

Some scholars regard trust as an interactive quality. The nature of trust when exercised through relationships is social rather than psychological or personal (Sztompka, 1999, Blobaum 2016). Political refugees will disclose personal information only to those with whom they feel safe. Until there is trust, their experience is based on fear, particularly for those left behind (Pedraza, 2007).

In his studies on forced migration and humanitarian emergency, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh noted the role of trust in maintaining or rebuilding a sense of identity (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014). To trust is to develop our faith in ourselves and in a better outcome. The ability to communicate essential inner meanings may empower those facing crisis to keep going, and to work for a better future.

Following Birx's view, in my research with refugees my primary task was to rebuild trust and confidence (Birx, 2010). I took this factor into account in my design strategy. Political refugees who faced severe abuses of trust are highly sensitive (Liamputtong, 2008) and may at first repeat and recreate the narrative of what they have faced. How could my participants, rather, share the inner meaning or essence? What were their personal experiences of trust? What did it mean for them? Through this approach, I hoped to access rich data.

Psychology and Politics

In the available literature, political refugees' issues have been discussed mainly in terms of international law, sociology and politics. My intention is to highlight their psychological aspect. However, it is clear that my participants' inner journeys are linked to their political environment. I found that few scholars concentrate on the relationship between the psyche and politics, or between mind and power. They agree that interaction can bring a real transformation on both sides.

In the literature, controversy arises when politics is linked to psychology – a sensitive area, especially when trying to transcend labels. The question is

whether one's own ideological and political values can help to produce valid insight, or whether they lead to bias and distortion. Tetlock argues that some sociologists might allow their analyses of value-laden topics such as racism to be shaped by their own personal views (Tetlock, 1994). Conversely Sears replies that being explicit about one's theoretical and political preferences is 'Far healthier than cloaking our own feelings in a pretence of scientific objectivity.' (Sears, 1994: 555).

Political psychologists are associated with a relatively recent interdisciplinary approach that draws not only on theories and methods from psychology and political science, but also on other fields such as anthropology, sociology, history and philosophy. This growing community of political psychologists is set within a 'venerable and often controversial cultural tradition whose psychology goes back many centuries in Europe' (Jost and Sidanius, 2004).

In ancient Athens, Plato and Aristotle elucidated the question of rights and responsibilities with their knowledge of human nature. The concept of the "political man" evolved during Medieval and Renaissance periods. In 'The Prince' (1513), Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) developed his interplay of virtue and fortune as cardinal qualities of political leadership: you have to play the fox to see the traps and the lion to scare off the wolves (Nunno, 2016). In other words, a political leader must be an astute psychologist. In his work 'The Leviathan' (1651), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) offered a more negative view of political man, as self-seeking and cruel. He held that 'the true doctrine of the Laws of Nature is the true Moral philosophy' (Finn, 2006: 171).

This view anticipated Sigmund Freud's later writing on the nature of man and society. In 'Civilisation and its Discontents' (1930) he views the social fabric as imposing a much-needed restraint on the individual's sexual and aggressive impulses. Rousseau (1712-1778) argued against Hobbes, maintaining that if man were left in his natural state he would achieve inner harmony and positive relationships with other human beings, and with his environment.

Considering the sources and nature of human knowledge, John Locke sees the human mind at birth as a sort of blank state – *tabula rasa* – upon which the lived experience is written. Locke's position foreshadowed Watson's behaviourist movement in psychology, which emphasises the primacy of learned experience over innate ideas in determining behaviour. Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) in 'The Mass Psychology of Fascism' (1933) and Erick Fromm (1900-1980) in 'Escape from Freedom' (1941) both examined how psychological repression may have driven people to support right-wing political movements. In his clinical study of political activists, Harold Lasswell (1902-1978) argued that political leaders often project their hidden, private conflicts onto public objects (Lasswell, 1930)

More recently, Andrew Samuels' work on the political psyche brings together Jungian, post-Jungian and Freudian thought in an effort to link psychology and politics in his clinical practice. He deploys ideas of good-enough-ness in a political setting, sadism and the shadow in relation to economic equality and the communicative functions and potential of the body (Samuels, 2015). Samuels does not reduce one field into the other, but tries to see how they can benefit each other (Samuels, 1993). In his words:

'Where the public and the private, the political and the personal intersect or even meld, there is a special role for depth psychology, in relation to political change and transformation … Subjectivity and inter-subjectivity have political roots; they are not as 'internal' as they seem' (Samuels, 1993: 4).

In the mid-1990s there was a new awareness among psychotherapists and counsellors of their social responsibility concerning nuclear weapons and climate change. However, I consider it problematical for many psychotherapists to take on social responsibility beyond their role and persona as professional practitioners.

Proceeding from an existential perspective, Langdridge (2012) explored the role of politics and power within therapy. He made a study of Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex' and Sartre's 'Critique of Dialectical Reason'. He believes,

however, that not enough has been done to take these ideas beyond the existential thinkers on political issues, or to incorporate them into existential therapy.

Emmy van Deurzen's work on existential therapy and its philosophical nature is concerned with understanding a person's position in the world. She reintroduced four basic dimensions of human existence: the physical (Umwelt), the social (Mitwelt), the psychological (Eigenwelt) and the spiritual (Uberwelt). We encounter the world through these interwoven dimensions, which provide a force-field for our existence (van Deurzen, 2012). In the existential approach, change and transformation in life is a long and on-going process within those four dimensions. Very limited work has been done on considering human beings as political and psychological beings. These characteristics are part of the condition of being human. The four dimensions are in an organic relationship, not separable in a mechanistic way.

Do political refugees suffer the loss of psychological orientation in the midst of a political upheaval? Can we separate the psyche from the political situation? I wondered whether the subjective trauma might move from self-preservation to 'the good of others', as perhaps the only way to live with what they have faced. Self for others might therefore become their highest level of political activity. Would the alternatives be survivors' guilt, despair and depression? There is very little work in the literature that investigates these phenomena.

Anger and Grief

The literature covers many instances of grief among refugees. Grief can be caused by situations of loss, failed relationships, or death of family members and friends. Their losses also relate to identity, possessions, home and

supportive network. In 1969, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross described five principal stages of grief, popularly referred to as DABDA. These are: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance (Kulber-Ross and Kessler, 2014). Studies indicate that anger, hatred, and desire for revenge are common emotional releases in refugees who have suffered human rights violations; and may also be related to post-traumatic stress reaction (Basoglu et al., 2005; Lopes Cardozo et al., 2003; Beck, J. G. & Sloan, D. M. 2012). Clearly much research is needed to investigate the phenomenology of anger in refugees.

Safety

Refugees' safety issues have been recognised within international human rights organisations. Furthermore, there is an extensive literature regarding this subject within philosophical, psychological, political and sociocultural disciplines.

Since individual interactions have increased to the point that they have "entered in varying degrees into a universal community (...) a violation of rights in *one* part of the world is felt *everywhere*" (Kant et al., 1991:107–8). At this level of universal interaction, the rights of hospitality and safe community are crucial.

As we learn further from Kant, by virtue of their communal possession of earth's surface as a globe, human beings cannot disperse across an infinite area, but must necessarily tolerate one another. No-one originally has any greater right than anyone else to occupy any particular portion of the earth (ibid).

However, the establishment has always found the stranger unsettling and a challenge to the existing order (Dikeç, 2002). From Plato's *xenos* to Camus' *L' Étranger*, from Ruth the Moabite to the French *sans-papier*, the stranger appears to endanger stability from the moment she arrives at a state's borders. The traditional duty of hospitality which is also a right, has become a matter of concern (Fotou, 2016).

Each human being is entitled to certain fundamental rights, including a degree of safety to live and to exist. Safety is interwoven with identity and rights (Ullah, 2014). Although these basic human rights are recognised in international law (UDHR 1948 and Charter of the United Nations 1945), host countries often ignore them, and many people continue to be persecuted and deprived of them. The protection and safety of refugees has developed into a major international challenge (Islam & Bhuiyan, 2013). Violations of human rights or deficient mechanisms of human rights protection increase the insecurity experienced by refugee populations. For example, the length (sometimes over 10 years) and complexity of the asylum application process in the UK creates its own hopelessness, uncertainty and acute anxiety. There are reports of suicide among asylum seekers whose applications were refused or inexplicably delayed (Burnett and Thompson, 2005; Lago, 2011). The host country's hostility, disbelief and style of interrogation further imperils and often destroys the asylum seeker's sense of safety as Eschoe pointed out: "In recent years negative attention has been focused on asylum seekers in the UK (Eschoe, 2006).

Agier describes how the protective element has been replaced by an escalation of control and dominance in the regulatory procedures of the host country.

In times of economic crisis and intensifying of anti-immigration politics in the host country, the rate of granted asylums in European countries has fallen to its lowest level in 20 years. The great increase in applications from victims of the Syrian civil war has slightly raised the statistic, but in the majority of EU member states including the UK, and excepting Sweden and Germany, it has remained constantly below 10% over the past fifteen years (Lago, 2011).

Most asylum seekers are accustomed to a structured lifestyle and value system going back many generations. From its continuity they derived their security, stability, sense of belonging and cohesion to individuals within their community. In the host country, if the existence of these personal values is not recognised, asylum seekers' psychological existence feels under threat. Being already

vulnerable as a result of the persecution in their homeland and hoping for a safer place to live, they are dealt a double blow.

Torture

Much has been written about torture from philosophical, ethical, legal and medical points of view since the early writings of Beccaria in the 17th century. In his view punitive practices at that time were excessive, brutal, arbitrary and unequal. His manifesto soon became known as the Enlightenment text on punishment. However, defining torture remains a challenge. Some scholars moved ahead by working with and analysing victims' lived experience, to try to develop a general definition (Ojeda, 2008; Perez-Sales, 2017). Pau Perez-Sales is the Chair of the World Psychiatric Association Section of Consequences of Persecution and Torture. In his research he has attempted to provide a scientific definition and to develop a theoretical framework for understanding torture from the viewpoints of torturer and victim. Despite his impressive analysis, however, the question remains, can any victim's subjective experience be generalised? With such a wide range of possible responses, in Ojeda's view the provision of a universal definition is impossible. In other words, there are infinite ways of reacting and psychologically processing an event.

Most psychologists and psychiatrists working with torture survivors apply standard DSM (Statistical Manual for Mental Disorder) classifications. However, with each new version of the DSM, the definition of trauma changes.

In the literature, the debates relating to trauma and torture resemble one another. Some scholars regard torture as a traumatic event (Gerrity, Keane and Tuma, 2012; Genefke & Vesti, 1998).

In the literature torture is mainly described on the basis of the 1984 UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT), which defines torture as follows:

'For the purposes of this Convention, the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions' (UNCAT 1984).

According to this definition, how do we define what is 'severe'? How is mental suffering defined, and when is it so severe as to amount to torture? How can we ascertain the alleged perpetrator's intentionality? Pérez-Sales wrote, 'the UN definition of torture is concrete in certain aspects but intentionally ambiguous in others due to a belief that a narrow and overtly operational definition of torture would allow governments to dodge the definition easily … The fact that these criteria cannot be easily defined impedes the development of an operational definition of torture that could foster human research.' (Pérez-Sales, 2017: 2-3). Torture can only be defined through a victim's subjective experience. Legal definitions of torture might give a general picture, but fail to access the feeling and lived psychological experiences.

Torture is the manipulation of a human being through terror produced by the infliction of pain and harm, the disruption and control of bodily functions and the manipulation of time, the environment and the senses in order to break the individual, to instil fear, to physically or psychologically punish, to produce information, to attain self-incrimination or to change the detainee's identity or world-views to accommodate the will of the perpetrator. Although it is the torturer who makes the rules, torture is experienced as a physical, intellectual and emotional battle against oneself that leaves permanent marks on the

individual (usually in the form of guilt, shame, recurrent memories and the inscription of pain in the body).

Torture is an organised and targeted violence, generally with a political motive. Totalitarian governments attempt to justify torture for the sake of national security. Amnesty International has consistently reported the torture of asylum seekers by physical and psychological methods which vary regionally. Some victims cannot speak about the torture they have suffered, lest it provoke the flashback experience of fear, shame, and humiliation (Burnett and Thompson, 2005).

Eva Forest recorded a survivor's testimony: 'They put electrodes on my testicles, but can anyone imagine what that means? Or the theatre and the madness that surrounded me? What I felt? Only someone who has been through that can understand.' (Forest, 2006)

The extensive list of torture methods classified internationally by The Istanbul Protocol (1985) includes blunt trauma such as punching and kicking, positional torture using suspension or stretching, cigarette burns, electric shock, psychological pressure, many forms of sexual violence, sensory deprivation and others (Pérez-sales, 2017).

Many authors have considered the religious justifications, which are made for and against torture. Religious ideology on both sides has challenged as well as supported the suffering of fellows and foes (Juergensmeyer, et al. 2015). Do torturers believe their religious order tells them to inflict such methods as stoning to death? Are victims who are able to resist sustained by the notion of redemptive martyrdom?

The literature since 9/11 raises many debates concerning the legal and moral status of torture. Under human rights law, torture is impermissible. However, some might argue that in extreme cases to torture a prisoner could be justified if the information obtained saves many lives. But in many cases severe pain

can prompt false or erratic responses (Allhoff, 2012; Allhoff et al. 2013; Kassimeris, 2016).

Asma Jahangir, who was appointed as UN Special Rapporteur on Iran by the UN Human Rights Council, in September 2016 said she had received "numerous reports" of torture and ill-treatment, used as punishment and to coerce confessions. Since its establishment in 1985, Freedom from Torture has received referrals for more than 5,000 Iranians for clinical services. In 2016, Freedom from Torture received 140 referrals for Iranians. In the literature there are many first-hand accounts by survivors, all of them unique in character (Freedom from torture, 2017). This demonstrates the necessity to employ a phenomenological study, to gain rich data. Freedom From Torture stated that as all survivors of torture in the UK tell different stories, their needs must also be different.

Feeling of Guilt

Do political refugees suffer particularly with feelings of guilt?

Some writers make a clear association with survivor guilt (Bemak et al. 2003; Fink.2010;). There might be other guilt-producing factors, such as the moral dilemma of dedication to human rights at the cost of separating from one's family or putting them at risk.   Do refugees experience a particular guilt through failure in their political task?

In the literature guilt is regarded as a natural human emotion that most people experience from early life, through their personal and social development (Seaward, 2013; Allen, 2014; Izard, 1991; Turner, 2000). The phenomenon ranges from a reaction to simple wrongdoings in everyday life to complexities relating to metaphysics, politics and spirituality. Regardless of our belief or non-belief in an omnipotent and benevolent god, the question remains open: Why do we suffer from moral guilt and evil in the world? How does this apply to political refugees' experience?

Guilt provides a fascinating study for philosophers, scholars and religionists in both East and West. In the Abrahamic traditions, guilt is central to ensuring that God's commandments are followed on a day-to-day basis. Contrary to this, the Buddha's teaching made no direct reference to guilt, for to dwell on it would distract from practicing the Four Noble Truths.

Some scholars suggest the concept of guilt is fundamental to moral philosophy and to our self-understanding as moral agents. In 'The Brothers Karamazov', Dostoyevsky returns repeatedly to the significance of guilt, and especially to its uncompromising first-person nature: each of us is said to be guilty with respect to everyone else, and guilty of the sins of the entire human race. The metaphysical sense of guilt emerges through traditional projections of evil (Dostoyevsky, 2013).

Ihde commented on Paul Ricoeur's philosophy, claiming that 'The consciousness of guilt constitutes a veritable revolution in the experience of evil' (Ihde, 1971: 112). To characterise our self-being, Karl Jaspers considered guilt alongside death, suffering and struggle. He distinguishes four types of guilt: criminal, political, moral and metaphysical (Stanghellini & Fuchs, 2013). His view is based on ethical values. By contrast, Heidegger understands guilt as an ontological foundation of the human condition: Dasein, being-in-the-world.

Guilt is an existential phenomenon: our human condition in its personal, physical, social and spiritual relationships. Sartre views guilt as derived from a notion of original sin; he writes, 'I am guilty when beneath the Other's look I experience my alienation and my nakedness as a fall from grace which I must assume' (Sartre, 1956: 410). For Kierkegaard, 'guilt is inexorably existential; hence freedom and guilt are dialectical' (Matuštík & Westphal, 1995: 54). The sense of guilt is more primordial than any knowledge about it. Guilt is related to our limitation in our personal expectations, freedom, choice and responsibility. It is connected with care, love and the meaning of life. It confirms our interwoven-ness with the world: a pressure to grow, to care and to belong. It

may drive us to expand as possibilities open up. When we cease to place unreal expectations on ourselves, we relate to others more authentically. To begin with, most of us are bound to one person by unconditional love – our mother. We all share this fact, its character reverberates uniquely through our lives. Guilt at what we have left undone can be transformed into self-awareness and awareness of others. Our existence is dependant on other human beings and our environment.

Rollo May (1958) defines three forms of existential guilt. The first is a result of forfeiting potential development in the intellectual, social, emotional or physical spheres. The second type of existential guilt, according to May, develops through our separateness from our fellow beings. Since we are unable to perceive them as they fully see themselves, our empathy is imperfect. The foundational aloneness, which each human being has in common, gives rise to intra-personal conflicts. The third form of existential guilt develops when we separate or alienate ourselves from nature and our environment.

In the fable of original guilt, our parents tasted and ate the forbidden fruit. They were told, 'By the sweat of your brow you shall bring forth the generations, to co-create humanity in evolutionary time and space. This choice you made – to know' (Genesis 3:19).

A better understanding of the nuances of our guilt will help us to break damaging patterns of thought, and stop us from punishing ourselves (Dryden, 1994). I do not think we can resolve our guilt, though we might find a balance through appropriate actions. Some might say that there is such a thing as healthy or proportionate guilt concerning a specific action or decision, which affects others negatively. Taking responsibility might spur us to correct our wrongdoings, generating social cohesion and a shared sense of responsibility. Proportionate guilt could help us to grow and to learn from our hurtful behaviours to others or ourselves. On the other hand, there is the possibility of suffering unhealthy or disproportionate guilt, concerning things we are not empowered to take

responsibility for. We cannot control other people's actions and wellbeing, or the outcomes of most situations. Our perceived failures could be amplified, along with our resentment. In any case it is always difficult to categorise the subjective experience of guilt. In the case of political refugees the question may be asked: how does the responsibility for making a fundamental change, together with its actual limitation, bring about feelings of guilt?

Whether our guilt is due to a past wrongdoing or arises incidentally, we can take steps to resolve these feelings. Firstly, we should recognize the type of guilt we are experiencing.

Do we need to understand our guilt feelings, rather than react against them? As Joan Borysenko put it, 'guilt is the teacher, love is the lesson' (Borysenko 2001). As we live and grow and discover our limitations, we are indebted to life, and may fall short of the standard we set ourselves: to live authentically. As human beings placing the bar high, we may either ignore or respond to the call of conscience, which in Heidegger's view allows us to confront our human fate, and to care. 'The call is the call of care. Being guilty constitutes the Being to which we give the name of care' (Dahlstrom, 2011: 76). Heidegger tells us about the relation between guilt and care. Care for family, care for human rights situation in Iran, care for those who are in the front line of the battlefield and care for the promise they made to bring about a positive change for the people of Iran. These combined cares can cause different forms of dilemma.

A great deal of the literature conceptualises guilt without much emphasis on how refugees feel their guilt personally.

Recognition

What is the role of recognition in refugees' psychological wellbeing? In the literature, the theory of recognition is well established, generating a wide variety of studies covering ontology, epistemology, psychology, phenomenology, moral

and political philosophy, social theory and philosophical anthropology (Busch and Zurn, 2010; Honneth, 2015). The psychological dimension of recognition is the main focus here. Most theories of recognition assume that to develop a particular identity, we depend fundamentally on the views of others, and of society as a whole. Those who are inadequately recognised by others find it difficult to connect with and value their perceived self. In other words, misrecognition destroys a person's relationship with their inner self. For example, a woman under a fundamentalist regime might suffer severe psychological harm from being regarded as inferior. So recognition constitutes 'a vital human need' (Taylor 1992: 26)

Experience of misrecognition violates people's identity and motivates them to resist. In particular, ethnic or religious minorities may struggle for recognition. My aim here is to find out what has been written, concerning recognition in relation to refugees, and its application to therapy.

The roots of recognition theory appear in the ideal of friendship in ancient Greece (Stern-Gillet and Gurtler, 2014; Lynch, 2005; Alfano, 2016). Renaissance humanism revived these values. Later, the Enlightenment philosophers developed a body of analysis crowned by Rousseau's study of recognition as essentially societal in human nature. Contemporary recognition theory however, is derived more from the idealism of Hegel and Fichte, who examined the interplay of subjectivity with inter-subjectivity. Hegel's famous lecture, "The Struggle for Recognition" discussed the master-slave relationship. Without the slave, there is no master to recognise (Honneth, 2015).

In Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right', an individual's autonomy becomes established through love within the family, contractual respect within the society and solidarity within the state (Rose, 2007). These interlinked spheres of relationship develop maturity and meaning in a person's life and community.

Fichte stated that we grow more conscious through being challenged (Pinkard, 1996). When we recognise what is intended behind the other's challenging acts and utterances, we learn to express our own intentional self.

Paul Ricoeur grouped 23 different uses of the notion 'to recognise' (Ricoeur 2005: 5-16) into three categories: recognition as identification, recognising oneself and mutual recognition. Mutual recognition lies at the core of the contemporary discussion.

Taylor writes that our individuality is recognised in the crucial context of loving care (Taylor, 1992). However, he regards love and friendship as a private phenomenon and thus irrelevant in public debate. Some philosophers (Honneth, 2015; Nemiroff, 1992; Thompson, 2006) have argued that a much more fundamental form of recognition underlies respect, esteem, love and friendship. By contrast, Sartre views the ordinary recognition concept as violating an individual's freedom to be himself. For Sartre, 'Nothingness', opposed to the 'Being' of the world of objects (*en soi*) is the basis of human freedom. He states that we suffer from being held captive within a specific pattern of socially mandated recognition (Lash and Featherstone, 2002).

Feminism, human rights and the question of refugees have given rise to an inter-subjective emphasis, requiring recognition. After World War II, recognition theory came to the fore in psychoanalytical studies, centred on object-relations theory, whose focus is on the early form of subjectivity between primary caregiver and child.

More recently, one proponent of the object-relations theory, the German philosopher Axel Honneth has focused on inter-subjective recognition and social change. His account promises to analyse many of the central social struggles (Honneth, 2015; Jakobsen & Lysaker, 2015; Cashdan, 1988). He links individual internal experiences of misrecognition and disrespect to the broader social struggle for an expanded and more adequate social recognition, for example for refugees and ethnic minorities.

Two psychological conditions which preclude the faculty of recognition are narcissism and *amour-propre* (Rousseau's term). Narcissistic self-absorption (a mirror in which, for better or worse, no "other" appears) may stem from inadequate parenting, causing a failure in the interactive self to germinate social and affectionate relationships. This is applicable to the wider base of government. Inadequate or repressive government produces a society in which no-one trusts anyone else. *Amour-propre* is an attitude regarding what belongs to oneself: to care exclusively about one's own good. An individual's *amour-propre* or self-regard engages with others, but only to secure his or her interest. Rousseau distinguished *amour-propre* from 'love for oneself', a relational self-recognition and capacity to grow. Recognition therefore is an interactive, expanding process, enabling a society through its individuals to flourish. 'Love for oneself' extends to empathy with others, by which we understand recognition and its meaning.

Working with political refugees, I found that those who are traumatised find it difficult to interact with the external world. In general one's psychological state preconditions how one relates to others, and the quality of relationship to one's self. We are liable to misrecognise our own capability. In other words, misrecognition from others leads to dysfunctional self-recognition.

Misrecognition also concerns our physical connection with the natural environment. One of my refugee clients remarked that he had only just started to notice trees and houses after five years in this country, and discovered a new world. I have found that many refugees experiencing misrecognition and feeling unable to adapt shared a negative self-perception and isolation. Ironically, they could not access or recognise their considerable positive qualities in confronting their crisis. I was unable to find instances of this in the literature. Misrecognition targets the heart of the self.

Does recognition happen automatically? It has to be conscious; we choose to recognise. Recognition is proactive and interactive. The issues a refugee brings

to his/her host country need to be recognised and not dismissed. Within the literature it was hard to find personal accounts of misrecognition.

Language

The use of language shapes our interaction through personal, social, physical and spiritual aspects of life. The way we speak reflects the way the world comes to the mind. Internally, we construct our sentences to meet it and follow the sentences in our mind. This shapes our feelings and emotions. It relates to our personal experience of the world, its history and its unfolding. Thus we create our understanding of and engagement with the world. In my view, it is the tool for active connection. Through the language we use, we release and understand our nature.

I read in the literature how significant language is for an individual's development in a new society or culture. On reflection, language plays a greater role than that.

To deepen my perspective on language and its relevance, I searched for the key-words, "language", "philosophy of language", "language and meaning", "language and identity", "language and culture", "refugees and language", "language and settlement", and "language in the developmental process".

The literature highlighted the role of language among refugees, in the settlement and adaptation process, as part of their culture and part of their identity (Feuerherm, Ramanathan, 2015). Although some scholars such as Patel (2003) and Tribe (1999) have done valuable work in this respect, there is little about refugees' subjective experience of language.

Human beings experience their use of language as central to their existence. It constructs the mental and internal life and enables us to understand our nature. It is impossible to imagine life without language in our environment, for human beings rely on it to express themselves, communicate with others, and make

sense of the world. Language may be used to represent the world or as a communication tool between people. However, Joseph says that without creative self-expression "something vital has been abstracted away: the people themselves" (Joseph, 2004: 21). Refugees who feel forced to use a host country's language might be able to communicate or represent the world, but they may lose the connection with their inner self.

It may be valuable to move into the historical and philosophical connotation of language and its evolution. Modrak noted in Aristotle's theory of language and meaning, 'Spoken words then are symbols of affections of the soul, and written words are symbols of spoken words. And just as written words are not the same for all humans, neither are spoken words. But what these primarily are signs of, the affections of the soul, are the same for all, as also are those things of which our affections are likenesses' (Modrak, 2001: 13).

Regarding Aristotle's realist epistemology, Modrak writes, ''The human mind is so related to the world that it is able to grasp the basic categories of reality. The impact of the world on us through our senses and intellect produces the concepts, which provide the foundation of knowledge and language' (ibid: 6).

More than 2,500 years ago, scholars in ancient Greece began a study of language. Philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists, scientists and sociologists have worked in this field ever since. Language in the ancient world was constructed on words having semantic properties independent of their performance as signs of the thought process in relation to the world (Everson, 1994).

Ancient languages carry intelligent emotional and spiritual meanings with very rich correspondences. Scholars say the syllables are sacred and generate energy and life forms (Frawley, 2010). Classical Hebrew, Arabic, Ancient Egyptian and Chinese hieroglyphs and Sanskrit all are languages with many levels of meaning. Furthermore, language as a vehicle carries emotional resonance, meaning and connection. Our heritage extends this historical connectivity through sounds and

rhythms, through music, poetry and the visual arts, and through stories and plays.

Prior to the 20th century, most philosophers tended to regard the use of language as a product of our reasoning faculty. Descartes identifies the ability to use language as one of two characteristics differentiating human beings from machines or creatures. In his view, even those with poor intelligence can learn a language, because human beings have a 'rational soul' (Descartes 1984: 140-1).

Contemporary language theorists have demonstrated its immense complexity. In his study of the human brain, Noam Chomsky identified the language faculty, with its innate knowledge of certain linguistic regularities. Initially, a baby's own sound or melody produced within the elaborate play of maternal gesture, voice and games is an encounter with the self and sound as language (Chomsky, 1986).

Broditsky and her colleagues conducted research into people speaking different languages to find out how they shape their thinking. Grammatical idiosyncrasies and the way sentences and punctuation are constructed might colour our view of the world. They discovered that the spoken language shapes our perception. Learning a new language also affects our way of thinking (Boroditsky, 2009). For refugees, learning a new language in the host country modifies their sense of identity and can bring altered perceptions of themselves and the world around them.

In my opinion, our thinking and our understanding of the world is shaped dynamically by our use of language. When learning a second language, changes in thought modes may be only slight, but are significant.

Similarly a child has language even before learning to read. After learning to read, the second and literate language with its syntax replaces the earlier one. Our language thereafter changes constantly, but in general we take it for

granted. Refugees respond to learning the host country's language in various ways. Some might resist learning English because their mother tongue manifesting their identity is bound to their self-image and their earlier struggle. I found no evidence of this subjective experience in the literature. However, Eva Hoffman wrote of her emigration from Poland to Canada in the 1950s. Her famous novel "*Lost in Translation"* provides an insight into the complex relation between language, culture and identity and enables us to understand the experience of living between two different cultures and languages (Hoffman, 2011).

Gibbins and Holt (2002) mention the historical links between identity and language, which defined the character of emerging nation states in Europe. From this perspective, language is part of national identity, and is also quintessential to the core of human identity as we are. Without the ability to put words or concepts together and to articulate ideas for others to understand, we cannot be fully human. Humanity, in all aspects of culture and identity is profoundly connected with the dynamic of language.

Nayeri (2017) wrote in *The Guardian* about her and her family's experience. Her mother was a doctor in Iran. They moved to America when Nayeri was six. Her mother now works in a pharmaceutical factory where her bosses and co-workers daily question her intelligence, though they are much less educated than she is. The accent was enough. If she took too long to articulate a thought, they stopped listening and wrote her off as unintelligent. They spoke faster and when she asked them to slow down, they would sigh and roll their eyes. If someone messed up a formula, she was the sole target for blame.

Some refugees have confirmed that in their mother-tongue they can feel what they are saying. When they talk English there is less sense of emotional connection. Speaking is a creative process. We create and convey sentences, feeling and meaning. Learning another language modifies one's organic mode of thinking and introduces new associations.

A French client's brother committed suicide. When he talked in English I noticed he was expressing no feeling. I asked: 'What was the quality of your relationship?' He answered, 'I loved him. But when I talk in English I don't have that feeling. When I talk in French I can't control my emotion.' According to Professor Dewaele (2010), who conducted extensive research on multilinguals and their emotions, a lack of vocabulary may force bilinguals to revert back to their native language when expressing their feelings. How does this affect refugees?

In my work with political refugees I found that some of them don't want to lose their linguistic identity, having already lost so much. On the other hand, I noticed that many women find it easier to learn English and the way of identifying which comes with it, because the old way was relatively oppressive. For the men, the old way was their pride and power. This has not been documented in the literature either.

Adaptation

The resettlement and adaptation of the refugees is a complex, multifaceted process (Haines, 2012). However, the living world presents an astonishing range of adaptations to environmental and biological changes. The same deep-rooted pattern appears in human history, and within human nature's ability to survive, through personal or social adjustment to circumstance. Human beings have demonstrated extraordinary resilience in facing difficulties. As Thayer wrote, 'Man/woman is the most plastic of all earth's creatures' (Thayer, 1975: 237). Individuals have the potential to rise from the ashes and to continue their lives. Thousands of Iranian political prisoners survive for many months and years severe conditions of uprooted-ness, confinement, torture and instability. The overcoming of hardship may bring out an unprecedented will to live, and a deeper understanding of self and others in the human condition.

Mass movements of individuals across cultural boundaries increased throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, but the current diaspora from the Middle-East, Asia and Africa has exploded. This amplifies the pressures that political refugees already face to adapt to a host country.

Some theorists view adaptation from a general-systems perspective, regarding refugees as a necessarily open system interacting with a given environment, which is not their home culture. Research into cross-cultural adaptation has generally featured theoretical diversity. One of the common problems in research into the topic is the inconsistent use of terminology, as the terms "adaptation", "acculturation", "adjustment", "resettlement" and "accommodation" have been used interchangeably (Kim, 2001; Searle and Ward 1990; Zhu, 2016)

Kim (1988, 2001) used the term 'adaptation' in a broad sense, to define refugees' internal transformation when challenged by a strange culture, to increase their compatibility with that environment.

The adaptation process develops through various communicational activities and events. Some scholars attempt to answer the question: how does an individual adjust to an unfamiliar culture? What does being 'well-adapted' really mean? Why are some individuals better at adapting than others? How does their cultural background influence this, and how does the new society influence or awaken their own process? The patterns of certain individuals over time have also been examined. The mass of literature related to cross-cultural adaptation amounts to thousands of books and articles over many years. The sheer variety of data sources makes it difficult to gain familiarity with the whole body of those literatures across disciplinary boundaries. A serious study lies beyond the scope of this research.

In Kim's view the field covering cross-cultural adaptation has become obscured by specialisation, complexity and confusion about how concepts and definitions are applied and the use of methodologies. In general, two levels of analysis are

discerned: group and individual (Kim, 1988, 2001). Sociologists study the group level, while the individual level has mainly interested psychologists. Some of these studies have examined how different individuals adapt to a host country (Tripathi et al. 2017; Padilla 1980;).

Cross-cultural adaptation is a dynamic communication process, in which individuals and their host environment are considered to co-determine the outcome of the adaptation process. Everyone adapts at a different rate. World-views influence the cross-cultural process, in ways, which may be both challenging and rewarding. 'Communication is the central pillar of all human learning' (Kim, 1988: 45). In Eisenbruch's view, some refugees experience their adaptation to a radically different culture as a cultural bereavement (Eisenbruch, 1990).

The literature concerning political refugees' ability to adapt to their host country considers the factors of culture, psychology, language, finance, legality, shelter, family dynamic, physical environment and climate (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001; Pernice & Brook, 1996; Kim, 1988, 2001; Uba & Chand, 1990). Aycan & Berry highlighted three distinct elements - psychological, socio-cultural and economical - in the adaptation process or its failure. The downsides have been noted in some of the literature: chronic displacement due to underemployment and social isolation (Aycan & Berry, 1996; Beiser et al. 1993; Young & Evans, 1997).

A refugee's cultural background might mean having to accept lower levels of status or prestige. For instance, a professional might have to do unskilled work, which would influence the adaptation process. For refugees and asylum seekers, displacement is associated with underemployment and downward mobility (ibid).

According to some studies, asylum seekers in the UK face the establishment view that their claim is bogus until it is proved to be genuine (Diken & Lausten,

2005; Barrett & George, 2005). This aggravates the sense of a hostile environment and might further disable their capacity to resettle.

Political activists must adapt in the new country to unfamiliar expressions of political values and ideas and to new forms of political involvement, while maintaining their own political identity and ideals. There is little in the literature about political refugees' political adaptation. What is it like to have to translate their political environment, discourse, beliefs and attitudes to a new environment with perhaps different priorities, and how do they find kindred spirits to whom they can convey their own meaning and purpose?

Nowadays many refugees experience a chaotic acceleration of circumstantial and temporal changes, which saturates and disrupts every stable pattern in their life. In 1970 Toffler coined the phrase 'Future Shock'. His work presaged the actual disorientation to which individuals are subjected when they face the upheaval of displacement as well as having to cope with too much change (Toffler, 1970).

The literature suggests that negative life events continue to impact refugees' economic, social and psychological adaptation, years after the initial events (Pernice and Brook, 1996: Uba and Chung, 1999). Some of the literature highlights refugees' experience of trauma and its impact on their resettlement process. However, many of the findings conflict because of methodological limitations within the different approaches employed, and the difficulty of interpreting emotional suffering through the veil of cultural nuance and expression. For instance some Muslim communities regard suffering as a stepping-stone towards God and liberation, and do not complain. They hold this in common with devout Christians and Hindus. On the other hand, those who could not endure the identity crisis of culture shock succumbed to depression or suicide.

Some studies have discovered that significant numbers of refugees suffer from mental health problems, sometimes for years during the process of resettlement (Weine et al. 1998; Pincombe et al. 2015). In the UK, some asylum seekers

waiting many years for a decision on their status develop acute anxiety symptoms. Western mental health organisations are challenged in their attempt to address and classify the levels of distress in multi-cultural groupings such as refugees and asylum seekers from various different backgrounds.

However, the literature suggests that not much is known about refugees' capacity to confront crisis within the adaptation process, and the positive impact of this on their psychological state (Pahud et al. 2009: UNHCR, 2002).

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), some refugees can be seen to adopt a coping mechanism to manage the constant disruptive and stressful changes in their situation, drawing on their inner resources and on external support from others (Stanfield, 2006; Harrop et al. 2006). In 1998, Vanista-Kosuta & Kosuta indicated how a traumatic experience could be transmuted into a meaningful context in the recovery process from day to day. A consistent spiritual or religious practice can play an important role in this respect (Pargament et al. 2000: Tarakeshwar et al. 2003).

Many scholars consider self-efficacy as a developmental factor in coping with the stresses induced by unemployment, homelessness and transitional circumstances. Internal resources can be directed to problem-focus rather than to a self-centred emotional focus (Luszczynska et al. 2005)

Dorais' study (2007) of Vietnamese boat people and their resettlement underlined the importance of their religious faith as a source of hope and meaning. Mayer (2007) considers the loss of identity and its impact on the resettlement process, as a liminal state, or transition.

The available information on the resettlement of refugees indicates some of their own strengths, which contribute to this process (Harrop et al. 2006). Successful resettlement depends largely on four elements (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003; Schweitzer et al. 2007):

- Personal achievement and vision (sense of belonging, safety, freedom, employment, family re-unification)

- Internal resources (religious faith, resilience and self-efficacy in aspirations, communication skills, social and analysis skills, commitment and determination, positive attitude and future focus)

- Social support (creating opportunities, encouragement, practical and financial support, being treated as an equal, being recognised and respected)

- Official support (education, housing, financial assistance, employment, medical care, social amenities, access to legal aid)

A host country's communication technology should be considered in the context of political refugees' adaptation process. In many refugees' homelands, access to basic, free online information and media is prohibited. In the host country where information circulates freely, the refugees' native languages become enriched through freedom of discourse. However, there might be a downside: technology saturation as a significant aspect of culture shock. I find there has been insufficient study of this issue.

Asylum seekers, as well as dealing with basic needs, like shelter, food and finding work, must at the same time follow up their legal status to be recognized, and cope with the host country's bureaucratic immigration process. They may have to wait on the phone for days and weeks on end, navigate websites and join endless queues within a seemingly arbitrary calling-system. The complexity of the automated process stands in the way of their seeking employment and stability (Bloch 2000; Pearlman, 2017).

A more competent decision-making policy within the asylum system could release much wasted time and energy (Bloch 2000). Many asylum seekers are confronted with a computerised bureaucracy before they have time to get their bearings in the new society (Pearlman, 2017). It keeps them in the queues of the displaced, preventing their integration. The stresses of isolation and homelessness generate nervous and psychological disorders. and many refugees

feel they need to assume a false 'victim' persona, in order to advance their case. Furthermore, since the riots and terrorist attacks of 2005, the British Home Office's approach has developed a more 'faceless' fear-based legislation for asylum seekers and their integration (Bertossi, 2007: 4)

Refugees suffer in a magnified way the multiple pressures which many people endure in their daily working environment. This idea touches on the human capacity to adapt and to prevail against the extreme stress and difficulty of conditions manufactured by humans.

In 2004 Ager & Strang conducted a project concerning the integration of individuals in host countries. Integration itself is a widely used term, and the understanding of it varies. Although in the literature most of the terms such as "adaptation", "integration", "assimilation" and "adjustment" are used interchangeably, most researchers and theorists differentiate "integration" from "assimilation". At the same time each culture has its own individual existence, within the multicultural context. Within a group we have both a homogenous group identity and our own individual identities. It is difficult to define integration, a highly dynamic and constantly changing phenomenon. It may be considered a positive and outgoing activity; assimilation is a more long-term development.

Harrell-Bond (1986) refers to integration as a situation in which host and refugee communities are able to co-exist, sharing the same resources – both economic and social – with no greater conflict than that which exists within the host community. Host communication competence is essential to cross-cultural adaptation.

For some political refugees, their pattern of existence was reliant on opposing the system in their own country. On their arrival in their host country, this same pattern could carry the same expectation. Without it, there would be nothing psychologically for them to stand against and define themselves. I couldn't find anything in the literature concerning this factor.

Social identity theory argues that individuals seek positive social identities in cross-cultural encounters. The behavioural aspects of language and its crucial link with social identity have received special attention from some researchers (Giles & Johnson 1981).

Kim wrote: 'living systems act instinctively to meet a challenge or threat and to restore harmony and balance. Once regained, equilibrium continues, until a new environmental demand or stressor disturbs the system' (Kim, 1988: 137).

Each culture connects its individuals through specific world-views, beliefs, values, norms and other assumptions. Cultural communication patterns are based on systematic encoding and decoding, concerning language and verbal behaviour, manner of movement, sitting, standing, gesturing, posture, tones of voice, facial expression and ways of dealing with time, space and materials. (Kim, 2005)

The stress of the adaptation process causes much suffering and frustration, but may also provide the impetus for adaptive personal transformation and growth. People learn and become creative by responding to and handling their new cultural environment. They learn to communicate by communicating. Those who pursue active intra-personal contacts with the host society will adjust better psychologically as well as financially (ibid). When a refugee does not accept or affirm the host environment, he or she is unlikely to be highly motivated towards adapting. Adaptation might come more naturally when a refugee accepts the new situation and remains open and relaxed.

Summary

My aim in this chapter was to evaluate critically the existing literature concerning the lived experiences of Iranian political refugees in Britain. This needed to be done before gaining any particular perspective. I found very little written material on subjective core experience. This study is conducted as an insider,

concerning my participants' subjective view. In the literature, most research studies on the refugee situation are conducted from outside. As topics arose from my initial reading for my pilot study, I arranged them under headings. These include discussion of the deeper philosophical, psychological and socio-cultural dimensions.

I began with a brief historical background of 20th century politics in Iran, and the reasons behind the large number of refugees fleeing that country. There is much documentation of the human rights violations, but insufficient coverage so far of individual experiences and their meaning. In Khomeini's rise to power in 1979 and the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism, the psychological reactions of those afflicted, have not been sufficiently studied.

In the country's history since the beginning of the 20th century the decisive role of Iranian women is well documented. With the Khomeini government's initial attack (1979/1980) on women's' status, the 'women's question' came into the forefront. Insufficient enquiry has been made into the psychological impact of the mullahs' punitive attitude to women.

Among the various preconceptions of political refugees, how might we define them phenomenologically: as victims, as masters of their ideological purpose in life, or both? How might we recognise them as human beings without labelling? The literature does not acknowledge the conscious choice which some political refugees made, long before their lives became endangered, to attempt a collective change in their society. We also should consider those who have families and those who do not. The capacity to adapt and change the powerbase dynamic within a refugee family cannot be generalised and has much to do with individual character.

In the literature 'refugee' became almost synonymous with 'trauma'. Some scholars pointed out that Euro-Western research is generally designed to solve problems, and so it often focuses on people's difficulties while ignoring their strengths and the contributions they do, or could, make to society (Lambert,

2014; Walter and Andersen, 2016; Kara, 2018). However, a small number of studies examine crisis as an opportunity for transformation and a deeper level of purpose. Although much has been written about trauma counselling for refugees, little has been written about trauma in its political, ideological and spiritual context. Another major socio-cultural concern was to understand trauma in its political and environmental context, rather than medicalising it. Another factor is how refugees deal with trauma collectively within their own community, where traumatised individuals may tend to isolate themselves. These matters are not covered in the literature, although the importance of community in the adaptation process is acknowledged.

Ethnicity and cultural diversity are comprehensively acknowledged in the literature, but with little attention given to the uniqueness and variety of refugees' actual experiences.

Trust as an interactive quality, particularly regarding refugees who faced severe abuses, has been mentioned, but what can be done in the research process itself to rebuild trust and confidence? Can the researcher reach through defensive narratives to access rich data?

As the aim of my research is to highlight the psychological aspect, it is important to examine the controversy in the literature over the link between politics and psychology and to reach beyond labels. There is a growing community of political psychologists – an interdisciplinary approach drawing also on sociology, anthropology and philosophy. I read Andrew Samuel's work on the special role of depth psychology, whereby the public and the private, the political and the personal intersect or even meld. This view extends beyond the personal to a "collective" psychology or study of the movements within humankind. Emmy Van Deurzen's work on the existential four dimensions of therapy fills out the complete picture concerning refugees' situation. Can subjective trauma move from self-preservation towards 'the good of others'?

Refugees' sense of safety is recognised widely in the literature. The length and complexity of the asylum seeking process in the UK, however, creates further hopelessness, acute anxiety and persecution. The growing escalation since 9/11 of control, dominance and hostility in the regulatory procedures of host countries and their anti-immigration politics increases refugees' vulnerability.

Since the 17th century, much has been written about torture from philosophical, ethical, legal and medical points of view. Scholars have tried to establish a general definition of torture. Can any victim's subjective experience be generalised? Contrarily, can we ignore the shared aspect of that experience among victims? For example, they might be able to share only a few of 20 possible characteristics of torture or trauma. Most psychologists and psychiatrists working with torture survivors apply standard DSM (Statistical Manual for Mental Disorder) classifications. In the literature, the debates relating to trauma and torture resemble one another. However, with each new version of the DSM, the definition of trauma changes. Political refugees however, are sustained by a strong political or ideological identity, which may increase their resistance. Some victims might be sustained through it by the notion of redemptive martyrdom and the collective 'resistance body' of their fellow sufferers. The political or ideological motivation torturers or their masters is not much discussed in the literature.

The literature has few first-hand accounts of misrecognition, which might destroy a person's relationship with their inner self and with others and undermine their sense of identity.

A great deal of the literature on refugees' survivor guilt conceptualises it, without emphasising how they feel it personally.

The challenges of language are written about extensively in the literature on refugees, but there is not much about the subjective use of language and how our native tongue engages our feelings and the nature of our existence. Difficulty in the use of a host country's language may disable a large part of a

refugee's personality and cause him or her to be negatively judged. There are many instances of how a person's native or imposed languages affect their behaviour and how others see and behave towards them. The fact that some political refugees might refuse to lose their linguistic identity having already lost so much is not reflected in the literature.

The resettlement and adaptation of the refugees is a complex, multifaceted process. Some scholars enquire about the effect of cross-cultural adaptation on individuals and recognise that they adapt at a different rate. There is not much in the literature about the ability to adjust to a new political environment.

I conclude that more research is required to investigate the phenomenology of political refugees' experiences, and to approach these from an interior or first-person perspective, rather than by external study.

Chapter Three

The Research Strategy

Research is a quest. A quest is an evolutionary journey. The quest towards truth probes and liberates trapped patterns and transforms the attitude (Adams, 2009).

There are many layers to experience. I was aware that the research I was conducting would be both time-consuming and emotionally demanding as a creative, qualitative process. In this chapter I will describe my research strategy retrospectively.

I aimed to develop an in-depth phenomenological perspective, evolving from my participants' unique experiences. This required openness, empathy, imagination, reflexivity and disciplined study. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) pointed out that to obtain a fully detailed analysis for each participant is unrealistic. It is more likely that key themes across all the participants may emerge. At the same time, I tried to do justice to their individual voices in order to retain an ideographic focus.

Having completed the research, its outcome confirms that I could not have employed a better methodology. I will now describe some of the key processes involved in the research plan.

Ethics

Philosophical foundation

Each therapeutic interaction has an ethical dimension. 'At its heart, an ethics code should reflect the moral principles underlying the values of the profession' (Fisher, 2011: 5). Students of ethics hold that ethical decision-making is based upon classifiable philosophical propositions. The basic function of an ethics code is to provide a mechanism for professional accountability through a full

understanding of the underlying principles and goals (Pack-Brown & Williams, 2003). Certain theories including virtue ethics, deontology and teleology have profoundly influenced our understanding today of psychotherapeutic ethics and professionalism. Our modern ethics are rooted in early Greek philosophers such as Aristotle. He regards the virtues – such as courage, generosity, temperance, charity and justice – as living entities, whose expression acts in beneficial ways through the person and that person's community. The question here, is not what we 'ought' to do, but how we should 'be', as a person (Van Hooft, 2014; Peters, 2013).   .

Kant's deontological ethics make certain laws and prohibitions binding, whatever the consequences: the moral duty of humans to respect other rational beings. Rational ethics considers emotional impulses to be a threat to morality, as they are not governed by reason. This view was contested by Hume, prior to Kant, who regards our reason as motivated by feeling: 'Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions' (Harris, 2010).

Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian philosophy suggests that our actions should be considered in the light of whether they enhance the common good of humanity. We should aim to act for the welfare of the greater number of people (Tannsjo, 2002). However, qualifying the level of pleasure achieved by a moral act can be problematic.

The philosophical foundation of professional ethics defines principles, virtues and theories that form the rationale for specific statements in the ethical code. In Welfel's view, this foundation connects standards for professional conduct to the wisdom of the ages, and helps us to address difficult and confusing ethical dilemmas (Welfel, 2012).

Ethical Criteria and Approval

Ethical research practice is a dynamic process, which I monitored throughout the project. As I mentioned in chapter one, ethical approval was obtained from NSPC and the Middlesex University Research Ethics Committee.

In my plan to make each participant my starting point in the research, I considered carefully what might make things easier for them. To protect their anonymity, their real names do not appear on data sheets or files. Rather than myself choosing pseudonyms for them, they were all invited to choose their own. They read the transcripts, signed each page and agreed to its future publication. All data is stored under a computer password known only to myself.

From the outset of my research I was eager to develop an atmosphere of trust and safety with each participant. Prior to the formal interview, I met them to introduce myself and the project and for us to get a sense of each other and break the ice. Creating this familiarity between us helped my participants to express things which had affected them deeply. I think that if the formal interview takes place at the first meeting, not enough time is given for participants to assess the interviewer and discard their possible defences. There is a great difference between talking with a stranger and with someone who became familiar even over a short period. At the initial meeting a working intuitive environment is created. Gila said, 'In our first meeting, I did not want to tell you that, but now I trust you.'

My fundamental ethical duty was to care for my participants' wellbeing. However, my main interest as a researcher is to collect rich data. This could conflict with the loyalty to my basic duty of care. Clearly, I am not their therapist; however, my training as a psychotherapist makes me particularly sensitive to their psychological state during the interviews and complements my role as researcher.

It seemed likely that some of the questions might bring up traumatic memories. To avoid harm I advised all my participants from the outset to be aware of this possibility, and asked them to feel free to stop at any time, if they wanted to. The interviews revived intense memories. I was aware each time this happened, and invited them to stop; but they all wished to carry on. At the end of each interview, when I asked how they felt about it now, they said without exception that the process had been therapeutic for them and they thanked me. When I asked them why, they all showed their appreciation of my time and effort spent to give them voice and recognition. Although my principal role was as a researcher and not a therapist, they felt comfortable enough not to politicise their situation, but to unpack and release their deep experiential feelings.

Karimi said, 'I am happy, because I have had some experiences and you are letting me give voice to them. I hope my contribution may be helpful and useful … If you want to do something positive, it brings difficulties as well and you have to accept those; this is very useful to realise. I am happy and I am comfortable with that. This has also been therapeutic for me. I couldn't imagine how much good it would do' (Karimi, 461-462, 469-473).

Hiva said, 'That was very, very helpful for me. I was thinking about those things but I couldn't write about them. I didn't get the chance before, to review everything, which has been happening. I respect and admire your work. This is creating a new path for human beings. In the human rights context it can define political refugees and generate a new respect for them, by reading your work. Being a refugee is ongoing. It is a human condition. Your work is valuable. I might have children here, and they could decide to move from here to other countries. Always the free movement is open. I feel happy for this chance to talk about myself. I feel my focus is more on my future. I don't have political identity here, but this is not the end. I look to the future. I am very pleased to hear that people like you think about political refugees.' (Hiva, 509-525)

Lida said during the interview, that she would like to write her story as a book. Sara and Gila later informed me that they are also thinking of writing books. After each interview, I felt confident on hearing their closing remarks that they carried away no unpleasant burdens. I took time also to close down our meetings in a natural way and to make sure my participants were in a good psychological state.

Participants and Recruitment

Following the project's ethical approval, I recruited nine Iranian ex-political refugees who had made the voluntary choice to stand against the undemocratic regime.

I didn't recruit anyone I knew. I first approached academic institutions, but was not successful. I knew it would be difficult for me, a stranger, to gain their trust. However, my personal network played an important role in my recruiting strategy. Through people who knew me, I accessed those who did not. Recognising the sensitivity of political refugees' issues, trust was the essential element. For this reason, I recruited through third parties. Briefly: I realised that those who didn't wish to be involved would not participate.

Sina said, "one Iranian characteristic I learned so far is Iranophobia!" Iranians run away from Iranians – the issue of mistrust is very common amongst them.

When I asked Sina whether he had felt hesitant about my project, as he did not know me, he said, of course. He added that he trusted his British friend who introduced me to him. He had met her several times and asked her a lot of questions. She had told him a lot about me. Then he decided to give me his phone number. In our first conversation, he had felt really challenged, and decided not to contact me again. But after nearly a month he felt bad. He thought of his British friend's impression of me. So then he decided to contact me.

Karimi said that the first interview had helped him to trust me. He felt he respected me, and was honoured to be able to take part. This process was therapeutic for him, and helped him to understand himself better. He found my recognition of him as a refugee very helpful. My other participants echoed this several times.

Before her interview, Gila said, 'Although you were introduced to me by a person I trust, I do need to be sure.' Afterwards, she said, 'I feel I trust you. At the beginning I hesitated.'

All my participants shared this initial doubt. They needed to assure themselves that I was in no way associated with the regime, and that I did not wish to undermine their political party. They said 'The Iranian Government employ spies in the West, and use them to maintain their control by creating fear.' Having worked with Iranian refugees over three decades, I found that those in exile would neither express their views nor engage with any Iranian they did not know personally. Many Iranians who were not politically active thought it was safe for them to go to Iran, and when they did the Intelligence agency arrested them. This fear is common among Iranians. My initial approach therefore was to develop through our initial meetings a foundation of trust, which the interviews themselves enhanced.

It took me more than a year to recruit my nine participants. Before starting the actual interviews, I met each one of them informally at least twice, to introduce myself and to develop the level of trust needed, to gain rich data.

Participants had to fulfil the following criteria:

1. a) Ex-political prisoners, human rights activists, members of women's rights movements, supporters of banned political parties, or members of student movements. Or they might be writers, authors and journalists fighting for democracy.

1. b) Those who are profoundly opposed to the regime and refuse to support it in any way might say, like Sina: 'I had financial problems and I didn't want to compromise my integrity by working for them.' Darius was offered money by the Intelligence service to cooperate and spy for them: he refused, saying he was not that kind of person. This made him a target and he couldn't stay in Iran.

2. Aged between 25 and 60;

3. Settled in the UK for periods of 3–12 years;

4. Fluent English speakers; and

5. Over 21 years old at the time they moved to the UK.

3-12 years is an appropriate period for a refugee to settle down and to organize his memories and activities while they are fresh. Were I to sample a longer period, it could be difficult to obtain fresh information; memories become distorted. Sina, for instance, did not feel too distant in time from his memories, and having established a new home, he felt more confident in sharing them.

I selected nine participants to interview in depth. Jonathan Smith recommends three at the Master level, and for a professional doctorate, 4-10 interviews are adopted. That range seems about right (Smith et al. 2009). However, when I attended the International IPA Conference, I gathered that some researchers recruit more than 20, even 30 participants. When I questioned this number, I was told their project's funding body wanted a large number of participants, although they agreed that working with a large number makes it difficult to gain rich data and reliable findings.

I mentioned in my application request for Ethics board approval, that my research will be conducted in English and possibly in Farsi, as my participants and I speak the native language as well as fluent English. Eight of my participants preferred to speak Farsi because they could express their feelings better. I translated the Farsi into English and asked them to approve my

translation by signing each page of my transcript. I made appointments for each of my participants to read their transcripts carefully. They all spent more than an hour doing this, signed each page, and made some corrections. Darius was himself an English translator and had chosen to have his interview in English. He also approved and signed each page of the transcript.

Loss of meaning in translation

The issue of translation has been accessed from various theoretical discourses and the problem of translatability has a long tradition of being addressed intellectually. The aim here is to acknowledge that meaning may have been lost in the translation of interviews from a native language (Farsi) into English. Over the past half-century, translation studies have evolved considerably. It is beyond the scope of this section to evaluate various models of translation.

The thesis as a whole seeks to explore meanings in subjective experiences. The relationship between participants' subjective experiences and language is a two-way process; language is used to express meaning and at the same time language influences how meaning is constructed.

Translation has been an essential part of cultural interaction, as a basic human need, for many centuries. The process of translation is an intercultural activity, enabling communication among people. However, translating correctly sometimes seems problematic. How can we possibly use one language, with its inherent complexities, to convey messages originally expressed in another language? Many scholars are of the opinion that the potential for distortion and loss of meaning can be immense. In other words any text belongs to a dynamic cultural and linguistic ecology. The translator uproots it to transplant its fragile meaning. Every experienced translator knows and accepts that translation always involves loss (Neubert & Shreve, 1992). Nevertheless, not all values and meanings   disappear   as   a   result   of   the   translation.   Mikhailova   in   his

hermeneutical model perceived that the process of translation should not be accessed solely from the viewpoint of translatability and the results of translation cannot be judged merely according to the criteria of "adequacy" and "correctness." He concludes that though translation is not a distorted version of the original, neither can it be identical with it (Mikhailova, 2005).

Venuti, one of the leading figures in translation studies, wrote that both notions of translatability and untranslatability, despite the dichotomy, seem to present the same model of translation, which he called the instrumental model. He wrote that the model reproduced an invariant that was contained in the source text, regardless of its form, its meaning, or its effect (Venuti, 2017). This is supported by Jacques Derrida's famous paradox – 'nothing is translatable; nothing is untranslatable' – either translation can be done or it can never be done (Derrida, 2001: 178). From a different perspective, George Steiner, in his well-known book "After Babel", proposed a hermeneutic approach to translation as an interpretative act.

As translation is also an interpretative act, meaning may get lost in the translation process (Van Nes et al., 2010). Language differences may have consequences, because concepts in one language may be understood differently in another language. Translation between languages involves interpretation as well. Language differences generate additional challenges that might hinder the transfer of meaning and might result in loss of meaning and thus reduction in the validity of the research.

In conclusion, where translation of subjective experience is involved, some loss in the quality of meaning seems inevitable. Qualitative research is considered valid however when the meanings as interpreted in the findings are as close as possible to the meanings as experienced by the participants (Polkinghorne, 2007).

Issue of Trust

Another important factor is that although at first all my participants hesitated to engage, they became willing and generous with their time. They were highly supportive of my project, and offered further time if I had any more questions or needed to contact them. Sara, Karimi and Gila helped me to recruit the other participants. A mutual trust evolved in the process; Gila and Lida in particular told me that after the interview, their confidence in me moved to a higher level. Those who came forward to be interviewed about their experiences shared a positive attitude about themselves and their achievement. Those without this attitude did not participate. I will discuss in depth the nature of this limitation in my project.

It is crucial to maintain a good working boundary: a friendly relationship rather than a personal friendship. If both persons have some emotional investment in each other, this could colour what they are talking about, and distort the rich data to be obtained. The professional framework of safety and trust enabled the participants and myself to concentrate on the study in depth rather than on ourselves. For political refugees, to feel that they are 'recognised' is vital.

For the reasons stated above, it was very difficult at first to recruit participants. My initial approach was to develop through preliminary meetings a foundation of trust which the interviews themselves enhanced. After the main body of the research was completed, my participants showed their interest and cooperation by introducing new participants to the project.

World-view, Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology

My world-view in general should take account of three fundamental phenomena: existence, human beings and world history. Human beings desire to be, and to be something; to escape from pain and sorrow, to achieve wellbeing and happiness. I believe that existence is real, independently from my mind, and evolving in its biological, sociological and spiritual dimensions. However, the

objective world is not independent from human perception. Our 'reality' is a phenomenal one open to a multiplicity of interpretations and meanings (Spinelli, 1989). Human beings are capable of constructing the meaning of the phenomena outside their mind.

It is essential to build a strong theoretical base for my doctoral study. To develop my research plan, I first put considerable effort into understanding the philosophical and ontological stance behind my chosen methodology. My ontological stance is derived from my world-view. What is ontology?

Ontology, the study of being, is concerned with "what is"; what is the nature of existence and being (Effingham, 2013; Ritchie et al. 2013; Berto & Plebani, 2015; Cappelen, Gendler and Hawthorne, 2016)? What constitutes the reality of being a political refugee? For example positivist approaches have employed objectivist ontology. Positivists believe reality is independent of human perception; the object has its own separate order that can be uncovered by the researcher (Porta & Keating, 2008; Ritchie et al. 2013; Holstein & Gubrium, 2013; Burr, 2015).

Epistemology is philosophically linked to ontology, and is concerned with how we know what we know: the theory of knowledge (Ritchie et al. 2013; Tsoukas, 2004; O'Hear, 2009; Everson, 1990; Cappelen, Gendler and Hawthorne, 2016). What constitutes valid knowledge of political refugees and how can I obtain it? The positivist approach to understanding the world suggests a single reality that can be researched and discovered. The positivist approach has long been applied within social sciences.

My study is ontologically rooted in constructionism. Without consciousness, there is no meaning–based reality. Reality is seen as an interaction between objective and subjective. Accordingly, knowledge is conceptualized as a construction of reality from a certain perspective based on the perception of the individual. In this philosophical framework, social phenomena such as political refugees and their meaning can only be viewed from an individual perspective. Logically,

constructionist approaches emphasize the discovery of patterns and meanings over universal truths, which are co-constructed within interactions in the world, and are influenced by personal, historical and socio-cultural contexts (Porta & Keating, 2008; Holstein & Gubrium, 2013; Burr, 2015). My methodology is based on my ontological and epistemological position.

I chose to follow a qualitative framework for this study. A number of methodologies were available for my research.

Why did I choose Qualitative Research?

In order to answer the main question of my study, I used qualitative research. The focus is on my participants' thoughts, meanings and experiences; through data collection, analysis and interpretation, I construct a view of their multi-level reality. I wish to delve deeply into the meanings that political refugees might attach to particular circumstances.

Qualitative research recognises that subjective ways of knowing are at the centre of the investigation process.

As a researcher, I engage directly with the participants. The study is grounded in my constructivist view of reality. As I bring my worldview and subjectivity into every aspect of the study, it is essential to acknowledge my bias and ensure that my participants' views remain in the forefront of the investigation, and are the ones which drive my findings.

I believe knowledge is more than merely gathering facts. Researchers perceiving reality in a fluid and dynamic way construct knowledge. Multiple meanings can arise from the interaction. Theory in qualitative research is generated from the data collected by the researcher. This process is often described as inductive. An inductive process by its nature keeps the mind open to exploration, moving from specific observations and data to broader concepts and the birth of a theory. My aim in this study is not to assert a theory but to develop a deeper understanding of my participants' lived experience.

Choosing the method

Methodology is a strategic process or plan of action leading to the desired outcome. It influences and can determine the choice of research questions (Ritchie et al. 2013; Berto & Plebani, 2015; Cappelen, Gendler and Hawthorne, 2016).

The search for meaning is rooted in the human psyche. The research journey is a systematic discovery, to advance our knowledge. Before selecting IPA to conduct my research, I examined Heuristic, Narrative Analysis, Grounded Theory, mixed-method IPA with Heuristic, and IPA. Initially I wanted to combine IPA and Heuristic methodologies, but as my understanding of research methods evolved, I found IPA the best option. On completing my research, the outcome confirmed my initial choice.

Narrative Analysis

As regards qualitative research, Narrative Analysis appeared similar to IPA, but it is focused on how an individual's life story led him or her chronologically to the current state. For example, a researcher utilizing narrative analysis will find an objective level of analysis to assess lived experience. Advocates of IPA however, remain open to each individual's unique perspective. Narrative Analysis has some similarities with IPA: both are interpretative and interested in how people interpret and make sense of their experiences, and how the context influences the story. There are however, some key differences between the two methods. Griffin and May (2012) wrote: Narrative Analysis is drawn on a range of theories and in fact contains within it several different varieties of analysis, so it is hard to specify overall rules about what kind of data ought to be analysed. Narrative analysts are in debate about how close they can come to an individual's experience. IPA's focus is not on initial theory, but on participants' lived experience.

Grounded Theory

It is possible for IPA as an inductive process to generate a theory, but that is not its main purpose. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) pointed out the marked overlap between IPA and Grounded Theory, concerning the enquiry's inductive process. The focus in Grounded Theory is pushed towards a more conceptualised explanatory base for which it requires a larger number of participants in the study. IPA offers a more detailed analysis of the lived experience of a small number of participants.

As Charmaz (2014) put it, grounded theory as a qualitative method consists of systematic data gathering, synthesizing, analysing and conceptualising qualitative data to construct theory. As I did not aim to create a new theory, grounded theory was not an appropriate method for my study.

Heuristic Method

The term Heuristic is derived from the Greek word *heuriskein*; to discover or to find out. It refers to a disciplined method for enquiry, highlighting the researcher's self-awareness. (Moustakas, 1990).

Clark Moustakas applied Phenomenology to his Heuristic approach. In Heuristics, the centre of the research is the researcher; the process evolves as a 'Husserlian' self-enquiry. The aim is to seek and embody the inner meaning, which enables each individual's unique relation to the world: to survive, to respond and to act. Fundamental to the quest is the researcher's sustained self-discovery. The Heuristic researcher does not bracket her/his self-experience. Deep enquiry into the phenomenon emphasises connectedness and relationship in the human search to know. However, in Sela-Smith's view, many Heuristic researchers have tended to slip back into the phenomenological roots of the approach rather than

adhering to the 'I-who-feels' agenda, formulated by Douglass and Moustakas (Sela-Smith, 2002).

Moustakas' Heuristic method applies to a qualitative researcher's personal, meaningful enquiry; it does not fit readily into academic programmes and publication arrangements (Hiles, 2001, McLeod,2012).

Both IPA and Heuristics aim to understand, from a shared philosophical background, the wholeness of human phenomena.

IPA became popular among researchers in the psychotherapy and counselling fields, but little Heuristic research was conducted within these disciplines. The IPA process follows two stages: the participants' efforts to understand themselves, and the researcher's effort to make sense of the participants' inner world (Smith et al. 2009).

IPA focuses on the participants, rather than on the researcher. Over the last three years of intensive work using this methodology, my insight through IPA confirms that the whole process starts from the participant.

While IPA covers a wide range of phenomenological features, the Heuristic method investigates in depth the phenomena arising within the researcher's consciousness (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). Both IPA and Heuristic inquiry involve commitment and passionate personal interest.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Phenomenological research explores human interactions while preserving a lived relationship with reality (van Kaam, 1969). What is a phenomenon? The Greek word *phaenestia* means to flare up, to show itself. The origin is *phaino*, 'to bring to light, to place in brightness, to show in itself, the totality of what lies before us in the light of day' (Heidegger, 1977: 74-75). In Husserl's view: all scientific knowledge rests on inner evidence. In consciousness appear the phenomenal

building blocks of human knowledge. 'Any phenomenon is a starting point for investigation' (Husserl, 1931: 129).

Clark Moustakas refers to the experiential texture of situations, feelings and ideas. 'The task requires that I observe (them) … always with reference to textural qualities – rough and smooth; small and large; quiet and noisy; colourful and bland etc … within an experiential context' (Moustakas, 1994: 90). An enormous amount of information is accessed, leading us towards the essence.

In the 1990s, Jonathan Smith introduced Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as a qualitative research method. Since then, IPA has been employed increasingly in psychotherapy and counselling research. Smith designed a method to gather a detailed description of personal experience. IPA's philosophical foundation is based on the work of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. 'Stay with the phenomenon, in its appearance, view it from different angles … When the evidence feels complete, the object is given to us adequately' (Husserl 1931: 117-118).

IPA's main focus, though based on existing psychological theory, is to examine and analyse the content of each participant's lived experience, rather than to make theoretical assumptions. Both participants and researcher share the cognitive factor as a central analytic concern, including a primary interest in the psychological process (Fiske and Taylor, 1991).

IPA analysis is built around the interaction of the researcher's personal experience and psychological knowledge, with fresh information received from entering each participant's experiential world. The aim is to explore the inner meaning. IPA attempts this by engaging with the participants. Through a series of leading questions to get an "insider view", the researcher plays an active role in the dialogue.

IPA allows the researcher to engage creatively with the participants. The parameters are kept open. The researcher may use empathy; or may approach

an emotional event in a more intellectual way, enclosing the episode in a suitable explanation or theory.

IPA is committed to a person's whole being. The researcher takes into account physical, affective and cognitive aspects of a participant's emotional state, and tries to "read between the lines".

IPA is conducted on small sample sizes. I aimed to collect a qualitative depth synthesis. I designed my questions to give scope for further questions to arise spontaneously, followed by comparison with other cases to broaden the analysis (Smith, 2013).

IPA assumes and is rooted in the philosophies of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Phenomenology is the study of perception, while hermeneutics studies interpretation. Although subjectivity is assumed, an IPA advocate works within the subjectivity of the person to interpret her psychological profile, never removing the arena of study from the person's perception of things.

Willig draws our attention to certain limitations in IPA, which we should be aware of. 'These concern the role of language, the stability of the accounts, and explanation versus description' (Willig, 2013: 94). Through their use of language, participants convey the sense and meaning of an experience to the researcher. Does it give a full picture of the event? The choice of words when describing a specific experience constructs a particular version of that experience. For example, the same experience can be described in many different ways. Therefore we have to realise that it is almost impossible to access someone else's actual experience at the time it happened. However, IPA enables both participant and researcher to make sense of it.

When one of my participants, Parya, arrived in the UK, she said: 'When we arrived, unbelievably, the police treated us with respect – their manner towards us was respectful. It gave us hope – my God! I had tears in my eyes. I couldn't control my feelings. I felt: I've found my home, I've found my family. Can you

believe this? A black woman hugged me, she said: Don't worry. You can't imagine! We were dirty, like sick people, our skin was pale, yellow, we looked wasted and weak. She said: Don't worry – we will help you. She really empathised with us. I wanted to talk! To open up, to explore my feelings! I wanted to tell her everything! I told her we had had a terrible time. She was holding me, she contained me beautifully, in such a comforting way. When she warmly hugged me I felt I was saved, rescued. I'll never forget this feeling' (Parya, 354-376).

IPA's flexibility, and engaging with the transcript, opened up also my own past, which I had forgotten. On the basis of the mutual trust Parya and I had established, she told me her story and I was able to imagine the 11-year-old girl who had been repressed and interrogated at school for asking the wrong questions (Parya, 65-88), and who had not been able to accept herself. She had not been allowed to speak. But her feeling was very powerful. In that instant I travelled with her escape route through Kenya, where she had tried to protect herself and her children from Ebola, where she also gave some of their food to starving children.

I felt I embraced her whole story, beyond the words. I empathised with her way of communicating a life changing experience, it was her Phoenix moment: she was rising from the ashes. When I related the black woman's embrace to what had happened to her when she was eleven, she agreed, 'Exactly'.

Perhaps all IPA researchers know that moment when an interaction jumps out of the box: a physical and emotional image – the black woman embracing Parya, who, in tears, recalls and brings this event right into the present. At the same moment, I embrace her self-acceptance with my attention.

The language participants use to construct meanings, might obstruct their past experience. In my project however, my participants and myself share language, history, background and general worldview as political refugees. This is more

likely to help bring those events into the present as we move closer to the centre of the phenomena and their meaning.

Is IPA both descriptive and interpretative?

Phenomenology is an approach rooted in the 20th century work of Edmund Husserl, followed by Martin Heidegger. All phenomenology is descriptive, in the sense of aiming to describe rather than explain. Phenomenology as an inductive qualitative research tradition has transitioned from descriptive phenomenology, which emphasises the 'pure' description of a person's lived experience, to its 'interpretation' as in hermeneutic phenomenology. However, researchers are still challenged by the epistemological and methodological tenets of these two methods.

Phenomenological research characteristically starts with concrete descriptions of lived situations, often first-person accounts, set down in everyday language and avoiding abstract intellectual generalizations. The researcher proceeds by reflectively analysing these descriptions, perhaps ideographically at first, then by offering a synthesized account, for example, identifying general themes about the essence of the phenomenon. Importantly, the phenomenological researcher aims to go beyond surface expressions or explicit meanings to read between the lines so as to access implicit dimensions and intuitions. It is this process of "reading between the lines" which has generated uncertainty.

A number of scholars and researchers distinguish between descriptive phenomenology and interpretative or hermeneutic phenomenology. Descriptions of the experiences are anchored rigorously to the data without the influence of any external theory. This approach is based on the philosophy of Husserl's phenomenology, which involves the principles of epoché, intentional analysis and eidetic reduction. In other words, the researcher is required to adopt a phenomenological attitude and bracket or put aside past knowledge or

presuppositions. Husserl believed that by consciously setting aside our previous knowledge and detaching ourselves from prejudices, prior understandings and our own history we can identify core structures and features of human experience. Experience of perception, thought, memory, imagination, and emotion, involve what Husserl called "intentionality", which is one's directed awareness or consciousness of an object or event.

There are several approaches to data analysis within the different schools of phenomenology. Colaizzi, Giorgi, and Van Kaam formulated three methods of data analysis, following Husserl's descriptive phenomenology.

Giorgi (1989, 1997, 2009) argues that the phenomenological method encompasses three interconnecting steps: (a) phenomenological reduction, (b) description, and (c) search for essences.

There are also a number of phenomenological methods which focus on rich descriptions of lived experience and meanings, but which do not explicitly use Husserlian philosophy as a base (Friesen, 2012).

Contrary to Husserl's descriptive phenomenology, Heidegger's interpretative phenomenology eliminated bracketing, asserting that impartiality was impossible, because researchers identified with the experience and hermeneutics presumed prior understanding. Heidegger endorsed the hermeneutic circle, whereby understanding and interpretation of a phenomenon were gained through shared knowledge and shared experiences. He rejected the epistemological theory of knowledge and adopted ontology, the science of being.

According to Dahlberg, Drew and Nystrom (2008), Heidegger asserted that human existence is a more fundamental notion than human consciousness and human knowledge. His philosophy makes it clear that the essence of human understanding is hermeneutic. As we understand something we are involved and as we are involved we understand (Welch, 2011)

Heidegger utilizes the hermeneutic circle method, whereby there is continual review and analysis between the parts and the whole of the text. A basic tenet of the hermeneutic interpretative school of thought is that researchers cannot remove themselves from the meanings extracted from the text. The researcher becomes a part of the phenomenon. Consequently, preconceived ideas or opinions are not bracketed.

IPA has emerged by identifying more strongly with hermeneutic traditions and seeks to understand the lived experience by integrating the works of four major phenomenological philosophers: Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre (Smith, 2009). As Smith emphasizes, a distinctive feature of IPA is its detailed and systematic analysis of consciousness. Like Husserl, researchers primarily seek to capture the participants' experiences of a phenomenon by bracketing their foreknowledge. As IPA acknowledges a role for interpretation, the concept of bracketing is somewhat controversial and in any event gives way to a more interpretative process

Smith argues that his idiographic and inductive method, which seeks to explore participants' personal lived experiences, is phenomenological in its concern for individuals' perceptions. However, he also identifies more strongly with hermeneutic traditions, which recognize the central role played by the researcher and do not advocate the use of bracketing (Smith, 2004). Hermeneutics is the art and science of interpretation or meaning. Meaning in this context is fluid and continuously open to new insight, revision, interpretation and reinterpretation.

The main theoretical underpinnings of IPA are phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. IPA has two primary aims: to look in detail at how someone makes sense of life experience, and to provide a detailed interpretation of the account in order to understand the experience. As a qualitative research method, IPA is inevitably subjective, as no two analysts working with the same data are likely to come up with an exact replication of the other's analysis.

Understanding Heidegger's work invites IPA researchers to ground their stance in the lived world of things, people, relationships and language, and to question knowledge outside interpretation. His work also prompts IPA researchers to be reflexive in their interpretation in relation to their prior understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

For example, Heidegger's and Sartre's phenomenology are focused on existentialism, whilst Merleau-Ponty's centres on embodiment. Together, these authors have formulated the argument that we are embedded in the world of language and social relationships. The works of these philosophers complement each other and collectively contribute to a mature, multi - faceted and holistic phenomenology. IPA believes that Heidegger's concept of the appearance of being captures the essence of interpretation.

To gain a more complete understanding of IPA's philosophical foundation it is important to consider the contribution made by the thinking of both Merleau-Ponty and Sartre.

As already noted, Merleau-Ponty focused much of his work on subjectivity, embodiment and our relationship to the world. Thus, he linked phenomenological description to human existence as a bodily being or 'body-subject'. At the core of his philosophy is a protracted argument about the crucial role perception plays in understanding and engaging with the world. For instance, Merleau-Ponty suggested that humans are unique and different from everything else in the world and therefore use their holistic sense to engage with the world. He also argued that empiricism has failed adequately to conceptualize the mechanisms of perception and judgment and that it is essential to acknowledge human existence in shaping the elementary principles of knowing the world. The lesson that IPA researchers can take from Merleau-Ponty's work is his portrayal of the vital role the physical body plays in knowledge of the world. While it is acknowledged that different phenomenologists place different emphasis on the role of sensation and physiology in relation to the intellectual or rational domain,

the place of the physical body as an essential element in experience must not be overlooked (Tuffour, 2017).

Sartre's work focused on human freedom, responsibility and the psychology of human action. In Sartre's view, human nature is more about becoming than about being. Sartre's work offers IPA researchers a comprehensive view of what a phenomenological analysis of human experience should look like in the context of personal, social relationships and moral encounters.

Other philosophers influential in IPA methodology include Schleiermacher, Ricoeur and Gadamer. Gadamer, like Heidegger, believed that all understanding assumes essential elements of presumption and interpretation.

Ricoeur linked phenomenology and hermeneutics, explaining that experience and meaning are closely intertwined. In other words, it is impossible to study experience without simultaneously inquiring into its meaning, and it is impossible to study meaning without experiential grounding. For Ricoeur, hermeneutics, experience and language are co-emergent. Language is used not only for descriptive purposes, but also as an expressive force of experience.

IPA has been criticised as mostly descriptive and insufficiently interpretative (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; HefferonK & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). In my view, IPA is an interpretative methodology, though its foundation drawing on two key philosophers, Husserl and Heidegger, includes descriptive elements. However, Smith himself stated that 'IPA is not trying to operationalize a specific philosophical idea, but rather draws widely, but selectively, from a range of ideas in philosophy' (Smith, 2009: 6).

Working as an IPA Researcher

From 2014 onwards I started to conduct my study using IPA methodology. I learned that I could not limit my participants as human beings, to being objects

of my research. This enabled me to engage with them beyond the context of the research, and to move within their world of human challenge. IPA opened the gate for me to move beyond the research context and to access the unlimited sense of meaning in my participants' lived experience. In this journey, my own life and my own story were observed. I recalled forgotten episodes of my life. Implementing the methodology in my study brought about changes in myself regarding my philosophy, my sense of authenticity and the relationship with my wife. These changes may be summarised in one word: openness.

As a human rights activist, I fought in the battlefield against those who violate these basic rights. The way was clear, in black and white. There was no room for shades of grey. Single minded, I must defeat the enemy of basic human values. I feared that if I moved into grey areas, I would lose that edge and agency in myself. I thought that no grey could exist. IPA helped me to see grey as a possible alternative, and I lost my fear. I accepted it. Going into the grey space, being safe, not losing my own identity, in fact my identity clarified, and I became more authentic. This was my inner change.

Jonathan Smith, the founder of IPA, contributed to the field of research, by transforming personal ownership of the methodology to 'public ownership'. Researchers can now pool their own experiences. In this respect I am aware of my responsibility.

As a researcher, I am aware that in order to be open and to receive fresh and meaningful data, I should not impose my technique, ideas or theories on my participants, as there is no room in the inductive element of IPA, for deductive processes. This requires an understanding of my participant's situation; and for me to create a safe enclosed environment for him or her to explore their experience. It requires a way of communicating which works through the feelings, developing a high level of empathy.

Following the steps introduced by IPA method, reading and re-reading the transcripts, I meet my participants again and again afresh, through their

narratives. Our interaction was not only cognitive, but reflective. This helped to deepen my understanding, and so did the act of writing my descriptive notes and reading again what my participants told me. The themes flourish in this natural way without being imposed. In this process, I feel I have known each participant for a long time; their struggle, their pain, their fear and their achievements. They live within me.

A Critical Reflection on IPA

There is no single way of conducting IPA. IPA is not a fixed method; it is continually evolving. For myself, attending the Conference at which over twenty different projects were presented, confirmed this.

For example, Jonathan Smith gave a presentation of his recent research study on depression, using IPA methodology. His colleague was an experienced therapist. Although the full scope of their study lies beyond that of this reflection, I would like to point out some areas of my own concern. IPA in general gives room to a flexible approach, working creatively with the possibilities, which arise. Each IPA research develops its own characteristics. There is no single 'correct' way to conduct an IPA project.

It seems that many research studies give little thought to cultivating the psychological dynamic between researcher and participant: their initial meeting and assessment of each other.

In his study on depression, Jonathan Smith did not meet his participants. His colleague interviewed them, and Jonathan analysed the texts. They worked as a team. I asked Jonathan how he worked without seeing his participants, but relying only on the texts? He replied, 'I worked with my team member. He is an experienced psychotherapist.'

Within the short question time, I asked additionally, 'What was his therapeutic approach?' Jonathan replied, 'Oh. Oh! Interesting. He uses any approach, not a specific one.'

IPA researchers may also gather data through visual methods, such as encouraging participants to draw or to keep a journal. Dr Michael Larkin, a reader in Psychology in Birmingham, presented 'Developments in design and data collection', through multiple methods. I asked, 'Do you initiate or impose these methods on your participants? How do you decide which method will fit best? Is the starting point from yourself or is it from your participants?' He replied, 'That's an important point: not to impose.'

Sampling

Keeping within the guidelines of IPA qualitative research, the number of participants is subject to the purpose of the enquiry. This depends on various factors: the degree of commitment to the case-study, the level of analysis and reporting, the richness of the individual cases, and the constraints I operate under. In contrast to the random or representative sampling strategies of quantitative research, IPA research methodology focuses on the detailed analysis of the experiences of small samples most suited to the research question (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Participants are recruited because they are experts in the phenomenon being explored; IPA allows their subjective thoughts and experiences to be investigated (Reid et al. 2005). For example, IPA studies were published with samples of 1, 4, 9, 15 and more. There is a recent trend for IPA studies to be conducted with a very small number of participants. A distinctive feature is IPA's commitment to a detailed interpretative account of the cases included, sacrificing breadth for depth (ibid).

My sampling requirement was my nine participants' willingness to discuss the meaning of their own lived experience. This included their active interest in reflecting on these issues, and making fresh discoveries. They shared an

informed interest in my research topic, which I invited with my sample questions. The sample should be homogenous, i.e. consisting of those for whom the research questions are meaningful.

Who are my participants?

I would like to introduce my participants as fully as possible. I don't see them only as objects of my research. They are human beings; their connection with me began in doubt and mistrust. Through several meetings I established my relationship with them. Although recruiting was difficult – it took about a year – after our association developed they became supportive and highly appreciative of someone whose efforts enabled their voice to be heard. They gave their time generously and welcomed my questions.

Personally, I felt proud of each of them, for despite what they had gone through, they were able to develop a new life and to keep their mission alive for human rights and social justice, as well as becoming productive, respectable citizens in their new homeland.

To this research, I was able to bring a small portion only, of their full experience. This is partly because what has happened to them was in the past, and it is impossible for them to recall each detail. Their life pattern is very rich. To describe any of them adequately is beyond the scope of this project. I feel my responsibility is to give as accurate an overall picture as I can. My connection with these individuals is linked to a collective movement for freedom and human values, regardless of time, location and space, and is ongoing.

Although I think of them as individuals, they moved from their personal space to join with others in fellowship. In their commitment and the choices they made, they exemplify 'self for others'. They crossed the boundaries which separate people and became 'with others and for others'. This became their life's purpose.

Sara, Gila and Karimi, Darius and all the others say that without helping other people, life would be meaningless.

At the beginning of the project I thought I 'knew it all' because I was full of my own experience: involving three decades working with refugees – since 1981. I had no idea the project itself would bring so much new meaning into my life.

My participants helped me towards a better understanding of human values. For me, giving them a voice won't be limited to this project. They enriched my own life, and my mission is to continue to give them a voice. I carry all of them forward with honour, gratitude and respect.

Demography of my participants

Sina

He is single, in his early thirties, from an ethnic minority group in Iran. He lost many friends and relatives through their political and human rights activities, and the situation in his homeland became unbearable. He escaped about 10 years ago and studied anthropology in one of the London universities. In Iran he had been barred from further education. His brother left Iran several years before him to live in England, where he is now completing his PhD. The rest of their family are still in Iran.

Sina is self-employed, loves his work and enjoys intellectual activity and discussion.

Karimi

He is in his early fifties, married with six children – one son and five daughters. He and his family live in London. In Iran Karimi was a political activist, and member of a prohibited party. Many of his friends, family members and relatives were executed. Because of his activities he was arrested, imprisoned for five years and severely tortured and traumatized. After five years he was released,

but under continual observation and interrogation. It was impossible for him to remain in Iran; he escaped about 10 years ago. After he got asylum here, he managed to bring his family out. He studied engineering and his children went to university. In Iran they were barred from further education.

Karimi is a very hard-working man, well respected and popular among his friends. He takes great pride in his work, in which he exercises his values.

Sara

Sara is in her mid-fifties, married, and comes from an ethnic minority in Iran. She and her husband were freedom fighters and members of a prohibited party. She has three children – one son and two daughters, who went into medicine. Her son is not in work, because of his psychological condition. Sara and her husband remain members of the prohibited party's European branch. She is an active member of women's rights organisations.

Sara devoted her life to help her people. She is well respected within her community.

Hiva

Hiva is single in his early forties. Eight years ago, he escaped from Iran. He was head of his family in Iran. After his parents died, he took care of his brother, an activist, and his sister, whose health was delicate. Hiva is the author of two books. Because of his activities – his house was a centre against the regime – he was arrested and imprisoned. After his release, he could no longer stay there, and he escaped. Hiva's application for asylum was refused by the Home Office, and he is in the process of re-submitting his case. He was able to bring his brother and his sister here; both of them were granted asylum; he is disappointed with his own rejection by the Home Office. He has a strong personality and entrepreneurial gifts. He has created a successful business with over 40 employees.

Watan

He is in his early thirties. Watan was a freedom fighter and member of a prohibited political party. He lost relatives and friends to execution. He was arrested and imprisoned, and succeeded in escaping from prison seven years ago. When he came here his case for asylum was rejected. He got married in England, is eager to study, but without refugee status he is unable to afford it. He has developed several successful business outlets. He is re-submitting his application for asylum. Watan is popular in his community, and continues to be politically active.

Darius

Darius is single and in his early forties. He worked in Iran as an English translator, to support his family, until the intelligence service tried to force him to work for them. He refused, because to spy on people was against his conscience. The intelligence service attacked his father's house, to try to capture him. Darius' life was endangered, and he had to escape. It took ten years for Darius to get his leave to remain in the UK. During those hard times, he became a Buddhist, and he now works as a company administrator and translator. His contribution to the firm was respected, and after a few months he was promoted.

Gila

Gila is a widow in her mid-fifties. She works in a supermarket. Her husband and her brothers were executed in Iran. She was a political activist in a prohibited party, and was arrested, imprisoned and severely tortured. After her release from prison, she had to escape. Gila has three children, who are all high achievers in this country. Gila is well respected as a political activist on the international scene. Through her activities for human rights and women's rights, she is well-connected through the UN and the International Court of Justice in The Hague. She said, 'My purpose in life is to help people.'

Lida

Lida is in her mid-fifties, married twice, with three children. Two of them are in Iran with their own families. She was a political activist in a prohibited party. Her present husband was no longer politically active. Lida was followed by religious guards to arrest her. Her party informed her of this and told her to escape at once. She took her 18-year-old son with her, and fled. Lida arrived here three years ago, and was given asylum immediately. She is studying to improve her English and to write a novel. Her husband is psychologically disabled and homesick.

Parya

Parya is in her mid-thirties, married with two children, a daughter and a son. Her husband was a political activist; they were at risk in Iran, and couldn't stay. They escaped through Africa three years ago, and risked catching ebola. It was a highly traumatic journey for Parya in particular, because of her small children. Parya was a school counsellor, and always under surveillance because she had a mind of her own. From an early age, she had radical views concerning women's rights. This made it impossible for her to stay in Iran. Parya got asylum for her family after her husband's application had failed. Although she enjoys her life here, her husband has great difficulty in adapting himself. This has led to tension and serious family conflict. She is now the head of the family and breadwinner.

Table 3: 1   Demography of my participants

Name	Gender	Age	Marital status	Children	Occupational status	Refugee status or Citizenship	Political status	Years in the UK	Remarks
Sina	Male	33	Single	-	Self-employed	UK citizen	Activist	10	Ethnic minority
Karimi	Male	52	Married	6	Engineer	UK citizen	Political Prisoner	10	Activist family
Sara	Female	55	Married	3	NGO worker	UK citizen	Freedom fighter	11	Leadership
Hiva	Male	42	Single	-	Businessman	Asylum seeker	Political Prisoner	8	Author
Watan	Male	32	Divorced	-	Businessman	Asylum seeker	Political Prisoner	7	Zoroastrian
Darius	Male	43	Single	-	Translator	Asylum granted	Activist	10	Buddhist
Gila	Female	56	Widow	3	NGO worker	UK citizen	Political Prisoner	10	Leadership
Lida	Female	55	Married	3	NGO worker	Asylum granted	Activist	3	Family conflict
Parya	Female	36	Married	2	Shop assistant	Asylum granted	Activist	3	Family conflict

Interviews

Those who fulfil the sampling criteria are approached and invited to participate. I use semi-structured interviewing as my method of data collection, which requires careful preparation and planning. Semi-structured interviewing depends on the mutual rapport established between myself and participants. This requires sensitive and ethical negotiation. For example, a researcher should not induce interviewees to reveal more than they may feel comfortable with after the event (Willig, 2011).

In each of my first meetings with participants, I introduced myself, explained my project, its criteria, boundaries and ethical issues and read my information sheet with them to make sure they understood. They were open and cooperative. We made appointments for the formal interviews, and I mentioned that they might take more than an hour. They were generous with their time, and appreciative. Hiva spoke for them all: 'I look to the future. I am very pleased to hear that people like you think about political refugees' (Hiva, 524-5). We agreed on a time and place, and I explained that the interviews would be tape-recorded and transcribed for data analysis.

Conducting a good semi-structured interview requires the skill to cover the domain in a conversational manner, and to offer unbiased probes (Ashcroft et al. 2007). Finding the right balance and maintaining control of the interview while not losing sight of the original research question, researchers should give the participant room to speak freely and openly. They should consider the possible effects upon the study, of their own social identities such as gender, social class, ethnicity, politics and age.

Settings and Equipment

I looked for interview sites which might feel comfortable and familiar for both parties, reasonably quiet and free from interruption. I sought my participants' acceptance of the venue. I met them at the office of a counselling and

psychotherapy charity in North London. The Phoenix Aid Centre is an office within a block of flats, and provides a safe and confidential environment. During the interviews the centre manager remained in her own room.

With her agreement, I aimed to create a comfortable environment for the interviews. I brought in an Iranian carpet and cushions, put portraits of friendly persons on the walls, green plants by the window and a display table with photographs. I arranged a table for us to sit at, offered them their own language preference for the interview and monitored and created space for their emotions. All these factors helped me to engage deeply with each of my participants and their data.

Collecting Data

Semi-Structured Interview

Through semi-structured one-to-one interviews, I hoped to elicit detailed stories, thoughts and feelings from the participants.

Initially, I collected demographic information: age, gender, education, social class, place of origin in Iran, profession in Iran and now in the UK, marital status, children and family, ethnicity and religious beliefs. I also asked whether they had been arrested or imprisoned in Iran.

Although my intention was to gather data relating to the four worlds reintroduced by Emmy von Deurzen (2009), I kept my questions open so as to avoid making assumptions about my participants, or leading them towards particular answers. My main focus was then on analysing the data.

The interview schedule followed four primary domains of participants' experience: their life in Iran prior to their escape, the escape process, their experiences of adaptation and resettlement, and how they saw their current situation and future plans.

For example, my landmark questions were:

1. Could you please describe what it was like for you in Iran before you left the country? (Prompt – what did you do there? What were your political activities?)

2. How did it feel when you first arrived in the UK? (Prompt – were there any difficulties? If so, what helped you to overcome them? If it was easy for you, can you describe what happened?)

3. What did you think your way of life might be? (Prompt – what were your plans?)

4. How would you describe your life at present? (Prompt – positive and negative experiences, achievements and meanings.)

5. What have you learned? What do you hope for, in the years to come?

Through Question One, I gathered data concerning social (Mitwelt), personal (Eigenwelt), physical (Umwelt) and possibly spiritual (Uberwelt) worlds. Question Two developed the personal and spiritual dimensions. The third question gave me more information concerning all four worlds. Question Four was also regarded in the light of the four worlds, and Question Five was designed to cover any or all of their aspects.

Rather than lead the questions, I relied on analysing the data following the interviews, to interpret the four world dimensions as they emerged. This gave my participants the freedom to explore their own stories.

I was careful not to ask questions which political refugees might be over-sensitive to, such as the practical and highly secret details of their escape. This allowed them to describe this crucial process freely, in terms of how they felt during it.

Transcribing – Method and Participants' Approval

It is a highly concentrated intellectual and emotional exercise for me to listen to the tapes of my interviews with the participants, and make an accurate translation of each phrase of the conversation from Farsi to English. In fact the translation was quite stressful to begin with, and I felt very tired afterwards. Later on, as I grew accustomed to it, it became easier, particularly when I decided to take time to tackle one section at a time.

In Sina's case, with my first transcript, I wrote a rough draft of almost the whole of the interview, working through most of the day. I needed to know how long the process might take, and felt encouraged. With the transcripts which followed, I was able to pace myself.

I felt deeply engaged and empathic with my participants and their stories. I listened to the tapes repeatedly, while correcting the transcript, focusing on the dialogue, and giving each section time and thought. I also included some observations on body language and tone of voice.

To get a different perspective, I sent a draft of the first transcript to my supervisors, one of whom observed that I had asked some influential or leading questions, and had given my participant insufficient room for his data to emerge. My other supervisor commented that the interviewing method should allow the participant to walk in his own space, experientially, and that the content was interesting. Going through the tape and transcript a second time, I discovered the mistake was mainly stylistic, because of my efforts to write correct English. The stress of translating had become an obstacle. My questions and prompts were in fact more open and relaxed than they first appeared. I was able to represent my participant more accurately, and find parts that I had missed. However, my supervisors' views increased my sensitivity in subsequent interviews to be as open and receptive as possible, and to allow my participants

to be forthcoming. As I mentioned before, all the transcripts were approved by my participants, after careful reading.

Sara, my second participant, spoke quite repetitively in her interview. In her case also, I listened to the tape and corrected my translation. Before we started, she had an urgent phone call and said she must leave soon, but that she had enough time. If we couldn't finish in the given hour, she would come back again. In fact we spoke for an hour and a half, and I asked for a second meeting to clarify some points. She agreed to give her time. During this second meeting I also showed her the translation I had done so far. She read part of it and said she would like to read and sign each page of the full transcript, next time.

Although during each of the interviews I asked my participants if they felt tired and would like to resume later, they were all fully engaged in the project, and wanted to carry on.

Data Analysis

IPA does not prescribe a specific method for analysing data. The IPA approach recognises the central, interpretative role of the researcher in analysing and making sense of the participants' accounts. IPA is applied flexibly to a set of common processes and principles. According to Smith et al. (2009), analysis as an iterative and inductive process encourages the researcher to engage reflexively with the participant's narrative. Although the analysis is a joint product of participant and researcher, IPA's primary concern is the participant's lived experience and the meaning which he or she constructs from it. The research finding is therefore based on the researcher thinking about the participant's thinking: a double hermeneutic. IPA analysis is subjective in its strength; nevertheless, that subjectivity is dialogical, systematic and rigorous. Its application can be made available subsequently, for the reader to check (ibid).

In the process of my data analysis the ideographic focus on each participant developed into that of the whole group. I explored the inner meanings derived from my participants' experience. I planned to acquire an all-round picture for analysis.

IPA analysis follows a step-by-step process. See tables and boxes of all IPA process steps in the appendix. I first numbered the lines of each transcript (see Table 3. 2 A sample of Sina's transcript) so as to code them, then read and studied them carefully.

		Table 3. 2 A sample of Sina's transcript
205	**A.**	How did you feel when you arrived here?
206	**S.**	Here?
207	**A.**	Yes I mean, as soon as you arrived here, what
208		was your feeling?
209	**S.**	*Silent for a moment*.
210	**A.**	Did you know you were coming here?
211	**S.**	Yes. I knew. My brother was here. One of the reasons
212		people go from one place to another place is because of
213		their social status.
214	**A.**	Do you mean your brother being here, opened
215		your mind to come to England?
216	**S.**	No. No, it made no difference. As a person I couldn't be
217		there. I was suffocating. I had this feeling of
218		suffocating. To provide basic needs was very difficult for
219		us, and I didn't want to earn money in a corrupt way. I
220		didn't feel I belonged there. This feeling was zero, and
221		it wasn't my fault. This wasn't imagination, it was real.
222		From age 17 to 21, I was searching a way of life for
223		myself … It was a dictatorship! Yes.

Step One: Reading and re-reading.

The first step in IPA analysis involves immersion in some of the original data. While I was translating my participants' data from Farsi into English, it was helpful to hear their tone of voice several times, which enhanced my sense of connection. Among other things I considered their use of pronouns, poses and body language, laughter, repetition and metaphor.

For example, Lida in her interviews, uses watery images: 'I was like a bit of wood in the sea with all the waves, you don't know where to go. That is exactly how it felt. My God, where am I going – my son at that time was 15 years old, he's now 19 … I kept my hope. The wood had reached the beach. The waves brought the wood to the coast, and I hoped I would then find my own way' (Lida, 177-180, 205-7). Gila spoke forcefully about 'keeping the blood in her husband's veins alive' and: 'for as long as I have blood in my veins I will fight for freedom. I will never stop. This is my wish' (Gila, 63-64, 70).

I could therefore imagine their voices during subsequent reading of the transcript, which helped me towards a more complete analysis. I used my ears and my eyes. I also read the transcripts at different times of day for fresh points of emphasis, and avoided doing so when I was tired. Through my reading, and as I assimilated their stories and drew close to their inner world, I felt emotionally connected to each participant in a way beyond cognitive understanding. In other words, the IPA process step 1, reading and re-reading transcripts, enabled me to meet my participants over and over again, engaging with their story and their emotion, and experiencing it for myself. It goes far beyond engaging with texts. We interact with human beings with whom trust is established; our openness to the unexpected flows into the encounter.

Trust is crucial. Nothing comes to life in the research without it. If we don't develop trust the participants cannot feel safe to use language freely and remit the essence of their experience; they will be selective and wary. Research is a search for truth. Rather than re-read, I would use the term, re-connect at

different times and in different moods to discover new flavours of this relationship, the human journey.

Step Two: Initial Noting

In the second step, I began to write and explore whatever came to my mind spontaneously from reading the transcript. This process increased my familiarity with the transcript and identified the specific ways in which the participants talked about their issues. With subsequent readings, I added further exploratory notes (see Table 3. 3 for Step 2: Initial Noting for Sina's transcript). As I moved through the transcripts, I commented on similarities, differences and contradictions.

Table 3. 3 Initial noting for Sina's transcript			
Initial comments			**Original transcript**
	205	**A.**	How did you feel when you arrived here?
	206	**S.**	Here?
	207	**A.**	Yes I mean, as soon as you arrived here, what
	208		was your feeling?
A silence. He now starts to think carefully and to review his memory.	209	**S.**	*Silent for a moment*.
	210	**A.**	Did you know you were coming here?
My brother was here". *Knowing where he was going. Social network and advantages.*	211	**S.**	Yes. I knew. My brother was here. One of the reasons
	212		people go from one place to another place is because of
	213		their social status.
	214	**A.**	Do you mean your brother being here, opened
	215		your mind to come to England?
	216	**S.**	No. No, it made no difference. As a person I couldn't be
"No. No, it made no difference. As a person I couldn't be there. I was suffocating. I had this feeling of suffocating". *Threat to his existence.*	217		there. I was suffocating. I had this feeling of
	218		suffocating. To provide basic needs was very difficult for
"To provide basic needs was very difficult for us". *He didn't want to compromise his dignity or further undermine his sense of self.* "I didn't feel I belonged	219		us, and I didn't want to earn money in a corrupt way. I
	220		didn't feel I belonged there. This feeling was zero, and

there ... it wasn't my fault": *Condemning the government.""* Searching a way of life*: to choose his future, the self he wants to be. From age 17 he discovered a way of living which was forbidden by the dictatorship. He reiterates the fact that he did not belong there, psychologically or physically.* *Sina created his own opportunity to move: a positive motivation.*	221		it wasn't my fault. This wasn't imagination, it was real.
	222		From age 17 to 21, I was searching a way of life for
	223		myself … It was a dictatorship! Yes.
	224		When I arrived here, the first thing I saw was a
	225		symbol of here – that double decker red bus! Without
	226		knowing about my future, or what might happen to me,
"Symbol: double decker red bus … Without knowing about my future, or what might happen to me, I felt comfortable and relaxed": *He arrived at a place where he is meant to be.*	227		I felt comfortable and relaxed.
	228	**A.**	What gave you this feeling?
	229	**S.**	I don't know. It was a symbol, it said you have gone
	230		somewhere, arrived somewhere. This is only a symbol,
	231		but I felt comfortable, I felt relaxed. I felt safe and
Red bus!	232		secure. This was funny. The bus didn't have anything,
I felt safe. I felt secure and relaxed. *The double decker red bus symbolizes Sina's sense of security, comfort and relaxation. He compares what he remembers in his country with what he sees here. The metaphor releases his*	233		was nothing special, but when you go back to the past,
	234		you look at the experience, and also the symbols, the
	235		red bus was a symbol of that moment for me.

expressive language in images; he speaks with power and clarity and from the heart. The plight of women in his country is a fundamental abuse of legitimacy, social justice and human rights. While the regime's ideology is based on discrimination against women, the sight of women here who sit safely with men in the bus symbolizes their freedom to travel, to circulate and to communicate. This gives Sina a deep sense of security; he can relax.	237	**A.**	Was there a bus where you lived in Iran?
	238	**S.**	Yes!
	239		*Observation: smiles*
	240	**A.**	What were the differences between that bus and
	241		this bus for you?
	242	**S.**	That bus unfortunately segregated human beings
The first thing Sina noticed here, was women's freedom to circulate. The comparison with the situation of women in Iran shows how crucially embedded the issue is in Sina's psyche and in his values. This suggests that in the nomadic life, women work with the men while raising the children, and are treated with respect. He speaks with passionate emotion about the way women are treated in Iran. He describes the bright colour of the bus he saw, signalling prosperity, hope and happiness.	243		according to their sex. Can you imagine?
	244		*Observation: smiles sadly*
	245	**A.**	Are you saying that bus symbolised segregation
	246		for you there? Do you mean that?
	247	**S.**	Yes.
	248	**A.**	Here, people sit freely in the bus.
It was impossible for Sina to live under a misogynous government.	249	**S.**	Even the colour of the bus here is bright. Yes.
In his creative language the red bus symbolised that he arrived; that he moved from danger into a place of safety and comfort. It is in his nature as a nomad, to be able to move freely: to find	250	**A.**	What else do you remember about your arrival
			here?
	251	**S.**	That bus was the first good feeling I found.

fresh grazing land: to be not trapped or confined.			

Step Three: Developing emerging themes

In this step I analysed my exploratory comments to identify emergent themes (see Table 3. 4 below for A Sample of Emerging Themes and see in Appendix Table 3. 5 for Initial List of Themes)

Table 3.4 A sample of emerging themes from Sina's transcript			
Original transcript			**Themes**
214	**A.**	Do you mean your brother being here, opened	
215		your mind to come to England?	
216	**S.**	No. No, it made no difference. As a person I couldn't be	Sense of suffocation in being there
217		there. I was suffocating. I had this feeling of	Social justice
218		suffocating. To provide basic needs was very difficult for	Threat to his existence
219		us, and I didn't want to earn money in a corrupt way. I	Human rights
220		didn't feel I belonged there. This feeling was zero, and	Keeping his values
221		it wasn't my fault. This wasn't imagination, it was real.	Misrecognition
222		From age 17 to 21, I was searching a way of life for	Suppression
223		myself … It was a dictatorship! Yes.	Condemning the regime
			Desire to develop his way of life

Identifying each theme

Table 3. 6 shows where in the transcript instances of each theme can be found by giving the page/line numbers plus key words from a particular extract.

Table 3. 6 Sample for table of list of themes in Sina's transcript		
Themes	**Page/line**	**Key words**
Social connection and status;	16.211-213	my brother
Knowing where he was going;	16.211-213	social status
Possibilities;	16.211-213	my brother
Hope;	16.211-213	my brother
Sense of suffocation, being there;	17.217-218	suffocating
Social justice;	17.218-219	corrupt way
Threat to his existence;	17.220	belonged
Sense of suffocation in being there;	17.217-221	suffocating
Social justice;	17.217-221	was not my fault
Threat to his existence;	17.219-221	feeling zero
Human rights;	17.222-223	dictatorship
Keeping his values;	17.222	way of life
Misrecognition;	17.217-223	for myself
Suppression;	17.217-223	dictatorship
Condemning the regime;	17.221	was not my fault
Desire to develop his way of life;	17.222-223	way of life
Trusting a new environment;	17.224-227	felt comfortable
Hope and rebirth;	17.229-232; 18.233-236	arrived somewhere
His values on gender equality;	18.242-243	their sex
Connecting to the new society;	19.251	good feeling
Trust - that he can live in this environment;	19.251	good feeling
Finding himself and his values;	19.251	the first good

Step Four: Searching for connections across emergent themes, clustering them and identifying Key Themes (super-ordinate themes).

I started to discern how emergent themes linked together, forming patterns and finding Super-ordinate Themes (see Appendix Table 3. 7 for Clustering of Themes and Table 3. 8 below for Super-ordinate Themes).

In Table 3.8 by indicating page/line and key words we identify the link between key themes and the pilot's transcript:

Table 3. 8 The super-ordinate themes in Sina's transcript		
Super-ordinate Themes	**Page/line**	**Key words**
Violation of human rights and social justice as a threat to Sina's existence:		
Violation of human rights and social justice	10/130	'were killed'
Corruption, poverty and exploitation	10/135; 25/325	'become poorer'; 'bribed'
Living under fear and terror	8/112	'machine gun'
Sense of suffocation in being there and threat to existence.	17/217	'I was suffocating'
Secularism, religious dictatorship controlling people through abuse of power	2/14	'secularism'
Women's rights and gender discrimination	20/257	'security for a woman'
Sense of self is rooted in his ethnicity and culture		
Ethnic minority and nationality	5/70	'ethnic minority within Iran'
Recognition and respect for his identity	11/146;	'do I belong';
Misrecognition.	17/220	'belonged'
Culture	8/104	'culture'

Identity and being misrepresented	15/204; 34/461	'represented'; 'identity'
Language and expression	7/96	'language'
By following his values Sina made a conscious choice and took responsibility to develop his way of life		
Motivation to make a positive change.	28/373	'my motivation'
Hope, focusing on the future and desire to develop his way of life.	17/222	'searching a way of life'
Commitment to meaning and purpose.	23/310	'wanted not to be there'
(Continued)		
Conscious choice.	24/317	'conscious choice'
Responsibility and commitment.	12/158	'lost his life'
Freedom is the essence of Sina's existence; his life's purpose is to defend human rights and social justice and to remain loyal to his people.		
Defending human rights and social justice and loyalty to his people.	4/51; 3/29	'my fellow citizens' 'human society'
Freedom and access to information.	22/292-3	'freedom to access information'
Resistance.	2/26	'always hurt me'
Sina experienced a psychological rebirth; in the UK his values were respected, enabling him to adapt himself and to help others.		

Interacting and adapting meaningfully with the new environment.	19/251	'first good feeling'
Rebirth in the new world.	21/282	'it was birth'
Emancipation, strength and liberation; helping others.	27/365	'emancipated, and Strengthened'
Access to social assets and connection and community.	163	'belonged to someone
Survivors' guilt.	10/130	'After I came here, my closest friends were killed'

Summary of Data Analysis

To assimilate Sina's story, I re-read it several times. I wrote my initial notes and comments, then began to analyse each paragraph. Allowing my ideas to flow in response to Sina's statements, I began to notice a pattern and consistency, which enabled me to identify themes. I clustered themes into broad categories developing super-ordinate themes. For example, 'Violation of human rights and social justice as a threat to Sina's existence' was an obvious key theme, under which I clustered sub-themes of:

Violation of human rights and social justice.

Corruption, poverty and exploitation.

Living under fear and terror.

Sense of suffocation in being there and threat to existence.

Secularism, religious dictatorship controlling people through abuse of power. Women's rights and gender discrimination.

I noted the number of times Sina mentioned each theme or topic, throughout the interview directly or otherwise. Table 3. 9 shows how often each theme occurs in Sina's transcript (see Appendix Table 3.9 for Frequency of Themes). The quantity of 'mentions' did not always reflect Sina's quality of feeling about the topic. For instance he spoke of the women's status in Iran just twice, but the emotion with which he spoke left a deep impression.

As part of the Doctoral requirement I completed and submitted the first participant's data for my pilot study, which received a Distinction from two Examiners.

In the following steps, the same process applies to the rest of the participants

Step Five: Moving to the next participant

Step five involves moving to the next transcript and repeating the process. In keeping with IPA's ideographic commitment, I tried to do justice to the next participant's individuality. This means the ideas emerging from the analysis of the first participant should be bracketed. However, it is unrealistic to expect that the first participant's influence could be totally avoided or is irrelevant. IPA allows new themes to emerge with each participant's account. I continued this process for each subsequent case.

Step Six: Looking for patterns across the participants' accounts

In order to find patterns across cases, I collated all the participants' themes within a single list of 229 themes (see Appendix 11) and looked for connections. I clustered them into a new order (see Table 3. 10) which helped to develop group super-ordinate themes. This process enabled me to regard the nine participants as a single body. I formulated a master-table of themes for the group (see extract in Table 3. 11).

Table 3. 10 Clustering themes for the group
Violation of human rights and social justice
Women's rights and gender equality
Religious Dictatorship
Fear, threat, unbearable situation and risk to escape
Ethnic Rights
Meaning and purpose and value system
Freedom
Responsibility; Action and Motivation
Conscious choice
Motherhood and battlefield
Family responsibility
Loss
Fear and Risk in escaping
Hope
Uncertainty
New birth
Recognition and respect
Process of adaptation, facing a new conflict
Language and skill in adaptation
Supportive network
Positive future
The importance of being in work
Feeling of guilt
Identity and selfhood
Culture
Internal strength and resources

Table 3. 11 Master table of super-ordinate themes for the group	
Violation of human rights as a threat to the self	
Violation of human rights and social justice	
Women's rights and gender equality	
Religious Dictatorship	
Fear, threat, unbearable situation and risk to escape	
Ethnic Rights	
Their value system and commitment	
Meaning and purpose and value system	
Freedom	
Responsibility; Action and Motivation	
Conscious choice	
Motherhood and battlefield	
Family responsibility	
Loss	
Taking risks to create possibilities	
Fear and Risk in escaping	
Hope	
Uncertainty	
Psychological rebirth and overcoming obstacles	
New birth	
Karimi: In another country where you weren't born there, they treat you as a citizen. It is a huge difference.	188-190
Sina: It was a new birth.	278
Darius: I can change things.	535
Hiva: This was a new birth for me, and I was apprehensive, but I had hope.	165-166
Sara: My decision to fight, to be a freedom fighter, gave me energy! Before I came to this decision it was extremely difficult for me.	152-154
Watan: I can have a life here.	204-205
Parya: I felt I was saved, rescued. I'll never forget this feeling.	375-376

Lida: This was like a new birth for me. The very day of my birthday I received my leave to remain.	318-320
Gila: Here is now my country also	243
Recognition and respect	
Karimi: I felt there are people who can understand you.	187
Sina: we haven't been represented	25
Darius: the police, border agency came. Actually when we saw them treating us like that, with respect and very polite	393-395
Hiva: It is very painful not to be recognized as a political refugee.	347-348
Sara: If you want to do anything for others, they won't stop you	236
Watan: I felt I was in heaven.	222
Parya: I'll never forget it. Someone recognised me, respected me.	382-384
Lida: They recognised me as a human.	322
Gila: I am very grateful to this country for accepting us; they treat us as equal citizens.	394-396
Process of adaptation, facing a new conflict	
Karimi: I grew up in my culture. It was really hard to adjust	259-260
Sina: My native language is much stronger and richer here.	421
Darius: I did a lot of things to change the situation.	460
Hiva: We set up a business, which in two years became very successful. I created it!	359-360
Sara: According to our culture, a woman must obey and follow her husband. When she arrives here, she becomes more autonomous and independent	301-303
Watan: The first thing you must learn is the language, and also to follow your legal case to get your asylum, and to live in a healthy way, and to work.	476-479
Parya: My husband finds it hard to accept the situation here	480-481
Lida: But my husband is not happy!	360
Gila: When I see how the boys and girls are free here, there are tears in my eyes	294-295

Language and skill in adaptation	
Karimi: I went to the college, the teachers respected me, when I did my engineering course I was respected – I have learned a lot here.	291-293
Sina: I have conversations with different people, and I always learn through these interactions.	409-410
Darius: Someone who doesn't know any English, he might find this situation very, very hard.	766-768
Hiva: engage with this society, get close to it. To interact, language is crucial.	469-470
Sara: It is much easier for a woman to adapt in this society than it is for a man. She can learn the language more easily.	271-273
Watan: The basic thing here is to learn the language.	474-475
Parya: They speak perfect English now	620
Lida: I have to fight to learn the language, to adapt myself to new ways.	241-243
Gila: The first thing I would say to the person is, Go and learn the language.	363-364
Supportive network	
Karimi: I was a member of a left wing party. I'm still with them.	74
Sina: my brother and other people advised me to study	402-403
Darius: English friends in Stoke on Trent, they wrote me a letter	470-471
Hiva: First I created the business with a	362-363
friend. It worked well.	
Sara: to find your own community; through it you can get support and information about your basic rights	680-681
Watan: I opened a restaurant in 2012, in Kent, with one of my friends.	350-351
Parya: Of course it helps to have relatives outside.	216-218
I could also see my brother's life in Germany – he's a doctor there.	
Lida: Without my cousin's help, and my friends, things could have been very difficult.	463-464
Gila: Before coming here, I hoped for a better life, because my sister was here.	422-423

Positive future	
Karimi: I feel our family and my future is bright, I am very optimistic.	450-451
Sina: I want to do something for them. This is my 'tomorrow plan'	379-380
Darius: you can change things if you want	662
Hiva: When you have no recognition from the Home Office you can't think about future.	424-426
Sara: You must make yourself a useful member of society.	761
Watan: if you face difficulties, don't give up. Carry on, keep going.	474-475
Parya: I would like to resolve the problem with my husband	644-645
Lida: I want to work and to integrate more with the people here, and to carry on my political activities. I'm thinking to write a novel!	458-461
Gila: Another way is to stand against the regime. I stood, and I will stand.	435,438
The importance of being in work	
Karimi: It is your duty to work in this country, to be a useful citizen, and also you can help the people here, and the people in your homeland	456-458
Sina: I am very happy in my work, it is a good job, I love it	390-391
Darius: if someone is working there is a variety, he goes out, he comes in, he creates …	749-750
Hiva: I spent four years developing successful business plans for different people and I was able to survive.	377-379
Sara: I am active here, working for women's rights. We established an organisation.	332-334
Watan: A person who doesn't work is like a dying flower. They get weaker and weaker.	480-482
Parya: He says he can't accept menial work.	509-510
Lida: he or she must work. They must get themselves a job, somewhere to live – be active, not sit at home.	473-475
Gila: I want to be useful. I pay my taxes, I work here, my children are decent people, they work hard.	260-262

Feeling of guilt	
Karimi: I feel guilty because I'm not in the battlefield.	399-400
Sina: I came away, but amongst my relatives and my family, people suffered	132-133
Darius: It's hard, because my mother you know, passed away. I didn't want to leave my family.	299-300
Hiva: I don't feel I'm fighting now. I feel guilty.	300
Sara: I felt guilty, a bad mother, I felt shame.	494
Watan: I couldn't do a lot – I didn't attend meetings but I try now always to attend them and keep active.	343-345
Gila: I thought of my brother I left behind. I wasn't comfortable about it.	234-235
Their sense of self and cultural adaptation	
Identity and selfhood	
Culture	
Internal strength and resources	

Summary of the master super-ordinate table for the group

This Master table of super-ordinate themes demonstrates my movement from the individual to the group as a whole, representing the individual, ideographic and group character of my study. I think that recognising each participant's unique contribution enables us to move on coherently to a view of the whole. The super-ordinate themes, particular to individual cases, are shared with others in the higher-order group concept.

Each super-ordinate theme has a dual quality, both shared and unique. For example, the sub-super-ordinate theme of 'violation of human rights and social justice' (under the super-ordinate heading 'Threat to their existence') is qualified by Karimi, who was imprisoned for five years and tortured, and in a different way by Darius, who was pressured to cooperate with the intelligence agency and refused. For Sara, the 'violation of human rights and social justice' was what she

endured as a woman under a misogynistic regime. The sub-super-ordinate theme of 'freedom' (under 'value system and life's purpose') meant for Darius the right to find work in Australia to support his family and to enjoy music when at home. For Sina also, to be allowed to study music (forbidden under the regime) was as vital as the freedom to use his mother tongue. Gila on the other hand, was a freedom fighter from a family of political activists. She wanted freedom for all Iranians: 'For as long as I have blood in my veins I will fight for freedom.' Her desire to give of herself for others helped to liberate her from the memories of her own imprisonment and torture. My participants' individual definitions of what freedom meant to them resound across the group, expressing their will to live.

Each participant, for whom the same theme carried different weight, guided me towards my deeper understanding of the others in the study. My grasp of thematic material in the Pilot study grew significantly in the group analysis.

Identifying Recurrent Themes

Identifying recurrent themes across cases gives us the weight and quality of each super-ordinate or sub-theme within the whole findings. Setting my focus on the sub-themes, I established a table of Identifying Recurrent Themes (see Table 4. 12) The number of stars (1-3) in each box shows the degree of emphasis. Where there is a cross, the theme did not arise.

Table 4. 11   Identifying Recurrent Themes

Super-ordinate Themes	Themes	Karimi	Sina	Hiva	Darius	Sara	Watan	Parya	Lida	Gila
Violation of human rights as a threat to the self	Violation of human rights and social justice	***	***	***	**	***	***	**	***	***
	Women's rights and gender equality	**	**	**	✗	***	**	**	***	***
	Religious Dictatorship	***	**	***	*	***	***	*	***	***
	Fear, threat, unbearable situation and risking of escape	***	***	***	***	***	***	*	***	***
	Ethnic Rights	✗	**	**	✗	**	**	✗	**	**
Their value system and commitment	Meaning and purpose and his value system	***	***	***	**	***	***	**	***	***
	Freedom	***	***	***	**	***	***	**	***	***
	Responsibility; Action and Motivation	***	*	***	*	***	***	*	***	***
	Conscious choice	***	**	***	*	***	***	*	***	***
	Motherhood and battlefield	✗	✗	✗	✗	***	*	*	***	***
	Family responsibility	**	*	*	*	**	*	**	**	**
	Loss	***	*	**	*	***	**	**	**	***
Taking risks to create possibilities	Fear and risk of escaping	***	**	***	**	***	***	**	***	***
	Hope	***	**	***	**	***	***	**	***	***
	Uncertainty	*	*	*	*	✗	*	*	*	*
Psychological rebirth and Overcoming obstacles	New birth	**	**	*	*	**	*	**	**	*
	Recognition and respect	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	Process of adaptation, facing new conflict	***	**	***	***	**	***	***	***	**
	Language and skill in adaptation	***	**	***	**	***	***	***	***	***
	Supportive network	**	*	**	*	**	**	**	**	**
	Positive future	**	*	*	*	**	*	*	**	*
	The importance of being in work	***	**	***	**	**	***	**	*	***
	Felling of guilt	**	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
Their sense of self and	Identity and selfhood	***	***	***	***	***	***	**	***	***
	Culture	**	**	**	*	**	**	**	**	**

cultural adaptation	Internal strength and resources	***	**	***	**	***	***	**	***	***

Conclusion

There is no one single correct way to conduct an IPA study and to write up its results. This chapter follows the step-by-step process to make sense of what my nine participants said. Throughout the project, I monitored the ethical criteria. I have discussed my participants' recruitment process, which took more than a year. The methodology, epistemology and ontology of the research were based on my own world-view: that the world exists independent of our mind. Human beings are capable of constructing the meaning of the phenomena outside their mind by interpreting their perceptions of them in terms of their past experiences and beliefs. Our 'reality' is a phenomenal one, open to a multiplicity of interpretations and meanings (Spinelli, 1989).

Studying various methodologies in the qualitative approach, I found IPA worked best for me. In the process of completing my research and when I attended the IPA conference, I received confirmation and assurance of this. My sampling was homogeneous. I analysed each participant's data individually to meet the ideographic principle, and I looked for patterns across the cases to develop super-ordinate themes for the group. Six super-ordinate themes developed, together with their sub-themes. I identified recurrent themes.

It is a requirement of an IPA study to engage not only in data collection and analysis, but also with the participants. In my study, the analytical interpretation of my participants' accounts moved beyond their own meaning-making and conceptualisation. In the process, IPA allowed me to link this understanding, in a creative way, with the theoretical framework of mainstream psychology, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

My contribution to IPA is my emphasis on the need to develop a relationship of trust prior to interviewing participants and considering it as an important step, in order to be able to access rich data. I found the IPA process flexible, creative and open to further development. Joining the IPA community had a positive and open-ended impact on my personal life.

One of the interesting things to emerge from my study was how the political refugees' identities become a central concern, particularly during a major life transition. My IPA research is in part an enquiry into the cultural aspect of my participants' lives. Their social or political dimension influenced their personal, spiritual and physical dimensions. This dynamic is shaped within the whole transitional process. The philosophies of Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Husserl came to life, together with that of the great Islamic existential philosopher Mullah-Sadra.

In Heidegger's view, our interpretations of experience are shaped, enabled and limited by language. He calls language 'the house of being'. His metaphor 'Dasein', being 'thrown into the world', helped my understanding of my participants' relationship with culture and language. We are constrained within the existential boundaries of our physical, social, spiritual and cultural world.

Consistently with Merleau Ponty's view of embodied knowledge – 'we come to know the world partly through our bodily engagement with it' – my participants' physical sensations before and during their escape remained with them vividly. As well as the daily threat and their experiences in prison, there were restrictions on dress and appearance. The body also represents a person's emotional nature. This is central to our experiential understanding and intersubjective actions. In other words, my participants' physical, cultural and cognitive dimensions are equally important in my study.

In the next chapter of my qualitative enquiry, I will discuss the results of my research in detail. I feel this should be presented in a comprehensible and systematic way, as a full narrative account.

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

In the nine interviews I conducted, I designed my questions to investigate each of my participants' psychological journeys in four stages:

a) Their life in Iran prior to their escape

b) The escape process

c) Experiences of adaptation and resettlement in the UK

d) How they see their current situation and their plans

My interpretative analysis of the data collected yielded the following five key themes:

Violation of human rights as a threat to the self

Their value system and commitment

Taking risks to create possibilities

Psychological rebirth and overcoming obstacles

Their sense of self and cultural adaptation

In this chapter I will attempt to present these five themes in my participants' lived experience in the four domains of my interview questions. As all my nine participants had strong feelings about women's rights and were profoundly affected by the regime's misogyny, at the end of the chapter I will briefly compare some female and male responses to these refugees' situation.

Life in Iran prior to their escape

The key themes of participants' experience in this stage are:

Violation of human rights as a threat to the self

Their Value system and commitment

Violation of human rights as threat to the self

In this study, human rights standards are those defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The characteristics of the Declaration are universal, inherent in all people, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. The regime's violation of human rights threatened my nine participants physically, socially, psychologically and spiritually. The regime's main weapon to maintain power and control was to instil fear and terror (Ganji, 2002; Afshari, 2011). Remaining true to their purpose, all nine made the conscious choice not to keep silent, but to defend human values. They chose to be in the battlefield against the regime, under fear, threat and risk to their lives and to their relatives. It came to the point where they felt suffocated by the abuse of basic human rights.

Karimi: I was in prison for a long time, and I have been tortured severely.	(10-11)
Sina: I must not speak or be familiar with my mother language.	(95-96)
Darius: The government tried to control everything and never let the young people tell or say what they want.	(29-30)
Hiva: At the end of 2005 I was arrested, and imprisoned.	(41-42
Sara: Women, with no rights at all, not even towards their children.	(86-87)
Watan: I was arrested and they asked me to write that I would not do it again, not to involve with any political activities.	(65-67)
Parya: You mustn't let any of your hair show!	(110-111)
Lida: I wasn't allowed to wear my national costume or to speak my language.	(39-40)

Gila: I was tortured to give information. I didn't.   (144)

Some of the participants served long prison sentences and were tortured, others were harassed for being women or for their ethnicity; ethnic minorities were not allowed to use their mother tongue or to wear their national costume. These abuses were experienced as attacks on the core of their sense of self.

'*You don't want to leave your country unless it is killing you*' *(Karimi, 18-19).*

Karimi's strong language demonstrates what a profound wrench it was for him, to leave his natural environment, his family and community. He was under attack not only physically, but also through his spiritual values, by a regime which uses religion as a political weapon.

He echoes Sina, 'I couldn't be there, I was unable to breathe'.

Karimi's profound commitment to justice and human rights for all people was enhanced through his experiences in prison. As an advocate for freedom and democracy he was aware of the constant threat to those who defend these values in Iran. He wants his years of imprisonment and severe torture to be recognised in the UK in order to carry on his struggle against the regime.

Torturers generally attempt to control a human being by terrorising them, inflicting pain and severe harm, disrupting bodily functions, and manipulating time, the environment and the senses in order to break the individual. Karimi was able to resist because of his purpose and values, his hope for freedom and his conscious choice to take risks.

His confinement with other political prisoners being tortured and executed on a daily basis further strengthened his resistance. To resist collectively became a norm. Many did not even give their names (Hadj Heydari, 2013; Nemat, 2007; Ghaffari, 2012; Talebi, 2011).

Karimi's psychological and spiritual torture began before he was imprisoned, as he witnessed people in the streets being bullied by religious guards and was unable to defend them. 'I mean, on a daily basis you are tortured' (Karimi, 41).

In 1988, Karimi witnessed a massacre of 40 political prisoners in one night. 'I can never forget that night – 2am' (Karimi, 116). He carries the memory of those brave martyrs. 'They are part of our history. They were fighting and they taught us to fight. Their names in our history will be written in gold' (Karimi, 119-120).

According to Gila's and Karimi's experiences, most political prisoners find themselves sharing the pressure of fear, pain, loss, and uncertainty about their future. Strong affections are developed, a sense of self-sacrifice, and community feelings. Their collective response enables them to handle the unbearable situation imposed on them.

It was hard for Karimi to make any social connections after he got out of prison, as he didn't want to put others at risk and his political and warrior activity was frozen. The unremitting terror was exacerbated, by having a family and children. This is another form of being unable to breathe. His neighbours had high expectations of a political prisoner and activist: yet Karimi was now forced to censor himself when confronted with injustice. To survive, he had to stand against himself with a false personality. Before his eyes, people were abused and beaten every day. This had become a norm, and no one was allowed to argue with it. This desensitization is another human rights abuse (Cushman, 2012). It was intolerable to have to lie to himself, to adopt a false personality, and to risk the deterioration of his integrity.

'In Iran you are or you are not, and we were not! (Sina, 303-304). Gila said: 'it wasn't only I lost my husband, my father and my mother – my three brothers also were executed. They were 23, 21 and 19 years old' (Gila, 206-216).

In Iran, Watan was a minicab driver, from a strong background community of political activists, his role models against the regime. On one occasion in the

town with his father, he saw a man hanged publicly. 'The scene is branded on my mind. I can never forget it. I joined different political groups against this injustice, and I was arrested' (Watan, 49-50, 52-54).

Darius is in his forties; in Iran he obtained a degree in English and worked as a translator in an oil company. He was not part of a resistance group; he was one of many millions of Iranians who disagreed with the regime, but didn't want to risk their lives.

The turning point in his life came when the intelligence service asked him to work for them, and to spy on his colleagues. He was also being followed. 'They wanted me to cooperate, and I never did' (Darius, 67-68). Until then, Darius had tried to keep a low profile and to play the regime along when they wanted him to compromise his integrity. Now he could no longer hide and was forced to make a radical change in his life.

Another major human rights area concerns women's rights and gender equality. This affected all my participants. As the ideological foundation of the current regime in Iran is based on gender discrimination, so the issue of women becomes pivotal (McKinnon, 2007; Rajavi, 1995). In my study, men and women share strong views on gender equality.

Karimi: the regime attacks, separates the women from the men.	36-37
Sina: That bus unfortunately segregated human beings according to their sex.	242-243
Hiva: Gradually they accepted the rights of women, and encouraged them to fight against the regime.	223-225
Sara: As a woman I must fight inequality.	93
Watan: Relationships here – for example, between men and women – here it is very much better.	439-440
Parya: For a woman the first obstacle is to be a political activist and the other is to overcome the culture which limits women in this way	50-53

Lida: When I was there, I was invisible. I had never been   257-259
understood or accepted.

Gila: The way I was living, made other people come to me and   377-379
confirm I'm no second class citizen as a woman.

It was clear from what my participants said that without recognition of women's rights, there are no human rights. The fourth International Women's Rights Conference in Beijing in 1995 culminated with this statement that "Women's Rights are Human Rights" (Afrianty, 2015).

For the regime, sexual vice and virtue are principal criteria (Rajavi, 1995). However, women in Iran take a leading position against the clerical dictatorship. Male human rights activists could not serve their ideal without supporting women's leadership.

The issue of discrimination against women has been documented extensively, but without much study in the psychological context. My participants' accounts give rich data on how they were affected.

Parya spoke out against the obstacles women had to face. While it was culturally acceptable for a male political activist to pursue his activities, a woman had to face two barriers: to be accepted as a political activist and to overcome the cultural dogma, which limited her.

Being a female freedom fighter, like Sara, Gila and Lida, shows considerable commitment to gender equality and women's rights. Political activity is generally reserved for males.

> 'For a man, if he wants to be a political activist, it is culturally acceptable to pursue his activities. For a woman, it is hard to become a political activist because of the cultural and psychological barriers. These make everything really hard'(Parya, 48-53).

Parya opposed the regime's misogynist ideology by defending her desire to be a teacher. She had to take a religious exam on trivial domestic details and answer

time-consuming and confusing questions. Living in this cultural environment made it very difficult for a woman to keep any position or job outside the family. Parya had already crossed the regime's boundaries and was penalised. She refused to be brainwashed and she was kept under surveillance. She told me, 'Always it was difficult for me to use chador (Islamic dress), and always the school authorities put me under pressure because I didn't do it properly. Basically, you mustn't let any of your hair show!' (Parya, 107-111).

On 8 March, International Women's Day, 1979, more than 100,000 women gathered on the streets of the Iranian capital to protest against the new Islamic government's compulsory hijab ruling.

Within months of the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the 1967 Family Protection Law was repealed; female government workers were forced to observe Islamic dress code; women were barred from becoming judges; beaches and sports were sex-segregated; the legal age of marriage for girls was reduced to 9 (later raised to 13); and married women were barred from attending regular schools. The revolution is ideologically committed to inequality for women in inheritance and other areas of the civil code; and especially committed to segregation of the sexes. Many places, from schoolrooms to ski slopes to public buses, are strictly segregated.

> *The regime violated women by making them responsible for bad things.*
> *'When I talked with the children in my room, there was a religious guard*
> *spying. They reported what I said and what I talked about to the children.*
> *I took this qualification because I genuinely wanted to help children. The*
> *regime didn't value that at all. I couldn't carry on there!' (Parya,179-185)*

Like the other participants, Parya faced an unbearable situation, and couldn't keep her job. 'I felt I couldn't breathe' (Parya,207). As a mother, she had to be extra careful. Her husband's position as an underground political activist put the whole family in jeopardy. This helped Parya to make her decision, but she

wanted it to be her own. They were ready to escape to anywhere, so long as it wasn't Iran.

The women's increasing potential against religious dictatorship and persecution is evident within Iranian society. In the June 2009 national uprising, when millions of people came out to demonstrate against the election result, women played a significant role (Rajavi, 2010).

During her interview, Lida told me of the negative thoughts, which still pursue her from Iran:

> *'When I was there, I had no hope. When I was there, I was invisible. I had never been understood or accepted. I didn't exist. You don't have any voice – you can't make it reach anyone. These things bring despair' (Lida, 256-261).*

Lida felt she was invisible, with no value as a human being. She lived in a misogynistic environment and the tone of her voice confirmed her deep suffering there.

Sina spoke with profound sorrow of the segregation of women in Iran, and how they are molested at night. Karimi expressed the rage he felt, when the religious guards bullied his wife. Both men intuitively recognised that freedom for women is crucial to their country's struggle for liberation.

Sara's story, following theirs, gave me an opportunity, to hear the woman's story from within. The first thing she says about herself is, 'I was a housewife in Iran' (Sara, 7). Her husband was an active member of an organised left-wing party against the regime, and she was at first his follower. Then she made her transformative and independent choice to become a freedom fighter.

Following on from Sara's story of how she and her sisters in the resistance transformed traditional attitudes within themselves and in others, Hiva echoed his experience of women's rights within his activist group:

'The groups and the parties in my area were for the men. Women had no significant role. But gradually this changed. Gradually they accepted women's potential, and were inspired by them. Basically, peoples' attitudes began to change in my area. This was a significant achievement – an opportunity for women to fight' (Hiva 221-227).

Many opposition parties to the regime made the important discovery that if they wanted to stand up to religious dictatorship they would have to struggle against a gender-based ideology. Human beings are born as men and as women. While not the same from a purely physiological aspect, they are equal insofar as they are human beings. A gender-based ideology finds its roots in the historical and cultural oppression and objectification that enslaves women, men and therefore all of society. According to this ideology, a man's character and identity is dependent upon his ability to suppress and exploit women. Without fostering his sense of superiority over women, he would feel unfulfilled and would lack self-confidence. Women under this ideology regard their subordination, reliance on men and second-class status as both rational and natural. Women are enslaved by such attitudes towards themselves. As Simone de Beauvoir said, 'one is not born but rather becomes a woman.' (REF)

As Sara, Hiva and Karimi pointed out, many opposition groups recognise that in a gender-based ideology, the Mullahs' reactionary view towards human beings bars the flourishing of men and women's capabilities. As soon as this barrier was pushed aside, women overcame their passivity and no longer evaded responsibility. They accepted key roles at all levels of the movement against the regime.   As Sara, Lida, Parya and Gila discovered, women must pay the price of their freedom, emancipation and belief in themselves.   This might subsequently pave the way for men to change their attitudes and become liberated also. Travelling this road was by no means easy. As the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy said, 'We must speak of things that everyone knows, but no one has the power to express.' REF

Religious dictatorship tries to control all aspects of life, social, physical, spiritual and personal: what people eat, what they wear, their family and social relationships, what they believe, say and think, and even how they feel.

Karimi: You are fighting an enemy who has no humanity. They torture children.	
Sina: Perhaps if I was a woman in Iran going out alone, this was ethically unacceptable, she was doing something bad or wrong	259-260
Darius: walking in the street, you know, they caught you if you had short sleeves or long hair or tee-shirts	119-120
Hiva:They kept us in prison; we were declared guilty on five counts: insulting the Islamic religion …	46-50
Sara:The sight of police or religious guard in Iran was horrifying	119
Watan:At the school they tried to involve me in religious activities	105-106
Parya: When I talked with the children in my room, there was a religious guard spying.	179-181
Lida:A lot of innocent people and youngsters were getting killed. They even killed babies	50-52
Gila:The Islamic regime started the repression; we didn't start anything.	27-28

Watan's religious teachers persecuted him for asking questions. Looking for work in southern Iran he found he was unemployable, being from an ethnic minority and not Shia (a denomination of Islam).

Parya's battle was a comparatively solitary one, for she did not join a political party, formally. At the age of 11, she asked her teacher a question.

This brought years of interrogation and harassment from the school authority. Parya made the point that the regime promotes gender discrimination in Iranian culture. She objected to being called 'sister' at the school where she taught. The religious dictatorship rewards people's loyalty by calling them 'brother' or 'sister' in the ideological family. If a person stepped out of line, or failed to show loyalty,

they were ostracised. The reality was that outside the home everyone mistrusted everyone else.

In Iran, Hiva was found guilty on five counts, including being a threat to national security and insulting the Islamic religion and the Supreme Leader, and was given a four-year prison sentence. His young sister was not politically active, but suffered imprisonment also. The family and relatives of political activists can be arrested through their association. He carries the burden of his sister's psychological fragility on his conscience.

Gila says that under a religious dictatorship everyone is behind bars. All my participants, under the pressure of fear, threat and the unbearable situation, felt suffocated and were forced to escape.

Karimi: You have to accept either to die there – but it's not only you, you have your family – or to live, that is, to escape.	20-21
Sina: from the time the central government took the machine guns in hand, the situation of the people, of whom I am one, got worse, not better	111-114
Darius: they used very bad languages to my dad, looking for me	81-8
Hiva: I was always under their observation	22-23
Sara: the government attacked our region	12
Watan: The regime created a situation where you can't trust anyone	55-56
Parya: you are all the time under surveillance	195-196
Lida: I was in danger. I couldn't stay	66-67
Gila: The regime attacked us and began to kill our people	20-21

Sina had somewhere to escape to, because he had a brother in England – a 'social asset' as he called it. Like Gila and Hiva, it made no difference to him where he went. My participants were determined to gain freedom for themselves and others at all costs.

Watan was arrested twice, and questioned about the leaflets he carried, and his family's activities. After the second arrest, he managed to get away while being transferred to a different prison, barefoot and in handcuffs. He was shot at, but he knew that part of the country well; the people there were against the regime, and a relative took him in.

In Iran, Hiva studied political science and joined a political activist circle. To be a student in those days brought a great sense of achievement. The university was traditionally a centre of opposition against the Shah's regime and now opposes the Ayatollahs. 'As activists, we had new ideas! and the regime … wanted all the time to keep us under control. Several times the religious guards called me away and interrogated me' (Hiva, 17-21).

It is clear that activists have no other option, and the reaction to their political activity is unpredictable. Hiva, like others, wanted to stay in the country, but was forced to escape.

Darius' determination not to compromise or corrupt his own values, endangered his life there, and he was driven to escape from Iran. A strong inner life may accommodate hardship and human rights abuse, so long as it can access its own values. He really wanted to stay close to his family and help them, and keep a low profile. For Darius, a lover of philosophy, literature and music, his intellectual refinement made it hard for him to uproot. He lived for several months in fear, avoiding direct encounters, deflecting the regime's pressure with evasive promises, and playing for time.

Before Darius was forced to escape, he was following up an immigration avenue to Australia, whence he would be able to visit his family safely and have relatively free movement. The regime confiscated his papers and cut off that escape route. Darius stood alone and isolated. He had to address the roots of his own will to make a radical stand against the regime: to make that change in his life. The individual struggle is no less significant than the collective one.

Culture and ethnicity are regarded as significant parameters in working with refugees in research or therapy (Dana, 2000; Espin, 1999; Ahearn, 2000; Colin, 2011; Vera, 2012; Sue, 2015). However, refugees' lived experiences of these factors are not taken into account.

Sina: central government regarded the minorities, and the different ethnic groups as a threat, and continue to.	82-83
Hiva: My ethnicity, my identity, was under threat.	72
Sara: I am from an ethnic minority.	10
Watan: I suffered because of my ethnic minority.	128-129
Lida: I learned about injustice and persecution, In particular towards our ethnic group.	21-23
Gila: I stood against the regime, not only for my ethnicity, although my ethnic identity is dear to me.	11-13

Being community-oriented, Sina, Sara, Hiva, Lida, Parya and Gila suffered not only from human rights violations in general, but also through the targeted misrecognition of their ethnic identity: a double repression under the misogynist regime. This brings up the theory of intersectionality, originated by professor Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989. The theory recognises the complexity and interwoven effects of power, privilege and related system of oppression or discrimination (Enns and Williams, 2012). Speaking for his tribal group who are never far from his mind Sina explained how the regime crushes minorities and their right to speak. It deeply hurt him that his people were not represented. He wondered, 'am I part of this society? Do I belong here or not?' (Sina, 150-153) This feeling, under a repressive state, increases the pressure and forces a person to act, to do something, to find a way out.

Their value system and commitment

Meaning and purpose and value system

My participants chose consciously to stand up for social justice, freedom and democracy in their homeland. They put these values above their commitment to their own families and overcame their fears.

Karimi: Seeing those things, I couldn't sit aside.	88
Sina: This feeling even helps you to take risks	179
Darius: I never lived like that	57-58
Hiva: I thought about the justice and values and meaning we will bring to the people	77-79
Sara: As a human being I have to do something. As a woman I must fight inequality.	92-93
Watan: I can't actually convince myself or justify myself to be politically inactive.	341-342
Parya: I wanted to do everything to help the students. But I wasn't allowed to!	251-253
Lida: Those things pressed me to get involved, the path I should take.	23-25
Gila: I wanted freedom for all Iranian people	13-14

Thinking of his family while he was in prison helped Karimi to resist and enabled him to survive. In Frankl's words, 'There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that would so effectively help one to survive, even the worst conditions, as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life' (Frankl, 1959).

Sina spoke not only for himself personally, but for the whole exodus of refugees and the agony preceding it. I noted his philanthropic nature: the priority not to put himself before others. In nomadic cultures, life is hard and people must work together for the communal good.

'I came away, but amongst my relatives and my family, people suffered. More than this, it is about those people who have become poorer … I feel I am part of them, although I am here. It makes no difference' (Sina, 132-138)'.

The participants in my project see themselves representing their own collective, rather than acting for their individual interest. Hiva describes his sense of purpose and meaning:

'when I became politically active, the main barrier I had to overcome was the fear of death. But when I thought about the justice and values and meaning we will bring to the people, this was very inspiring and helped me to conquer my fear. Before me, many people chose this way, and they also inspired us. Our martyrs inspired us' (Hiva, 76-82).

Hiva was not alone. Nor was Karimi in 'the worst day of his life,' when 40 fellow prisoners were executed.

Hiva is loyal to his people. Human rights values and the injustice of central government were embedded in his psyche since childhood. 'I felt it through my whole body, and in my bones. I remember when I was 13, or 14, I had a dream – to bring justice to our society' (Hiva, 65-67).

My participants all spoke of their motivation to make a positive change and of their early commitment to meaning and purpose.

Karimi: I fought for freedom – freedom of speech, social justice, work and equal opportunity for everyone. A home for everyone.	81-83
Sina: I want to do something for them. This is my 'tomorrow plan' – my future. This is my ideology for tomorrow.	379-381
Darius: I try to change everything	446
Hiva: My political activities did not allow me to have a family	40-41
Sara: I decided I can also be a freedom fighter, not only a follower. I too can fight against that suffering which the regime	67-69

inflicts.

Watan: I joined the political movement, but I wanted to find, to do something.   58-59

Parya: I always respected my ideas and my views. When I was in Iran I was fighting for them.   580-582

Lida: I was a member of the organised Movement against the regime in Iran.   84-85

Gila: I stood against them! I carried on, and I will carry on against them! I don't want the regime to think that by executions they can survive   52-54

Sara came to the realisation that she should discard notions of herself as being second-class, only following her husband, being a weak and irresponsible person. She learned that only ideas of freedom and emancipation should guide her actions, and fought her weakness under the blows of male-dominated culture. Hiva's political commitment took priority over marriage. Speaking objectively, he affirmed that being politically active exacts a high price – a choice between life and death, for the cause. For this reason, he would not marry.

Values by themselves are not enough. We have to make a choice to act accordingly. All my participants had to choose between a situation which constrained them and the exercise of their free will. They made a conscious choice between dictatorship and freedom.

Sartre told the story of his student's dilemma during the 2nd world war: to fight in the resistance or to care for his elderly infirm mother (Railton, 2003). A common moral dilemma for political refugees is the impact of their activities on the family. All my participants, with the exception of Darius, grew up in politically active families; thus the situation was familiar and accepted. However, they felt responsible for the impact of their activities on their families' safety. Motherhood played a special role in the battlefield; I should give voice to this experience.

Sara spoke with pride about being a freedom fighter. She fled her home under fear of arrest, despite the uncertain future of her children. Carrying multiple responsibilities for her children's safety, for her husband and her ethnic group, Sara moved from village to village in order to survive.

> *'When the regime attacked our region, they established military bases everywhere. It was not safe for our own freedom fighters to stay in one place. My house became a freedom fighters' centre. It was dangerous for us to stay there … I knew 100% I would be arrested' (Sara, 17-22).*

Leaving two of her children with her mother in the city, Sara took the baby. It was very hard to separate from them, and harder still to choose which child to take with her, but Sara's determination to defend the rights of her people to live and to exist came first.

Facing all these difficulties, and with her maternal and home-making functions taken from her, a turning point came. I too can fight against that suffering which the regime inflicts (Sara, 68). Once she joined her husband's party, her position transformed from passive to active: from despair to new birth: a 'Phoenix moment'. She feels great pride to this day. She was 'no one' until she decided to join her husband's party proactively.

Sara trained as a doctor's assistant and made the freedom fighters' hospital her place of work. The party gave her this job to enable her to take care of her son. From relying on her husband's authority Sara began to trust and to know herself. 'Our party opened the door for women, and gave us the chance. They encouraged us' (Sara, 109-110).

To reach real freedom and release from all forms of exploitation requires women and men together to change historical attitudes of male superiority. Because my participants fought against misogyny in its worst form, they came inevitably to this realisation.

Beginning to define herself as a person in her own right, Sara felt reaffirmed also as a mother. She repeated to me three times, she wanted to be someone herself, and not to follow. Taking positive action made her feel protected. Joining the party manifested her equality and her human potential. It removed the fear.

Being among other women, and also a fighter, Sara faced two battles – one battle for her ethnic rights and the higher battle for her dignity as a woman. A woman to reach this point has to confront many cultural and psychological barriers**.**

> '*I think the 1979 revolution helped people towards a better knowledge and education of their capability, particularly the women. We became more confident. The culture started to change from that time, particularly in our area. This was when women decided to fight against the regime; at this point our knowledge of ourselves changed dramatically*' (Sara, 121-124).

Sara's husband supported her independence and training as a freedom fighter. This was quite unusual, and touches on how 'women's rights' may work in cooperative partnership within the marriage.

Sara spoke very emotionally of the agonies of separation; she hadn't seen her older daughter for seven years. She describes her heartbreak when she had to send her little girl away to a safe place. This trauma for both of them remains with her. After crying her eyes out, she joined a tough ten-hour march through the mountains to reach the battlefield. This poignant episode illustrates the extreme confrontation of parental love with loyalty to human liberation: woman's sensitivity with the steel of the fighter.

Sara's determination physical and spiritual, to improve the human lot, transcended her biological family ties. It was very hard. The wrenching away from her daughter (who is now a doctor) still comes into her dreams. During this key episode in her life, her commitments seemed for a while, to be torn apart. And yet she had to continue to keep them together.

On being asked how she managed to make these sacrifices, Sara replies:

'My purpose in life. My values. These values empower people profoundly. Otherwise it would be unbearable. You decide you have to change circumstances - because people are suffering - these things empower you and make you strong' (Sara, 618-622).

She stated that her decision to fight gave her energy: 'the fear was removed from my body (Sara, 158-159).

Parya, a mother of three, grew up in a large, politically aware family. In Iranian tradition, the oldest brother has a special place. Her brother was a freedom fighter and member of a left-wing party. Parya escaped from Iran about three years ago from a situation in which she was trying to avoid arrest. Two of her sisters were freedom fighters. One of them had already escaped to Germany. Parya's family was therefore well known in the community, and their lives were under threat. With her additional responsibility as the mother of two children deserving a better future, Parya had to put them at risk as well. Her desire for freedom was very powerful.

After Gila's father was assassinated, and their house was confiscated, her mother lost heart and died. Gila took responsibility for all her remaining relatives. At the same time, she remained in the resistance party, and tried to supervise her children's education. Education became her priority, as she wanted her children to grow up into good people who can carry on the values their father died for.

'I never stopped fighting the regime and distributing leaflets secretly among the people. I felt I had strength and power. My mother died because of depression. I would never die that way' (Gila, 112-115)

Gila told me she was in prison for 15 months, and tortured severely to give information, which she resisted. In the prison with her little girl, she was constantly aware of the continuing threat to her other children and relatives. Her

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two older children were at university and their lives were at risk. Even after her release from prison, she wanted to carry on the fight, but was forced with her family to escape.

> *'We had no freedom … I knew my phone was tapped, I couldn't talk freely in my home. If we wanted to go anywhere, they followed us. We had no choice but to escape. It wasn't my choice, I would rather stay there and carry on the fight' (Gila,131-137).*

Lida has three grown up children, two of them in Iran with their own families, and a 19-year-old son who lives with her. She married twice, which shows unusual personal development and initiative; in many parts of Iran, a divorced woman is a non-entity. Lida grew up in a politically active family environment. From an early age, she studied and read so as to understand the situation, and decided on her path.

> *'After I married, I seriously wanted to do something. I felt something was growing and transforming me. It reached a point where I had to get involved … For example, in my home town if I wanted to go anywhere, I wasn't allowed to wear my national costume or speak my language' (Lida, 31-40).*

Lida's moral dilemma between joining the fight and being a mother didn't stop her from working in the organized resistance movement. Her job was to liaise between them and their supporters in the city.

In a family-oriented culture, family is the first priority. This sometimes conflicts with social and political responsibilities. All my participants faced this moral dilemma.

Karimi said, 'It is not only yourself. It's your family under threat' (Karimi 10-11). Sina came away, but amongst his relatives and family, people suffered (Sina 132-133.) Darius's initiative to support his family (Darius, 308) by getting work in Australia was blocked by the regime confiscating his passport. Hiva's first

asylum application to the UK Home Office failed because he was too distracted by the stress of having left his brother and sister behind (Hiva 243-4). For Sara the situation was particularly difficult, having to combine her responsibility in the party, with being a mother (Sara, 138-140). In Watan's family, many relatives were imprisoned or killed by the regime (Watan, 114-115). Parya spoke for all my participants: 'My children – particularly my son – I couldn't see any future for him in Iran' (Parya 239-240). Lida worried continuously that her family was at risk (Lida,188). Gila's responsibility to her sisters and to her children increased her need to look after everyone, even after she settled in the UK (Gila, 106-108).

My participants' conscious choice and the price they paid in daily life for their resistance strengthened those values within them. When it was no longer possible for them to be there, they escaped. It was not enough for them to talk about human values. They actively defended human rights and social justice. This brought them on the one hand constant suffering and crisis, and on the other hand oneness with human values.

Karimi: I couldn't ignore what was going on against the people.	78
Sina: I just wanted not to be there. I just wanted not to be there. It is not simply that I didn't want, and I had a choice, it was impossible.	315-317
Hiva: Before me, many people chose this way, and they also inspired us. Our martyrs inspired us.	80-82
Darius: because I was not such a person, I couldn't do like that	57
Sara: I joined their party, and received military training and political education.	69-70
Watan: I joined different political groups against this injustice	53
Parya: I made my own decision.	215
Lida: I seriously wanted to do something.	31-32
Gila: I was a member of political parties against the regime, and in the underground activity.	108-109

For both Karimi and Sina, the people's suffering was unbearable and could not be ignored. Hiva felt inspired by the martyrs who stood against injustice before him. None of my participants compromised their values or their dignity.

Their aspiration was to defend human rights and to remain loyal to their people. All my participants used the word "Azadi" which means freedom, with strong feeling. Historically, before 1906 Iranian people had no role in governing the country. The Constitutional Revolution in 1906 marked a turning point in the people's role in their country's politics. Since that date, and under four successive dictators, 'Azadi' became their banner. 'Azadi' is significant in my participants' psyche.

Karimi: have no right to talk of freedom	25
Sina: I feel I have freedom. I have freedom. I have been liberated.	
Darius: I mean the style of life, yes. Freedom of speech; everything	140-141
Hiva: God created humans in freedom to be free – men and women	217
Sara: My house became a freedom fighters' centre in our city	20
Watan: No one can stop me to ask me what I'm thinking about, what I wear, or where am I going – I am free.	322-324
Parya: I had no freedom to express my views	175-176
Lida: fighting for justice and freedom	47
Gila: For as long as I have blood in my veins I will fight for freedom.	62-63

In Karimi's world, human rights, freedom of speech and the right to work in safety, are his clearly defined priorities. The battle in his homeland was for free expression and for basic amenities. Freedom of speech is the freedom to lead and express a normal life interacting and caring for others, without looking over your shoulder. The first and most basic human rights infringement is when this simple liberty is threatened.

Gila told me she stood for freedom in all Iran, and that as a member of an ethnic minority her heart was open to all the Iranian people.

Gila's ethnic origin is for her a deep issue of identity. When she feels she is 'someone', this 'someone' can fight for freedom. Her fight for values and decency gave energy and meaning to existence. Like Sara, Gila was traumatized as a mother of three children under seven, in a life-threatening environment. She uses strong language – 'for as long as I have blood in my veins, I will fight for freedom; I will never stop' (Gila, 62-64). This helped her to rise above the terror, and keep going: the will to continue and to do better. 'From that point, I searched to keep the blood in my husband alive' (Gila, 69-70).

Gila's strong language confirms her commitment to her political aim and to her desire to liberate her country. Her loss strengthens her loyalty to the goal. She was not alone in her struggle; she is amongst hundreds of thousands of families who lost loved ones within the movement. This was a collective challenge.

All my participants suffered many losses: not only family members and friends who were executed, or loss of home and possessions but also of their support networks, their natural and cultural environment and their identity.

Karimi: I felt I lost my control as head of family	282
Sina: I came away, but amongst my relatives and my family, people suffered.	132-133
Darius: will you be able to see your family again or … not?	382-383
Hiva: I arrived in London, I felt – how can I start all over again?	143-144
Sara: For seven years I didn't see my eldest daughter. Seven years!	174-175
Watan: I lost many relatives; and many were put into prison.	22-23
Parya: I do all the jobs, with the children, everything. It isn't easy living here.	547-549
Lida: I was a stranger, a foreigner … I lost everything	31,134

Gila: I lost my husband, my father and my mother my three   214-216
brothers also were executed. They were 23, 21 and 19 years old.

Karimi lost many relatives, friends, his home and all his possessions. Even within Iran he had to leave his social, cultural and natural environments in order to fight against injustice and avoid arrest. He could no longer function as head of his family, and had no idea what would become of them. After their arrival in the UK this loss of control was increased by having to confront and adapt to gender equality. Sina is never unaware of the loss to him, of his tribal community. Physically separated from his native environment, he continues to share their suffering. Darius felt alone and suffered from not being with his family. The family environment for all my participants changed, even for those like Karimi, who brought his family to the UK. When Hiva arrived in London he felt overwhelmed by the loss of his former life. Sara recalled the seven long years during which she did not see her eldest daughter, while fighting the regime. After taking on responsibility for her family, Parya lost any remaining harmony with her husband, and found herself without support. On arriving in in the UK, Lida found herself a stranger, a foreigner. She lost her old life entirely, as she was unable to return to her home in Iran.

Not many writers have addressed the significant psychological change in their lives, which many refugees make, prior to their escape.

Escape process

The key theme emerging from the escape process is:

Taking risks to create possibilities

According to my experience, political refugees in general do not discuss the details of their escape, so as to protect the routes for others to use. Being careful not to discuss these details, which they could not disclose, I asked them about

their feelings during the process. However, Parya and Darius voluntarily disclosed some unexpected information about their journey.

Those of my participants who are members of an organised party think, feel and act collectively. Normally their party helps them to escape and they use its facilities; therefore, they are less likely to disclose information about the process and mechanism of their escape. Some, like Karimi and Gila, did not disclose sensitive information, even under severe torture. It was essential for me during the interviews, to understand this. Lida was ordered to leave everything and escape at once, not only for her safety but for that of her party.

> Karimi says: 'Before coming here I knew the risks. You can't do anything without risk. Imagine! You're going to destroy a bird's nest. It's not easy for the bird to see that. I had to leave everything – my nest. Of course it was risky – with a wife and children, it isn't easy' (Karimi, 204-208).

For Karimi, who described his situation metaphorically – 'You are going to destroy a bird's nest' – accepting the risk was inevitable. He hoped to build a new and safer home, as many of his relatives and friends had done before him. Nevertheless, it was not easy for him, with a wife and children.

Karimi: it was not easy to leave my country.	67
Sina: The several million who escaped from Iran were those who could.	160-161
Darius: My hope was just to stay alive	320
Hiva: Those who escape might aim to carry on their political activities. If they stay, they cannot be active, lest they lose their life.	97-99
Sara: As soon as my husband got his refugee status here, I came and joined him.	189-190
Watan: To help me escape from Iran, my parents, my family borrowed money.	246-247
Parya: A relative acted as a go-between and helped us to organize our escape plan.	298-299

Lida: I had to escape, urgently   67

Gila: escaping was very problematic I had a lot of difficulty in   169-171
reaching here but if I have to do something, I will. I never give up
in the middle, even if I die.

Although Sina himself escaped, his closest friend and many others who wanted to escape, didn't have that opportunity. Escaping is a big project in itself, requiring others' support and the readiness to use any opportunity. His own escape confirms Sina's commitment and desire to seek a meaning outside of the regime's values and political system. He might not realize yet that the search for meaning doesn't end.

Sina said, 'I felt I was putting myself in a dangerous situation' (Sina, 181). Clearly, he also risked the potential consequences to his friends and relatives. These anxieties continue, and often complicate the escape process (Blackwell, 2009). For Sina, an environment without fear was almost inconceivable.

Gila had to take the risk:

> *'carrying the responsibility for my children, myself, my brother. From the moment I left my home in Iran I was crying. I escaped to Turkey. The intelligence service tried to capture me in Turkey. They tried to find where I was. I was very careful – they couldn't. I got to London through many obstacles. It took more than nine months' (Gila, 207-214)*.

Gila was clear she could not stay in Iran anymore. At the same time, she could not abandon her feeling for her home. Gila found herself in another battlefield.

Hiva was held up for a long time at the border, unable to trust any of the routes offered, and caught in a dilemma with his siblings. Like the other participants, he wanted to carry on his political activities. If they stay in Iran they must remain inactive, lest they lose their life.

To avoid arrest, Darius knew he could not stay in Iran; otherwise he would have to compromise his dignity. Despite all the risks he had to take, he hoped to survive. All my participants desired the freedom to live a meaningful life, to act as responsible persons, and to survive. To cross the border was not only to cross a geographical confine. Primarily, it was their psychological journey to create possibilities and to free themselves from that restricted environment.

Karimi: I had no experience of it, but I knew I was going somewhere where I would be respected as a human being.	177-178
Sina: For me it was a new start.	277-278
Darius: That hope kept me alive	378
Hiva: I was apprehensive, but I had hope	166
Sara: I had relatives and friends in the UK, the situation here wasn't totally unfamiliar.	326-328
Watan: I have hope!	260
Parya: I could also see my brother's life in Germany – he's a doctor there.	217-218
Lida: The waves brought the wood to the coast and I hoped I would then find my own way.	205-207
Gila: Before coming here, I hoped for a better life, because my sister was here.	422-423

My participants had no choice but to take any opportunity which opened for their survival. They believed and hoped there was a place they could go to. Also they knew that many millions had survived before them.

The escape option meant Karimi might be able to help his family, and for them to be respected as human beings. For Sina it was a movement from an old to a new life. Darius thought he might survive. All my participants had hoped to make a change, but faced uncertainty.

Karimi: When I came here I was thinking a lot, I was alone, what would I do	190-191
Sina: I couldn't believe they would let me leave the country so easily. For more than two days I felt fear. I couldn't believe it.	187-189
Hiva: how can I start all over again? I felt I am a baby.	143-144
Darius: Uncertainty. Yes. No control over your own life …	358
Watan: I didn't know we were in England – I thought at first it was another country.	193-194
Parya: Worrying where we are going – can we go anywhere?	323-324
Lida: Everything was unknown. I was a stranger, a foreigner.	130-131
Gila: I wondered would they be accepted, would they would get asylum.	172-173

Fear, uncertainty and hope are common themes amongst my participants. They had no control over or knowledge of what might happen to them. Sina and Karimi couldn't believe they were able to leave the country so easily. For all their ideas about it, they had never embraced the unknown freedom they were about to touch. They were used to a world of paralysing fear. They could find no words; their liberation has no language. They just wanted not to be there. Seizing the opportunity to escape, all they knew was that they were going somewhere safer.

Watan remembers, 'It was October when I got here. It was snowing. I didn't know we were in England – I thought at first it was another country. I couldn't believe there could be so much snow in October' (Watan, 192-195).

Darius remembered that he was depressed, he said 'you don't know what destination, you are going to, what's going to happen to you, some kind of - suspension, some kind of – up in the air, and what's going to be your next destination, or your last destination. Some kind of confusion, yes' (Darius, 351-355). It is difficult for him to recall the details of his clandestine journey: he vividly describes the numbness and loss even of his sense of self. Darius, unlike

most of the others, was open to give some physical details of his escape route. I had not expected to hear this from him:

> *'I came in the lorry! I just jumped out of the lorry, there was an Italian driver who saw me but he didn't know I had been in his lorry. We crossed several borders – I didn't look – some parking - drivers, they were sleeping. But - at the time you are not thinking about anything. When I go back to that time, when I think about it, I cannot imagine what I was feeling exactly (Darius, 364-376).*

Darius gave precise details of his journey. Although it was difficult for him to recall, he was sensitive to each moment of that experience.

Parya, like Darius, was not a party member, and was also able to describe her ordeal openly:

> *'It was a very difficult time. We were, for about five or six months, in Africa. It was very hard. We spent four and a half months in Mali. We also stayed for about 50 days in Guinea, in Kenya. I was very worried. Every day I had a feeling, something bad would happen. I was scared for the children. There was Ebola virus at that time. I felt I was going mad. Every day I tried to disinfect the rooms and ourselves' (Parya, 303-314).*

Bringing her two children through these chaotic conditions put extra pressure on Parya as a mother, although a supportive network played a crucial role in her survival. During that period, the traditional family roles changed, and she became the decision maker: the challenge gave her the opportunity to exercise her power. Lida whose presence in Iran put her party at risk, used a network also. She had no idea where she would go. 'I just had to get out. My son-in-law made sure I would get to a safe place, he organized it all, he paid the expenses, he's well off. It took three days. I escaped in a lorry. It was really hard' (Lida, 105-110).

For Sara likewise, the process of escape was well organized. Her husband went before her, and she had a relatively clear idea of what she would face; she did not disclose the actual details. She spoke of loneliness: 'In Iran we had family, relatives, friends looking out for us. Arriving here we had no one. Psychologically you feel utterly alone! Yet I was happy because we were going to be safe' (Sara, 199-201).

On arriving in the UK, there was a point of transition, manifesting new life for all my participants. There were reactions of relief; however, Hiva felt bewildered, having to begin his life all over again in the unknown.

For Sara it was the joy of discovering herself now safe and secure in a cosmopolitan environment, where she would blend in and be accepted. 'At the airport, I saw people from many nationalities, particularly in England you see people of different colours and types – they can all live together; this made me very happy' (Sara, 203-205).

Sina felt reborn in a new environment, which continued to require him to free himself. From being nothing, he would now be recognized. He had arrived in a new world.

Lida kept her hope. 'The wood had reached the beach. The waves brought the wood to the coast, and I hoped I would then find my own way' (Lida, 204-207).

When Parya landed from Africa with her children, it was nothing like she expected. It was like a dream. 'Were we really safe? Were we rescued? Had we reached a safe place? – in one of the world's best countries. I was very happy! I had a very good feeling' (Parya, 346-350). At the UK border, the black woman official hugged Parya warmly and told her not to worry any more. This gave her safety, security, and restored her sense of self.

All my participants received recognition and courtesy on arrival, which reassured

their sense of self. Within the new environment, they would face fresh challenges.

Experiences of adaptation and resettlement in UK

Overcoming obstacles; psychological rebirth

Their sense of self and cultural adaptation

Overcoming obstacles; psychological rebirth

It is impossible to conceive of existence without birth. Our physical birth is a 'given'; according to the Abrahamian religions, we may be born Christian, Moslem or Jewish, but we also give birth to ourselves spiritually and psychologically in the way we act and interpret life.

Hannah Arendt in 'the Human Condition' 'introduces natality as a conceptual moment when one is born into the political as the sphere where acting together can create the truly unexpected' (Champlin, 2013: 150). Arendt regards political action as a 'second' birth or rebirth (Arendt, 2013). Our words and deeds reveal our unique personal identities. She relates birth to political action. Although we must die, we are born to begin, and to make a change. With her focus on life and natality, rather than death and mortality, she opposes Heidegger's view that we are thrown towards our deaths, since being born and dying are beyond our free choice. In Hannah Arendt's theory, our birth is an opportunity to act and to be reborn psychologically or spiritually. We enter the world through birth: the root of our freedom(ibid).

I find that my participants' descriptions of their new birth nearly always include how it feels for them to be recognised and respected as a human being, during the period of resettlement. The theme of birth is almost inseparable from the theme 'Recognition and Respect'.

Karimi: In another country where you weren't born there, they treat you as a citizen. It is a huge difference.	188-190
Sina: It was a new birth.	278
Darius: I can change things.	535
Hiva: This was a new birth for me, and I was apprehensive, but I had hope.	165-166
Sara: My decision to fight, to be a freedom fighter, gave me energy! Before I came to this decision it was extremely difficult for me.	152-154
Watan: I can have a life here.	204-205
Parya: I felt I was saved, rescued. I'll never forget this feeling.	375-376
Lida: This was like a new birth for me. The very day of my birthday I received my leave to remain.	318-320
Gila: Here is now my country also	243

Beyond any doubt, Sina's arrival in this country was and continues to be for him an unexpected new birth. His personal survival and rebirth embodies his tribal group consciousness. He repeats that it was not just a feeling; it was an actual birth, the intake of breath after suffocation in his homeland. The opportunity 'to start again' was for him miraculous. He says he had no preconceptions, nor could he ever have imagined this leap into the unknown; from existential suppression into existence, purpose, freedom to circulate and to be; the Phoenix rose from the ashes. In the UK he found his values were respected. This continuing process of rebirth inspired him to adapt himself and to help others. The bright red double decker bus in London manifested a new sense of safety, security and community. In Iranian buses, women and men are segregated.

'I felt,' said Karimi, 'there are people who can understand you' (Karimi, 187). When he reached the UK, Karimi's life was in the ashes. Encountering humane treatment, his inner strength of purpose generated a new birth for himself and his family. On observing his new neighbours, Karimi began to think about and change some of his patriarchal conditioning, for the sake of his wife and his

daughters, thus enhancing his family's resettlement. For some, this interior revolution may be even more significant than the social revolution they fight for. I think there can be no social change without individuals' willingness to change themselves: to be reborn.

Lida spoke of her feelings of despair in Iran, where 'your voice cannot reach anyone' (Lida, 260). Here also the new birth brings recognition. She was given asylum within four days of her arrival in London: 'The very day of my birthday I received my leave to remain. This was my new birth. They valued me. I was important. They recognised me as a human. They embraced me with kindness and warmth. I will never forget it' (Lida, 320-334).

Parya was 'reborn' when the black woman officer embraced her. However, as regards the process of adaptation and confronting difficulties she says, 'I think the beginning of any new life is problematic' (Parya, 399).

Gila's arrival and reception here further inspired her loyalty to both her homeland and her new country, and her desire for herself and her children to work hard and be useful. Sara, who rose to the challenge to learn English and make new friends, observed, 'In general, any existing conflict within the family between the men and the women, increases when they arrive in a new country' (Sara, 299-301).' As soon as she and her family were given a home however, she made contact with her new neighbours by baking bread for them.

It is interesting to compare Darius's rebirth – his Phoenix moment - with that of other participants who were activists. They all reached a point variously, where they could no longer breathe under the regime, and had to abandon their homeland. It took ten years for Darius to get asylum. He was able to live in uncertainty because despite the difficulties he had his freedom and could survive. His life was not under physical threat. What were these challenging ten years for him? During this period, he lived like a vagabond in the Midlands, finding casual work and sometimes sleeping rough. He developed his philosophy and became a Buddhist. This lengthy birth process matured his aspiration 'to

be a better person' to the point where he profoundly appreciates what he has learned. Finding the balance between his physical and spiritual worlds helped him to tolerate his situation and even enabled him to assist and guide others, as part of his Buddhist practice.

Eventually he gained his asylum by representing himself; by then he was free from the past. He was centred in the present, and looking forward. Darius draws on his depth of experience to assist and advise other refugees. To have freedom is not enough. We need to make choices, to act and to be reborn.

Hiva spoke of his hope for a better life and felt he was reborn, although without refugee status, work permit or a place to call home (Hiva, 165-167). His feeling of rebirth was a by-product of his actions. The freedom he found in the UK gave him opportunities: he put his talent and strength to work, to establish a company with over 40 employees.

Watan remembers, 'I got away from a really horrible situation. I found my place – I can have a life here' (Watan, 203-205). However, Hiva and Watan faced new difficulties. Their asylum applications were rejected; they had no identity here, which felt almost as bad as the repression they had escaped from and which handicapped their ability to move from the past. Both rose to the challenge, however, and developed successful businesses under new names. They are resubmitting their asylum applications and are confident that they will be allowed to remain.

There can be no birth without someone or somewhere to be born to. The most profound human connection is through birth to a parent, or to a new way of life. For some, this takes a moment; for others it is spread over many years of adjustment, or emerges (as with Hiva) through inner acceptance. I note with each participant his or her positive determination to live, to interact and to try. They did not give up. A new-born baby appears helpless, but has just won the first great battle for life. Birth holds some quality of the whole life and activity to come, which makes it difficult to determine at which point the refugee's new

birth merges into his or her resettlement process. Each of my participants experienced rebirth and recognition through his or her contact with humanity in the new society. As Winnicott (1965) emphasised, a baby does not exist without its mother or caregiver; a political refugee does not exist in isolation.

The theme of birth is almost inseparable from the theme 'Recognition and Respect'. Most theories of recognition assume that to develop a particular identity, we depend fundamentally on the views of others, and of society as a whole. Those who are inadequately recognised by others find it difficult to connect with and value their perceived self. In other words, misrecognition destroys a person's relationship with their inner self. For example, a woman under a fundamentalist regime might suffer severe psychological harm from being regarded as inferior. So recognition constitutes 'a vital human need' (Taylor 1992: 26)

Karimi: I felt there are people who can understand you.	187
Sina: we haven't been represented	25
Darius: the police, border agency came. Actually when we saw them treating us like that, with respect and very polite	393-395
Hiva: It is very painful not to be recognized as a political refugee.	347-348
Sara: If you want to do anything for others, they won't stop you	236
Watan: I felt I was in heaven.	222
Parya: I'll never forget it. Someone recognised me, respected me.	382-384
Lida: They recognised me as a human.	322
Gila: I am very grateful to this country for accepting us; they treat us as equal citizens.	394-396

Like Sina's bus, Lida's symbol for freedom was red: a token of identity and relocation. 'They gave me a red card and a phone number, they asked me to contact that number for an appointment … This gave me some comfort, someone knows I am here, I feel recognised' (Lida, 143-148)

My participants all agreed that their first priority for recognition and respect was to communicate. Sara discovered that people in her new country 'respect' one

another. Under religious dictatorship, the natural care among neighbours is replaced by mistrust and paranoia. Religious dictatorship deeply fractures a society. Sara also recognised her volatile temper, and learned to control it: 'We had to learn the way they do things here. It didn't come naturally – people had to battle for it historically – and we must recognise and respect this way. There are many humanitarian things we can learn' (Sara,744-748). Receiving recognition and respect enables the self-recognition, which in its turn recognises others.

For Karimi, recognition and respect means: 'Here we are regarded as human. This is very important. I have my own identity. My rights won't be violated. No one insults me' (Karimi, 365-366).

Sina told me, 'The issue is no longer 'they don't want me'. Here everything is different; here the economy is not politically prejudiced' (Sina, 297-299).

Recognition is also a process arising from deep within. When the waves brought Lida's piece of wood in the sea to the coast (Lida, 204-206), it was like having her human identity recognised, she was not invisible anymore. 'The feeling here gave me confidence. I found myself' (Lida, 232).

Watan began to see his situation from a new perspective. He felt he was in heaven. He had difficulties in obtaining refugee status; he had no work permit and was homeless for a long time, but the freedom he had to be himself was heaven. Despite his uncertain legal status, he was able to open a restaurant. He said his feeling against the regime was stronger than before. Although no longer within the battle itself, he had a chance to read, to reflect and to study the situation in Iran more objectively.

This reflexive self-recognition is as significant as the recognition coming from others, for making important connections. Recognition implies a dialogue within the individual or with others. For my thoughtful participants, especially Darius

and Karimi, their reflexivity played a major role in their adjustment and resettlement.

Gila told me one of her neighbours in Iran, an old man seeing her struggle for herself and others, came and said to her, 'well done, we are proud of you. A lion is a lion, regardless of gender.' (Gila, 380-382). She carried this self-recognition to her new country, and to her political activities.

Here, Gila gave voice to her recognition of humanity: 'When I see how the boys and girls are free here, there are tears in my eyes. When I walk in the street and I see old people walking along, they remind me of the old folk in my country. Old, young, they all remind me of my people in Iran.

I recognise that my participants come together as a team, whose single voice for human rights and social justice reaches further than their individual voices, none of which are subtracted from the whole. For all of them, their purpose spiritually and psychologically transcends their local or personal interest.

With one accord, each of my participants expresses, in his or her unique way, an openness to learn and to try to do better in the new environment; to face the inevitable conflicts of adjustment and change.

Process of adaptation, facing a new conflict

In my participants' process of adaptation, new conflicts have to be faced, particularly in their family relationships and with the cultural changes. Sara states that any residual conflict in a marriage will come to the surface with resettlement. For Sara, Lida and Parya, the adaptation process put pressure on their marriages and increased underlying tensions. As Sara described, 'It depends on whom you live with' (Sara., 266). In Iran, a man had his authority as boss and head of the house and family. When the family arrived here, they found it quite different. It is not an easy process to change deeply embedded cultural attitudes concerning gender and power within the family.

Sara, Gila and Karimi told me of suicides and even honour killings within some badly divided families. Among the political refugee community,

> 'even if the men try to make a change, they can only do it very, very slowly. I know many, families who bring their mind and attitudes towards women from Iran, and they can't actually handle it here; the husband suffers from serious depression. Women can adapt more easily, find a job, do physical activities, go to the gym, interact with this society' (Sara, 286-291).

Sara's husband to begin with stayed at home while she went out to work. Parya's husband fell into depression: 'I had to carry everything on my shoulders. I do all the jobs, with the children. It isn't easy living here (Parya, 546-547). Her husband did not want to learn English. Lida described her husband's homesickness, 'He can't meet his expectation of being here. That is why he's not happy' (Lida, 418-419). For Karimi also, his adaptation process brought paradoxical realisations within himself: 'Let me say something. This is not easy – I recognise that. It is not easy to accept all of the new culture (Karimi, 244-245). He emphasised twice that 'it is not easy', this shows the conflict he had in dealing with cultural differences concerning male and female relationship. But his first impression was: 'there is freedom here' (Karimi, 249). The conflict intensified when his daughters brought home their boyfriends, nor was it easy for him to cede his traditional controlling position in the family. However, he noted that nobody here forced him to go against his values; this led him to learn from men and women whose values inspired him, and whose friendly behaviour he had at first thought unethical.

Another great trial in the adaptation process for my participants was isolation. Many political refugees arriving in the UK feel cut off and friendless.

'Our culture is community oriented. Being with others is very important for us. This was the downside and it disturbed me – the lack of this environment here' (Sara, 247-251).

Sara advises refugees not to use their children as interpreters or translators:

'Don't take them to the job centre or the doctor's surgery. That would be a great mistake. The children would think not only do you not know the language, you're not capable – you don't have a brain! Gradually they will lose their respect for you and do whatever they like' (Sara, 691-695).

The conflicts faced were cultural and intra-personal, but Gila had to tackle the fear and paranoia which still invaded her from her past imprisonment and torture. Lida also struggled to overcome and transform her negative thoughts. Part of Gila's mission is for her children to study and be good human beings. The fight for values creates an environment where children take themselves seriously. The suffering forces evolution and transcends self-indulgence. Many children of political refugees are now doctors, lawyers and teachers, valuing their freedom and the right to work. Gila made it her duty to motivate her children highly. She refuses their financial assistance, and works in a supermarket. Her very strong language – 'for as long as I have blood in my veins' - confronts the persecution which almost dragged her down. Her fight for freedom and values helps her to rise above her own difficulties and keep going. Against extremists, she remained extreme in her views, for herself and her children to survive. She told me she fears Iranian regime spies in this country. She did not remarry because 'I left my personal feelings behind, to be for my family and for others, to be for my people. I never thought about getting married again' (Gila, 319-320, 226-227). She carries this attitude into the new environment and accepts the sacrifices.

Hiva and Sina agree likewise, that having committed themselves to meet those values which made them come to this country, how could they make another commitment, to a wife and family? How could they compromise? All my participants face the challenge to adapt their political activities to the new environment. Gila became involved at an international level. At human rights conferences, she meets many others who lost family members. Once she, with

two other women, counted eleven martyrs between them. Sara is a founder-member of the women's rights group in which Parya, Gila and Lida are active.

For Watan, his conflict with the Home Office is still ongoing, although by now he owns a string of restaurants. 'In the first year, I concentrated on my case. I wasn't happy – it was very frustrating. I felt like just an object of the game they play – going this place, then going that place. I needed my asylum. But even if I don't get my asylum, I can still work. Every week I pay £130, £140 tax. I can carry on living here! I think I will get my asylum, eventually' (Watan, 276-285).

Darius, Hiva and Watan faced the difficulties ranged against them by their non-asylum status. Officially all three did not exist; inhabiting a limbo world they had to work extra hard on the black market to support their families. 'What I've learned,' said Darius, 'is that life and the universe will give you exactly whatever you have asked for' (Darius, 671-677).

Recognition by the host country's government and the Home Office, can go a long way towards helping a political refugee to establish his or her new identity. Hiva was not granted asylum: 'It is for me, like being in a regime prison here! I am imprisoned but in the UK' (Hiva, 165-166). He refers, not to a physical prison but to his misrecognition as a working citizen of his new country. He has freedom here, which he cannot totally use. When he was in prison in Iran he wrote two books. Here he finds himself dealing with personal issues rather than working for others; his focus in Iran was on his political commitment. For political refugees the hardship in Iran was their spur. The urge here is not the same. The loss of political activity may also contribute to Hiva's malaise.

Like Hiva, Watan also was a hero in his homeland, and has to live here unrecognised. Watan said, 'The first thing I thought of was – I can carry on, I can study! I was very keen on my studies and still am. But I didn't get a chance to do this here.' Achieving refugee status has to come first.

Each human being is entitled to certain fundamental rights, including a degree of safety to live and to exist. Safety is interwoven with identity and rights (Ullah, 2014). Although these basic human rights are recognised in international law (UDHR 1948 and Charter of the United Nations 1945), host countries often ignore them, and many people continue to be persecuted and deprived of them. The protection and safety of refugees has developed into a major international challenge (Islam & Bhuiyan, 2013). Violations of human rights or deficient mechanisms to protect human rights increase the insecurity experienced by refugee populations. For example, the length (sometimes over 10 years) and complexity of the asylum application process in the UK creates its own hopelessness, uncertainty and acute anxiety. There are reports of suicide among asylum seekers whose applications were refused or inexplicably delayed (Burnett and Thompson, 2005; Lago, 2011). The host country's hostility, disbelief and style of interrogation further imperils and often destroys the asylum seeker's sense of safety, as Eschoe pointed out: "In recent years negative attention has been focused on asylum seekers in the UK" (Eschoe, 2006).

It took seven months for Parya's family to get asylum. The first application, presented by her husband, failed. The second one which she presented, succeeded. Subsequently she lived with her husband's depression and homesickness, while she herself made new friends and became the family breadwinner. 'When I was in Newcastle I didn't know anyone. I got to know a few British families. I couldn't believe – I fell in love with them. I can't believe that after only four or five meetings with them I became like their daughter genuinely – a very, very good feeling. I met them in the gym. They invited me to their home, they had a music class … when I told them I don't understand the songs, they said it doesn't matter, you can come and listen' (Parya, 598-609). Parya's resettlement and rebirth reclaimed flavours of her lost childhood. For her, as for Sina and for Darius, music (restricted in Iran) spoke more than words.

The adaptation process, facing and overcoming new conflict, fuels my participants' imperative need to be in work. 'No one stops me,' said Watan. 'If

you want, you will achieve. No one should underestimate themselves. I believe I have to work. It helps me to carry on. I'm not here only to look after myself, I want to help others' (Watan, 398-403). In other words, my participants needed to manifest their ideological identity. To 'do more for others' helped my participants to navigate the conflicts they faced, of life-style, post-traumatic shock, recognition and relationship. Their way of life, energy, identity and purpose powers their adaptation through 'conflict resolution'. The fighter embraces the conflict and its ongoing challenge in the new country; against opposition, new meaning takes form.

My participants were astonished to meet a kindly, relaxed manner in police and Home Office officials. In their experience, all officials were against them, and they were used to having even to lie, in order to survive.

According to Hiva's and Watan's experience, it can be difficult for some political refugees to realise that in the UK a lie may play against them and jeopardise their status. Only by means of a highly dynamic adaptation process can political asylum seekers detach themselves from these conditioned patterns.

Adaptation and resettlement in the new society takes hard work. Through their active employment, my participants became better equipped to resolve their conflicts in the new environment.

> 'Don't stay at home – go out to work. Working is essential. Staying at home means depression. A person who doesn't work is like a dying flower. They get weaker and weaker' (Watan, 479-482).

Regarding his work as a driver and how he is able to communicate through it, Sina told me, 'It is the best job in the world! Financially I can stand on my feet, and I can be in touch with the rest of the world. I love my job! (Sina, 390-393). It means a great deal to him that he is now financially independent. His work enables him to build upon his strength of purpose: his interest in people led him to take a degree in anthropology. He enjoys his conversations; he can circulate,

communicate with people and move around in the open in the old nomadic way.

Hiva's small olives empire has outlets all over Europe. The olive, rather like a political refugee, undergoes many processes to become palatable. Hiva uses his executive role, the invisibility of which deeply frustrates him, to disseminate his ideal of community and cooperation in business.

In fact Hiva has an innate talent for secret dissemination; in his homeland he and just two others distributed 40,000 prohibited books all over several Iranian provinces. When he was arrested, Iranian intelligence were surprised not to find a network of thousands behind this operation (Hiva, 430-436).

For Darius being at work helped him to function, to be active and to avoid depression. 'You know, if someone is working, there is variety, he goes out, he comes in, he creates … the first thing is basically, to make themselves busy' (Darius, 749-752).

Watan has strong feelings on the subject:

> 'I feel if I stay just one week at home, I lose a year. When I applied to work here, I wrote a simple sentence: 'I don't want to get benefit – I want to work.' After one week, I received permission to work! Now I have my own restaurant' (Watan, 253-258).

He enjoyed hard work, because the activity helped him to believe in himself and to be respected within his community. He not only survived the restrictions imposed on him by having his asylum rejected, but also created a new life. He integrated within the new society, with his steady girlfriend and his successful business.

> 'When the owners know you don't have asylum, they pay you much less. I had to carry on. I didn't want to commit suicide! When things are tough, I have to get through it. I can't say, 'I cannot engage with this.' I had to carry on – I had no other choice' (Watan, 291-311).

My nine participants' desire to work hard and creatively, and their positive views about themselves made them willing to engage with my project and to make a contribution to it.

Karimi sums it up:

> *'When you work, you receive respect, and you can be proud of the result. When you work for people, they respect you and feel grateful – then you can release your tiredness! Many people are encouraged to study, they are working and they are happy; I also am happy and I can help others'* (Karimi, 366-370).

My participants recognised the key role of language in the adaptation process. 'My native language is much stronger here,' said Sina (Sina, 421). The mastery of language plays a crucial role in a political refugee's adaptation process. For Sina, the availability here to learn languages and the use of language, inspires him to take opportunities, in stark contrast with his homeland. His mother tongue, as it is allowed to become more expressive and articulate, develops his opposition to the regime, who suppressed it, and it becomes enriched through discourse. He also relished the opportunity to develop his musical gift and his native language. For the tribesmen, their music is the life-blood, expressing their rhythms, their history and their connectedness with nature and in themselves collectively. In Iran, all non-religious music – national, classical, or western – is prohibited. The English families who invited Parya to their musical gatherings played a major role in her joyful adaptation and enthusiasm for her new world.

Lida's fight for justice became enriched, by her more objective understanding of the battlefield from a distance. She focuses now on adapting herself to new ways and people, and learning the language. 'I'm still actively trying to change my situation, but the nature of my activity has changed. I see this as a part of my fight for life' (Lida, 243-245) Additionally, Lida takes the opportunity to study and to improve herself – a direct hit at the regime's suppression. Like Watan (281-299) she gained perspective: 'When I was there, there were many things

in the political situation which I couldn't see, but I now see clearly from here' (Lida, 265-266). The effort of learning a new language – such as English – serves to broaden her base and to enrich her perception of the world. The research conducted by Broditsky and her colleagues found that the new languages people learn to speak shape their way of thinking (Broditsky, 2009).

For Watan, regarding his sense of self, 'The basic thing here is to learn the language. That is the key to everything else' (Watan, 474-475). What does 'everything' mean for Watan? He was able to make new friends, to find a steady girlfriend and to set up his business. Learning English enabled him to defend his asylum application in court.

When my participants explore or describe their situation, they use extreme words. For example, they use 'must', not 'might'. The violation of human rights created its own language. When it comes to torture, rape, violence, rejection, misrecognition, my English clients tend to use euphemisms; my participants express themselves directly, boldly and without hesitation. I feel their emotion, and their anger. Their native language differs from English speakers who try to be less emotional and more considered.

I observe also, their natural use of metaphor. Many good poets are born in battlegrounds and in prison. Lida and Hiva both speak of 'a flood' of protest, to which they belong, which carries them to a place where they can fulfil their destiny. Lida described her escape as a piece of wood in the waves, which is brought eventually to the beach. Gila speaks of the blood of her husband's courage and martyrdom, which flows in her veins; she will never give up. For Darius the 'flickering light' of hope beckoned him steadily through his dark years of dislocation. Hiva sees the mixture of cultures in the UK as a garden of many beautiful colours, and his hidden role marinating and distributing olives as a way of disseminating ethical business initiatives. 'The red bus' with its cheerful colour and relaxed passengers, liberated Sina from the past. For Karimi the beautiful flowing rivers in his homeland were places where he was forbidden to speak.

Watan put the courage in his fiery name to work, to cook and create his new homeland. Sara guarded and nurtured her children through the mountains to a promised land. These are powerful visual images.

I found that little has been written about the subjective experience of language, and what it means in terms of self-confidence and personal recreation. Repeatedly, my participants described their sensations of trying to connect where there is no common language, and of breaking through the dam. Some of them spoke of birth. A new-born child receives and creates language through the warmth of being loved and recognised. Conversely, one who in whom the interaction is starved, may develop an aggressive character to be heard. The situation under the regime in Iran portrays, in its extreme way, the same starvation between a society and its government.

We speak also of 'word play': the play of language, as in poetic metaphors and music. This concept is forbidden under most dictatorships. The formation of language and a rich, flexible vocabulary is democratic, or 'of the people'.

In my subsequent conversation with Sina, he put his finger on what he feels are abuses of the English language: 'For example, here they use a lot of big adjectives – why do they say "amazing", "beautiful"? What meaning do those words have? Just say "done" – "I did".' Sina has established for himself a fresh perception, because of his new ways of speaking; his own culture can deal creatively with the new language.

'One hundred per cent,' said Hiva, 'engage with this society, get close to it. To interact, language is crucial' (Hiva, 469-467). My project helped me to focus on this subjective experience of language and communication, and how its mastery may alter a person's perception of 'being thrown into the world' (Heidegger, 1977), and even modify their sense of identity. Their use of language, inner and outer, became for my participants, their instrument for transformation and resettlement. The challenge increased intellectual clarity. Their freedom of speech resembles the freedom to breathe; the daily work of trying to

communicate and to make one-self understood by word, gesture or activity. To overcome the difficulties in learning a language and its cultural syntax requires commitment. Language is a commitment: an organic process of communication, connection and interpretation. The task of assimilating a new language and its cultural nuances shapes a refugee's thought and redefines their world (Broditsky, 2009). My participants demonstrate how language thrives with use. Language reveals the human condition, and develops with dialogue, passion and imagery. The use of language expands possibilities and cross-fertilizes ideas. Conversely, those who could not or refused to learn the host country's language, contracted into their own diminished resources. My participants' suppressed native languages grew rich through freedom of speech in the new country, through the rediscovery of who they wanted to be. Thuse of language is extended through social networking, with or without media technology.

Most of my participants were helped to escape from Iran through the supportive networks which also assisted their families to reunite; a reality they needed to recreate in the host country. Lida recognises she could never have reached where she is today without the support of others:

> 'I recognise how important my own community is to me. Without my cousin's help, and my friends, things could have been very difficult. I feel I belong here. I'm not a stranger here – I don't know why I have this feeling, but here it is! Perhaps it's because I was recognised here, officially' (Lida, 461-468).

Having a support network and an established refugee status helped Lida to integrate within the new environment and feel at home. Karimi, as a respectable and active member of his community, enjoyed the supportive atmosphere. He was also very grateful for the support he received from the government and from people in the UK. Karimi's positive view helped him to integrate and to adapt within the new society. He was able to support his family of six children, to become an engineer and to make many new friends.

For Darius on his own, establishing supportive networks here was touch and go:

'*After eleven months not answering, the Home Office just rejected my case. A few of my English friends in Stoke on Trent, wrote a letter to the Home Office for me. I cannot just, you know, live in a small room or somewhere far from other people; it would make me crazy, to be lonely like that. That's why I look for contact with more people' (Darius, 451-454, 469-473).*

Watan's social networks were largely created through his close friendships in this country. He would like to be more politically active here: 'our political parties have meetings in Manchester, Leeds, London – always I try to go' (Watan, 345-346).

Many family and community networks, deeply embedded by tradition in Iranian culture, were fractured and set at odds by the regime. A significant aspect of my participants' resettlement is their ability to inspire respect and care, to replant the seeds of extended family, and to reach out towards the kind of connectivity, which renews a society's health and vitality. For many, this was achieved through the hardships of surmounting misrecognition and prejudice, following their escape.

The onus is equally on the host community to make this a two-way process. Harrell and Bond showed that host communication competence is essential to cross-cultural adaptation, and that host and refugee communities should co-exist with no greater conflict than that which is generally found within the host community (Harrell-Bond, 1986). In other words, the psychological and social health of a host community can make all the difference to a refugee's assimilation.

Another subtheme emerging from the adaptation and resettlement process is the feeling of guilt. Some writers focus on refugees' survivor guilt and conceptualise it, without specifying the different forms of guilt (Bemak et al. 2003; Fink.2010). They might overlook other guilt-producing factors, such as

the moral dilemma of dedication to human rights at the cost of separating from their family or putting them at risk. For example, the process of escaping or resettlement in the new country sometimes physically or psychologically damages their children, resulting in parental guilt. Additionally it can be asked: do refugees experience a particular guilt through failure in their political task? For Kierkegaard, 'guilt is inexorably existential; hence freedom and guilt are dialectical' (Matuštík & Westphal, 1995: 54).

In general, my participants developed fresh mental strength, within themselves, to continue the fight. This in part mitigated their guilt with so many killed or left behind. Sara's serious attention to her political activities in the UK helped her to cope with her guilt concerning her son's psychological state. Sina's violated people were never far from his mind. To some extent he is able to reconcile the fact that he can no longer reach them physically, with his 'future plan' to do some good in his new extended family. The sense of wellbeing for the tribe, and to protect the human tribe from enemies is psychologically profound.

Sara's feelings in political battle strove against her parental guilt, which remains with her. Here, she describes her moral dilemma when she had to leave her children: 'I felt guilty, a bad mother, I felt shame. I remember when my youngest daughter was with me – my eldest thought it was because I preferred the little one. This was so very difficult. Now it is my son who has psychological problems, and keeps telling me even now, "You left me" (Sara, 494-502). Many years later, the memory of having to choose which child to take with her still makes Sara shake all over with emotion. The pain of it is right in front of her.

When I asked Karimi how he felt about not being in the battlefield, he replied, 'If I want to tell you the truth – I feel guilty because I'm not in the battlefield. I said I'm happy here and my family are safe; but always I have this feeling about my people.'

Gila, like Sara, suffered maternal guilt. She keeps her torture in prison secret from her children, in the same way that she did not break under the torture

itself. For Hiva his intense emotion and guilt at having endangered his family disabled his application for asylum: 'My sister and my brother were arrested because of my activities. I was unhappy about that. I felt responsible for their problem. They were arrested because of me. I had this guilt all the time.

Their sense of self and cultural adaptation

Identity and selfhood

Some political refugees like Karimi and Hiva, who had therapy with the Medical Foundation, were helped to articulate their spiritual and personal crisis, regarding the battlefield and their family members (Blackwell, 2005). A skilled therapist might firstly understand their pattern of self for others, and then help them to find and develop those same possibilities in the new society.

The ability to adapt to changing conditions might be our greatest human strength. My participants agree that a political refugee's first crisis on arriving here concerns his or her identity in the new country. As we have seen, some of my participants were granted asylum and could begin to establish themselves. Others had to wait sometimes for many years 'off the grid', which further stretched their inner resources and sense of selfhood. Relocating to a strange new city from a place of no return taxed all my participants, who knew others who were unable to adapt. For his family's sake, Karimi needed to make some existential adjustments:

> 'my children are all well educated, and my wife is studying. I can see a
> bright future. In this country I receive a lot of respect from people. I am
> happy here. Although I think about Iran – my relatives, people, my
> brothers, sisters, I can't think only of myself. Here we are regarded as
> human … I have my own identity' (Karimi, 358-366).

I found little in the literature concerning highly qualified political refugees who, like Darius, were reduced to menial labour at subsistence level.

Many refugees were advised to define themselves to the host country as victims of overwhelming suffering (Bhugra, 2010: Papadopoulos, 2002: van der Veer, 1998; Colin, 2011; Bertossi, 2007). Watan told me that his friends advised him when he went to the court, to try to cry. He refused to play the game: 'I can't do those things. I can only be myself. I didn't want actually to pretend to be a

victim – not at all ... I wanted to have my I.D. to be able to live here' (Watan, 378-384). He reminds me of Darius's statement on being asked to 'cooperate' with regime agents: 'I was not such a person. I never lived like that' (Darius, 57-58).

By focusing on their lived experience and feelings, rather than their usual thoughts and ideas, my participants discovered a deeper awareness within themselves, which their surface stress or sense of inadequacy may have obscured.

Although Hiva was still waiting for his refugee status, the sense of who he really is, what he creates, and what his values are, grew stronger as he spoke to me. 'Because I have my own value, my political value, By expressing his self-knowledge, Hiva became conscious again of his aim in life, the kind of person he really was, and his active values. This liberated him from the restrictions in his non-asylum status and enabled him to recognise the fact of dealing with his current circumstances as part of his original aim. Watan and Darius also reached this point of authenticity.

Some researchers have made cultural generalisations, such as the assumption that Asians dislike direct eye contact (Bemak, Chung and Pedersen, 2003). This inadequate perception of individuals or their socio-political background, limits their cultural expression to fixed behavioural traits. In Wen-shing Tseng's view, culture is the dynamic, flexible development of a society's attitudes and value systems, to regulate behavioural and ethical codes (Tseng and Streitzer, 2001).

How would my participants define what culture is, and what it means to them? All of them hold strong views about the negative aspects of their familiar culture, and the humane values, which sustained them privately and collectively through immense changes. For them, a nation's culture should celebrate these core values in its unique way, and if any so called culture becomes merely a custom or tries to repress a culture whose natural expression is different, it is meaningless.

Culture is an instrument of nationality and locality, but my participants, through their commitment towards meaning and human values, challenge any form of repression against people in the name of culture. Perhaps Hiva's image of a garden most clearly describes the phenomenon. He feels stimulated by the mixture of races and cultures in the UK. It helps him to understand the negative and positive aspects of his own culture, and to make personal changes.

> *'Sitting at home is just a downhill way. Do any work you can! I recognise here, it is like a garden full of colours. I came from my own culture, and I keep those values which are important for me. Being in this society helped me to remove the negative side of my natal culture. The different cultures here are this garden of many colours. You can benefit from the colours, perfumes and smells. It is up to you. Learn from those different cultures to develop your life!' (Hiva, 488-497)*

Gender inequality is deep rooted in the culture Karimi was brought up in. When he saw men and women whom he respected, standing naturally together, his prejudices were overcome. In some ways an internal personal revolution might engender and develop a grass-roots social revolution beyond the front line.

> *'Those who say a woman who shakes a strange man's hand is corrupted, are wrong. I've seen many decent, respectable people do that. They kiss a person, but it isn't unethical. I learned; and this changed my view. In Iran they might not shake hands, but they do wrong things. Ethical commitment is important. I really learned from that (Karimi 334-344).*

However, my participants criticised aspects of the individualistic culture they found in their new country. Sina, Darius and Sara, after they had lived here for a while, began to feel that there were downsides, in particular a lack of respect. In their view, some people here are locked into their own interests and do not support or befriend each other easily. Darius is shocked at the way the elderly are treated: being placed in care homes, distant from their families.

> *'In a country like Iran, when you get older, maybe the family or some*

people will be around you to look after you. But in a society like this, you are just on your own when you grow older. When I see this, it hurts sometimes' (Darius, 841-844).

In comparing and assessing their home culture with the host culture, Darius pointed out various differences.

Watan feels, however, that relationships here between men and women are 'very much better. Here, the women are more honest. Living with European women enabled me to learn trust (Watan, 440-455).

Comparing aspects of their past with the situation they find here, far from their communities at home, might sometimes make my participants feel they have lost more than they gained, and yet motivates them to do something positive. None of them 'romanticises' their past; they tend to look forward. For many of them, their ethnicity remains their centre of gravity, which helps their adaptation. Sina's upbringing and outlook are tribal: a nomadic society's centre and safety is the good of the community or 'larger self'. At the beginning of his new life in the UK he met the challenges to integrate within a new culture, and to adapt his own value system. Earlier he was still absorbed in the feelings aroused by the past. Carrying the cultural identity and sensations of his tribe forward into his new world, he replanted his values and discovered how to grow, educate himself and progress through relationships, current affairs, studying and his job as a driver. Engaging with the cultural diversity here, Sina learned new language skills, and obtained a university degree. Together with my other participants, he wants his unique journey from suffocation to rebirth, to be noted, to become a voice for his people, and to help others.

The culture of political refugees in many aspects is different from their national culture. Their group loyalty and the sacrifice of their personal lives, belongings and assets to the cause makes them somewhat different from ordinary people. In their cultural adaptation process we should recognise an expression of universal rather than local values. Sara said she loves her family members, but

feels more attuned to her comrades in the party. Karimi who misses the battlefield brings that high standard of the freedom fighter into his work; to do justice to the job and to help. Sina, Gila and Lida find fulfilment in their care for others. These are positive transformations of my participants' political culture within the new society.

In my experience of political refugees I find also some natural rebellion against authority, which sometimes disadvantages them. They are strong-minded, and might project onto officials in the new society what they fought against in their homeland, where all officials were against them.

In general my participants do not allow themselves to be defined by traumatic events, but by the resources they found within themselves to overcome them (Papadopoulos, 1999b, 2001a).

My participants worked hard on themselves psychologically, spiritually and socially. Their individual experiences and resettlement gave them this opportunity to develop their resources. They had no choice, for too much was at stake – their children, their comrades in the resistance, their integrity and their ideology. The pressure accelerated their humanitarian growth and reflexivity, which in some ways they pioneered. Lida reflects,

> 'I have learned also, to accept some difficult situations, like the death of beloved ones. Once I also learned that when I really love someone, I love them as they are – not the way I might want them to be. Also I think I have become calmer, I am more relaxed. They didn't respect my rights in Iran – that made me very angry. That shaped my emotional life – I was short-tempered and sometimes aggressive. But now I'm more laid back and compassionate' (Lida, 447-456).

Sara also learned to watch her impulsive temper, and to learn from others. Watan was able to develop some unexpected interior resources.

> 'I have learned humanity. I learned the reality of life. I learned not to be

aggressive and I became more emotional, more feeling. I appreciate life,
even the life of the birds. When I was in Iran I didn't mind killing birds,
but here I couldn't do that. I learned the value of life' (Watan, 430-436).

Darius feels he lost a decade of his adult life to the prolonged disruption and stress of homelessness he went through, until he got his leave to remain in the UK. His spiritual practice and visionary patience played an important role (Pargament, 2000, Tarakeshwar, 2003) in his ability to illumine his dark years, especially with hindsight. Vanista and Kosuta (1998) found other examples of the transmutation of trauma into inner meaning.

Perhaps my participants' deepest resource lay in their adaptability and willingness to visualise themselves afresh, to change old attitudes and to build bridges; their ability to trust. Trust is regarded as social: an interactive quality which develops through relationships (Sztompka,1999). 'Trust is a psychological attitude' (Castelfranchi and Falcone, 2010). In my field study and therapeutic practice I find trust extends through the relationship to build a person's centre of gravity; the existential core from which is derived his or her strength of purpose and hope. In all my participants, this resource was challenged before, during and after their escape.

All my participants found it difficult to trust, be open with, or be honest with strangers - unfamiliar Iranians in particular. When they were in Iran, they have had to dissemble to evade persecution, arrest and torture. In their experience, they perceived those in official positions to be against them, and they were used to lying in order to survive. Participants may bring this defensive pattern with them into the UK, making it difficult for them to realise that here, trust and the disclosure of personal information may no longer jeopardise their situations. By means of a highly dynamic adaptation process, my participants began to detach themselves from these conditioned patterns.

I found across the sample without exception, an existential shift from self-preservation to 'the good of others' as my participants' highest level of political

and spiritual activity. Not much work has been done in the literature to investigate this dimension.

How they see their current situation and their future plans

Following the super-ordinate themes presented in their experiences of adaptation and resettlement in the UK, these themes also apply to their current situation and future plans. In general, they are optimistic. The future compared with their past, is bright. All of them want to do something in an active way for others, in some cases to alleviate their survivor's guilt. Having made an enormous transition in their lives, they are confident that the ability to make changes lies within themselves. This depends on their connection with others, their relationship with the host society. If for instance, they are not recognised by the Home Office, they have to live a shadow existence, and cannot conceive the future in terms of making plans or starting a family: the problem of survival continues, but strengthens their internal resources.

The priority across the sample is to make themselves useful members of the host society, and when facing difficulties, not to give up but to keep going. Each participant is aware of his or her place in history; within the loyalty to that wider canvas they try to resolve actual tensions in their family or in the marriage. All of them are eager to work, to expand their adventure of integration with the new culture and society, and to consummate their positive stance against the regime. Those who were political activists in Iran, join resistance movements here and continue the fight for human rights and social justice. Those who do not belong to a party cultivate and develop the interior revolution. For all of them, their escape means: communicating their message, working hard to become better human beings, caring for and loving others, contributing to the host society, and a positive future for their children in the world.

Through the difficulties and releases of their new birth, my participants gained recognition and respect from others. In the adaptation process, they faced conflicts both internal and external, which challenged and developed their language skills. Through their determination to work and to communicate in English they were able to develop supportive networks and in some cases

enriched the host community. For them, productive employment is essential, to ease their survivor's guilt. The cultural adaptation in the family context is an on-going process; their children's educational achievements and proactive engagement with schoolmates helps the parents to integrate, as Sara, Parya, Gila and Karimi have demonstrated. Their sense of identity remains fluid with their integration and the developing of their inner strength and resources.

'This is my ideology for tomorrow – at least through working in cultural and educational activities for others, I want to do everything I can, and I will – in small or large steps for others' (Sina, 376-383). Through gratitude to the community which gave him a new home, he wishes to be helpful and positive, to study communications in technology, and to enjoy his work.

All my participants developed their sensitivity concerning the threat to their people. They lost their trust in authoritative infrastructures, and feel the threat to Iranian people is constant. They are still in touch with their relatives, and try to assist them, as they now live safely overseas. Although they have settled here, most of them are emotionally deeply engaged in what is going on in Iran. They regard themselves not as individuals, but as part of their community. In this respect, although they are physically here, some of them remain psychologically engaged there. This situation might not allow them to engage fully with their lives here, although my female participants who became head of their families, are keen to integrate with English society. Their children play a positive role.

At the time of his interview for my project, Darius – who now had his asylum – made a change for the better in his life. We met informally at the restaurant where he was dishwashing; he had that day secured a good job in translation and administration, and was jubilant; 'I'm happy now that things are changing one by one ... I can see now, a very bright future' (Darius, 629-641).

Gila feels confident that wherever she is, she can be successful, which benefits her children, while maintaining her stand against the regime.

'My children and myself we all work hard. We don't want to get benefit here … because we have freedom here, we can live like other people. They accept us and we have an obligation to pay our taxes … One thing I would like to do: I want to give service to others. I would like to do voluntary work to help others' (Gila, 247-268).

Gila would never exchange her small two-room flat in London for the fine house, beautiful park and river she inherited in Iran. She is free here to teach her ethnic mother tongue to her two grandchildren; she wishes also for a chance to help young Syrians. 'I can look after two children – I have room. I even think of taking in two Syrian children' (Gila, 444-446).

This statement suggests to me, that my participants were accustomed to speak and communicate ideas in the political forum, but the rare chance to open up and discuss 'the suffering' in their private lived experience, released them further, and brought them fresh insight and understanding.

My project enhanced my understanding and taught me about the quality of trust, in the therapeutic and intrapersonal domain.

Psychology of Resistance Party Membership

Sara, Hiva, Watan, Karimi, Gila, Lida and Parya mentioned their association with established political parties, some of which fought against dictatorship during the rule of the Shah in Iran. Since the 1979 revolution, many more parties emerged. Membership of a resistance party determined an activist's sense of identity and belonging. This was further enhanced by the history of the resistance and its martyrs, and by the regime's fear of organised opposition.

Most political refugees do not work in isolation. Individual members invest their sense of belonging, and dedicate their whole life to their party and its charismatic leadership. Difficulties, trauma and losses are dealt with collectively within the party. In order to understand the individual's lived experience, the psychology of this relationship should be understood. For some, this quality becomes

redefined over the years. For example, some party members might change their views. Watan, Gila and Lida said that since they arrived in the UK, their perception of the political situation in their homeland changed. This began to modify their party commitment.

Through my involvement with political refugees, I came across cases of severe disorientation because of separation, disagreement, loss of faith or sense of failure with political parties. Some political refugees might project anger with the regime onto their party also. I think the inner confusion of divided loyalties weakens and isolates a personality. This is another example of ideological trauma and existential loss, leading in some cases to acute depression and even suicide.

It is important to mention these factors, although the depth psychology of resistance party membership lies beyond the present study. As it has not been sufficiently addressed in the literature, I recommend this topic for further study.

Reviewing female and male responses to the situation

In chapter two, I wrote that the Iranian regime systematically considers women as inferior to men. In describing the regime's attitude towards women, I have highlighted gender discrimination as the foundation of their system. My female participants reveal that their response to the situation differs from the men's. Although I did not initially consider this in my strategic plan, I decided also that to analyse the female and male participants' data separately might enrich my finding. As a result, I identified for instance, 'motherhood and battlefield' as a key theme. I am aware that a full examination requires further study, so I will briefly touch upon this matter within four domains.

Their Life in Iran prior to escape

My four female participants mentioned the discrimination they experienced. Women in general, in order to defend their basic rights, have to overcome the

conditioning, which was imposed on them, that they are weak and inferior – a considerable psychological barrier. Even those who fight alongside their husbands against the regime, find they initially follow their men. When Sara decided independently not only to follow her husband but to be a freedom fighter in her own right against the regime, she felt released from much of the fear of their situation.

To claim her sense of self as a person, under a misogynist government, a woman must inevitably stand up for her human rights. This gives her desire for freedom and to change her situation, an extra impetus over the men. She has to do this, not only because of the regime, but because of the culture itself; whose downside is not supportive to women. These conditions supply an extreme incentive for change.

It became the norm over a long period of time, that women, not only in society but also at home, are mistreated as inferior and weak. A woman who wants to fight must overcome the formidable obstacles presented by her family background and by society.

In a general sense, individual responses concerning human rights violation vary. However, the fact of being a woman brings the matter into high relief. For a woman it becomes virtually a question of 'being, or not being', as Lida expressed it. This is further exacerbated through motherhood. For mothers who decide to join the battlefield, their powerful commitment to their values, and ultimately to their children's future, breaks through conventional restraints.

It is not by accident that even within opposition parties men retained their dominant position. As Hiva and Sara pointed out, this attitude inevitably changed. With the women's serious commitment against the misogynist establishment, the male party members had to change their own conditioned attitudes. Iranian women have leadership positions within the main opposition to the regime.

The escape process

The women already demonstrated their capability on the battlefield and resistance to torture in the regime's gaols. Some were fortified by their maternal responsibilities. In the escape process my female participants found themselves becoming their family's decision makers. Tens of thousands of women have been executed. Their dedication is manifest.

For men, the escape process, as Karimi pointed out, heralded a potential loss of their role as head of the family. For women, it may have been slightly easier because soldiers, religious guards and officers didn't regard them seriously.

Experiences of adaptation and resettlement in the UK

Although my participants unanimously felt safer and more secure in the UK, and variously experienced rebirth and phoenix moments, the four women in particular discovered equality for themselves. Men like Karimi with families and children growing up, found themselves challenged to accept the reality of this equality which they had fought for. After escaping, Lida's and Parya's husbands lost their dominant role and felt paralysed. Those who like Karimi were able to modify their attitude and accept gender equality, embraced a new definition of themselves and appreciated the benefits of the new society.

As Lida, Sara and Parya stated, the men tended to focus on the past, whereas the women were more future focused and embraced universality.

The role of women within the family changed. They put themselves in charge. The adaptation process was for them accelerated by their desire to learn English, to take their children to school and to interact in the new society. They were strongly motivated to integrate, whereas some of the males felt insecure without their old communities. Fearing the loss of their identity they stayed at home. Public awareness in the UK, concerning discrimination against women, made it easier for women than for men to gain asylum.

How they see their current situation and their future plans

All the men and women in my study are determined to confront their past difficulties and to adapt to the new society. Those men who accept the women's situation here find themselves in harmony, and are able to work. However the position of women here is basically to support the men. As Sara, Gila and Karimi said, there were cases of male political refugees who committed suicide. Divorce cases occurred where men found their wives' new role unacceptable. For Parya, her main concern is her husband, whom she has tried in every way to support; they have considered separating.

In my study, all my participants, both men and women, are optimistic about the future. On the whole the women are even keener to integrate, to educate themselves and their children, and to learn the language.

Chapter Five

Clinical relevance, my Research Dissemination and my Clinical Work with a Refugee's Family

Political refugees are people who take a conscious stand against human rights violations. However, in order to be recognised and accepted by governmental organisations in a new country, most of them face the condition that they must present themselves as victims of human rights abuses. Many mental health organisations which provide therapeutic services for refugees perceive them systematically as victims; their main focus is on what the refugees have lost. It appeared to me that they do not clearly differentiate political refugees as those who made a conscious choice to make a positive change in their homeland.

In my research I aimed to provide a safe environment for nine political refugees, enabling them to explore their own lived experience. I hope the outcome may be of use to mental health organizations, government organizations, individual therapists and all organizations working for refugees, in political, governmental, psychological, and academic contexts.

My study refers to the existential crisis which political refugees face, and whether they are able to regenerate their lived meanings and to survive. My research should act as a vehicle bridging the world of therapy and the world of the refugee, leading to a better understanding of refugees and their struggle. Therapy allows us to connect: to hear and to be heard; to converse on deeply sensitive issues – a two way process.

Concept of dissemination

To disseminate is to sow the seeds for a fresh outlook or change. These seeds need to flourish before and after research publication and they should be germinating before the research is published. The study's impact, through

communicating with the public, and generating feedback, may harvest an unexpected bonus, expanding beyond the original initiative.

In the dissemination process some complex issues may be opened up; yet it is my task to communicate my research findings widely, so that they are acted upon (Research Ethics Guidebook).

Regarding qualitative research, Rossman and Rallis (1998) define dissemination as the best way to inform and communicate data. No research process is effective without circulating the ideas, which stem from the study, to those who will find them useful. The data may also be improved in different contexts, and will grow. For example, the Home Office could acquire a better understanding of political refugees, and of their situation. Mental health organizations also may benefit. In each context the seed is sown, and grows in its own way.

What are my objectives?

My findings which emerged through the unique experiences of each of my participants, enables me to set the following objectives:

1.   To clarify the concept of "political refugees" and to serve the refugee community and its needs.

2.   To broadcast a wider knowledge of the situation faced by political refugees, the research will create opportunities for the therapy world, charities and government organizations to understand the concept of political refugees and their struggle for human rights and justice. To regard them positively for what they have already achieved, rather than negatively, as victims; to help release that potential, and re-educate conditioned attitudes, which oppose it.

3.   To liaise with professional bodies and charities – the Red Cross, Refugee Council, Baobab Centre and Therapy for Refugees - Home Office, NHS and government organizations concerned with mental health – also with private therapists and the academic world.

These are my main targets, and I will follow up the project's impact through my communications with them. Research Councils UK defines impact as: the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy (Brewer, 2013).

My practical plan

To establish my proposal's clinical relevance, I will develop connections primarily through writing and publishing – producing booklets, articles and leaflets. These may be circulated electronically or by hand. I will arrange a series of conferences, workshops and talks, and network them through professional and academic bodies. In this way I can develop my contacts with those who advise government organizations. I will invite their interest in the project, by sending them fresh data on progress with the participants, and summaries of the thesis. A website will be created and maintained.

Therapists concerned with political refugees' problems of adaptation might benefit from learning more about the extreme conditions they refuge from, and about refugee psychology. To this end as well as initiating publication, I will present a series of seminars to my colleagues and to mental health groups.

My Initial Activity

I have organized several meetings with the clinical director of Baobab Centre for Young Survivors in Exile. She is deeply interested in my topic, encouraged me to publish my findings and wishes to maintain an active correspondence.

I established (in 2010) a registered charity (Phoenix Aid Centre), offering therapeutic services to those who cannot otherwise afford therapy. The main focus is on refugees. Phoenix Aid Centre has offered over 2,000 clinical hours to its clients so far. The charity is also involved in research studies, thus creating a connection with the academic world.

To summarize, my thesis should not stay on the bookshelf. I intend to initiate a progressive change. My primary aim is for political refugees to speak, and for their voice to be heard.

Impact of my study's outcome on my clinical work with a refugee's family

I will now attempt to describe the impact of my study, on my clinical work with a political refugee's family. My study revealed changes in the power dynamic within the family. The following is a reflection on a major change in the father's role. I am aware that to provide the full picture of a family or a refugee's therapy lies beyond the scope of my study.

Refugee families generally leave their homes because they are in danger, and only later realise the significance of what they have lost. What is home? Papadopoulos wrote: 'Home is one of the fundamental notions of humanity' (Papadopoulos, 2002:10). "Home" is where we develop a sense of belonging; where we feel safe and secure. It is a place where we have, more than anywhere else, freedom. Home from the existential point of view is where we evolve our sense of 'physical, social, personal and spiritual' being (Van Deurzen, 2009). Many scholars and researchers since the late 20th century have been interested in discovering the significance of "home" during the life-span, and the relationship between home and self-identity. Rowles and Chaudhury wrote: it is widely accepted that home provides a sense of identity and a place of security in which we can centre and fortify ourselves against the turbulent world beyond the doorstep (Rowles and Chaudhury, 2005). What does home mean for any member of a refugee family?

When people escape and relocate to an environment, which differs radically from their homeland, their identity is disrupted. Essential relocation from a dangerous situation to a safe and secure place causes, ironically, a threat to individual and family identity, and separates refugees from the continuity of their sense of

being. Each family member may react in a specific way to the changes. The dynamic between family members changes in the new situation: this increases the level of anxiety amongst refugees and may become a serious threat to their mental health. According to my study, the traditional role of the father is likely to be most vulnerable to these changes. In the following case history, I alter personal information and background, for confidentiality.

Story of the Shaheen family

The Shaheens are a Kurdish Iranian family. Vahed Shaheen is now 52 years old. His wife Sahar is 48, and they have two daughters, Samyra 24 and Sanam 14. Vahed was an activist for Kurdish peoples' rights, and a senior member of the Kurdish opposition party. His brother and sister were members of the same party, and were executed by the regime for their activities. When the regime attacked their district 15 years ago, Vahed, his wife and his daughters escaped and came to England as refugees. Vahed's role as father of the family changed radically since they started to develop their new life. In his community, Vahed had been highly respected and trusted. His active influence in society and politics, made it dangerous for him to stay there, and forced him to uproot his family. In the new country, **most of** his prestige was lost. The whole family faced a new complicated struggle.

In his homeland, Vahed was the head of his family. His wife Sahar concurred with him in all aspects of their life. Vahed made all the decisions and provided for the family. Sahar's role as housewife and mother, maintained everything at home for him.

Vahed's main problem was with the role of women in a new society, radically different from where he grew up. In his view the man controls all aspects of family life such as finance, dress code, social activities, travelling, his children's' education and the arrangement of their marriages. His first experiences on arrival in this country were painful. The immigration authority insisted from the beginning, that the whole family be present. 'Where is your wife? She must come

with you.' It was particularly unbearable when the officer questioned Sahar also on the validity of their claim. Vahed was accustomed to take total responsibility, and to speak for his family. It was impossible for him to maintain the pattern he was used to, in which his wife stayed at home and he went out to work. Vahed realised that he was losing his role as head of his family.

These significant changes began when their nine-year-old daughter Samyra started school. Vahed took her to school and brought her back; he couldn't help noticing he was the only man amongst all the mothers fetching their children. It was difficult for him to let Sahar do this by herself and it was not easy for Sahar to take a responsibility outside home. Samyra enjoyed school; she was eager to learn English and received much support from her teachers. Her progress was fast, she also brought to the surface the deep cultural conflict embedded within her family and the whole family were challenged by cultural differences. The language was a big problem for Vahed, and he was unwilling to learn English. In Iran he had fought to be allowed to speak Kurdish, and he wasn't about to stop now. Sahar on the other hand needed to learn English, to help her daughter and the family to settle. In their first year in London she became pregnant and gave birth to their second daughter. This did not stop her and she took the baby to her language classes.

Vahed gradually lost his sense of power and authority and became unable to face the difficulties of everyday management. Dealing with cultural differences, in particular the role of women within private and public life, was extremely problematic. Additionally, in the new environment Vahed found himself in conflict with his political party. He felt increasingly isolated, depressed and vulnerable. He developed some physical ailments as well. Vahed used to lock himself in the room, crying and refusing to eat. He could not trust his wife to have an innocent conversation with a strange man. One day he overheard their daughter Samyra complaining to her mum about his controlling behaviour concerning her boyfriend; she said her father's attitude was sexist.

Vahed's meaning of life

For Vahed, his children's future was crucial and meant everything to him. He said 'if I did not have such a meaning to my life I would have been psychologically dead.' His daughter's achievements at school brought hope to the family. Vahed raised himself up again with the help of his wife and was able to transform and affirm himself. For him, discovering and accepting his new role within his family, and perceiving his wife as his equal, was his greatest achievement.

Ongoing challenges and overcoming the barriers

To keep a stable yet flexible role within the family was not easy for either parent. Initially there were many arguments: Sahar tried to accommodate and to tolerate Vahed's attitudes, and to keep the family together. She could see he was not 'the same person'. 'Depression lies in wait for all refugees as they face the need to mourn what it is they have lost' (Papadopoulos, 2002: 77). Vahed's greatest loss was his patriarchal identity.

A few years later, Sahar – who now spoke English - was in work, but Vahed had no job. In their role reversal, Sahar found a cleaning job to support her studies and her family, and now manages a children's nursery and is a qualified social worker. She began to develop her own potential to study, to work and to support her family. The girls' competence and confidence is due partly to their mother's radical initiative as role model. The eldest daughter Samyra went to university and was awarded a Masters' degree, and now has a position in a major company. Her bridging role was significant in acclimatising the family to new ways of life and meaning.

Vahed managed eventually, to overcome his psychological barriers. He developed a relatively equal relationship with his wife, studied carpentry, and is now in work.

An existential phenomenological theme

Vahed's anxiety and depression was an existential response to his difficult situation.

The new environment challenged his cultural values. The turning point came when he began to understand and accept that women and men could be equal. This new meaning opened a gate enabling a different interaction with others within the family and outside. He said 'my wife and my daughters particularly helped me to reach this point; my wife kept our family together.' He continued, 'this was the hardest challenge in my life, to accept and respect a woman's equal position within family and society. It was for me an internal revolution to see a woman as powerful as a man. I observed this within my own family and within the new society.'

The family is existentially, a centre of gravity, a training-ground towards our place in society. Family ties can do much to alleviate a refugee's depression and anxiety. Furthermore, engaging with social networks beyond a refugee's cultural circle can help her/him to realise certain shared values. Connecting with others creates a safe and secure environment for a refugee to overcome isolation and develop her/his sense of being.

Refugees are a particularly vulnerable population, at risk of psychological problems for many reasons. Escaping from their countries of origin is traumatic. They face cultural conflict and adjustment problems in the country of resettlement, as well as multiple losses (Lipson, 1993). Uprooting is a severe culture shock, Eisenbruch called it 'cultural bereavement' (Eisenbruch, 1991); the new situation generates much stress on this unfamiliar ground.

Vahed's fixed ideas about the woman's role, within his family and in society became the main barrier against creating a new home. His identity, power and self-worth as the head of his family were at risk. He was challenged to make a connection with a difficult and alien situation, and to make it work for his loved

ones. Coming up against it, he couldn't see where to go, and suffered severely from depression.

The new situation moved Vahed into his essence, his core belief, and a transformation happened. He experienced in his person the historical conflict of the male-female relationship: the discovery that the woman is not a sexual object. The strength of meaning in his love for his family resurrected him from psychological death*.*

A refugee's resettlement is like a new birth – the ashes from which the phoenix rises. Existentially, Vahed's love for his family gave meaning to his life, helped him to carry on, to adjust, and to receive his wife's support. According to the family systems model, Vahed's problem was not an insoluble, individualistic phenomenon. In Bradshaw's view: 'the identified patient then becomes the symptom of the family system's dysfunctionality' (Bradshaw, J. 1996: 27).

To summarise: my study highlighted changes in the traditional paternal role within the family system during the adaptation process. It enabled me to work with Vahed and to help his natural devotion to his family to re-orientate itself. Vahed overcame the psychological and historical barrier of the male's hierarchical position in the family.

Karimi's experience in therapy

Focusing on the Future rather than on the Past

I asked Karimi to tell me about his experience in therapy at the Medical Foundation. How many sessions did he have?

'Yes,' he said thoughtfully, 'I found the therapy very helpful. I myself wanted to do it, and I had six or seven sessions. I had an interpreter. I will never forget what the therapist told me. She said, "Although you were tortured, beaten and imprisoned, you are now in a different world. If you want to have a better world, you must focus on your future. The past is in the past. You can use your past as your experience, but the future is in your hands." This really helped me! I wanted

it. I know many people went into therapy not because they wanted it, but to use it for getting housing, and for benefit purposes.'

I then asked him at which point he felt he had made some real progress.

Karimi said, 'When my wife got her driving license, this was huge. She could take the kids to school and do other things, and I could concentrate on my job. There are many people who don't like their wife to drive and get a license. They carry on the old culture. This is very bad. In the therapy I had room to talk about my past, but I wasn't happy with that. When she told me to focus on the future, I felt I was really moving.'

He concluded, 'Everyone can work, in any circumstances – they can do something for themselves. After being able to escape from Iran and to bring my family here, six children – how could I then say to myself, " I can't find work, I can't learn the language"?'

Significant factors in therapeutic work with political refugees

At the start of my research, it was not my aim to develop a general theory. Dealing with a limited number of participants does not allow such a general theory to be constructed. However, according to the outcome I consider the following as important factors in working with political refugees as framed in the four dimensions: personal/psychological, social, physical and spiritual. It should be noted that these factors are speculative and arise from an interpretation of interviews with a limited number of participants.

Table 5. 13 Significant factors in therapeutic work with political refugees	
Personal/psychological dimension	
1.	Value system and political identity is the essence of their existence

2.	Trauma is mainly related to their ideological crisis
3.	Re-establish trust, otherwise their experience may be based on fear
4.	They see things mainly in black or white, right or wrong, and use forceful language to express themselves
5.	Recognition and respect are crucial for their sense of identity
6.	Recognise and remind them of their internal resources and achievement
7.	Subjective experience of language
8.	Using their value system and their desire to work for others as therapeutic resources
9.	Subjective meaning of trauma
10.	Wanting to do the best for others; alternative might be survivor guilt, despair and depression
11.	Responsibility, motivation and action are their familiar ground
12.	High expectation: they have ideals and tend to set the bar high. They are self-critical.
Social dimension	
1.	Their loss is related to their political task, rather than to material possessions
2.	Establishing a social network, community oriented
3.	Their attitude against dictatorship in their homeland may get projected onto authoritative figures in the new country
4.	Working on gender equality is the yardstick in their adaptation process.
5.	They are not 'only' victims or problems
6.	Political refugees are fully capable of dealing with their basic needs and confronting conflict situations.
7.	Adapting their political identity to the new country
8.	Their views might be extreme, having resisted an extremist regime

9.	How to deal with the differences, cultural, environmental and behavioural
10.	Confidentiality and the habit of secrecy and paranoia from having lived under dictatorship
Spiritual dimension	
1.	Acknowledging their value system, purpose and meaning.
2.	Having a strong sense of self connection and care for humanity and environment
Physical Dimension	
1.	The need to be active: not stay at home
2.	Generally, they are practical and creative.

Suggested Therapeutic Process

Characteristics of this therapeutic process are: relational, phenomenological, collaborative, developmental and educational.

The starting point naturally is based on human interaction, rather than on a professional atmosphere. Developing trust is fundamental through recognising their value system with care and respect. Exploring problems, engaging with and learning from them, the therapist should remind them of recognise their internal strength and allow the work to be focused on those. In the process, a common language may develop. We should continue to expand their familiar ground of responsibility and commitment. Their desire to help others may be utilized to strengthen their own self-connection.

As we work on the developmental process of authentic self, we can confirm and support the effort they are making towards the changes they are expecting.

Contrary to the 'Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders' (DSM), which pathologises, diagnoses and prescribes, this therapeutic process is neither directive nor medical-oriented. Developing a general therapeutic model working with political refugees, goes beyond the scope of my study. This work requires training and considerable professional competence.

It is important to mention that there are many organisations and individual therapists offer therapeutic service to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. They do not necessarily follow DSM criteria. Some of them, such as the British Refugee Council, Freedom from Torture (Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture) and Baobab Centre for Young Survivors in Exile, have developed their approach to meet the needs of their clients.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM,) published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA,) is considered the most important reference document for assessing and categorising mental disorders. The DSM provides a common language among clinicians, researchers, the pharmaceutical industry, health insurance companies and policy makers (Greenberg, 2013; Dailey at el., 2014). However, there are on-going debates and criticisms among mental health professionals about the DSM's validity, reliability and utility (Frances, 2013; Greenberg, 2013).

The British Psychological Society (BPS,) a highly respected organization representing over 50,000 members, made many criticisms of the new manual, the DSM-5. The BSP (2011) highlighted biased criteria and a failure to acknowledge the importance of social factors as precursors to mental health problems.

Since the DSM was first published, in 1952, some feminist psychologists have contributed to critical analysis of the manual on the basis of philosophical and socio-political dimensions. They have emphasised that psychological disorders are linked to the broad socio-political, economic and cultural context (Enns and Williams, 2012).

The DSM displays both scientific and clinical limitations. It potentially medicalises patterns of behaviour and mood and unnecessarily stigmatises individuals. Clinicians should consider their clients' internal resources and resilience rather than only their perceived deficits. In addition, socio-cultural, environmental, spiritual and political dimensions should be taken into account in perceiving human suffering.

Figure 01: An Existential Framework and a Medical Model (DSM-5)

Existential Framework   **DSM-5**

Relational, Phenomenological,

Developmental, Collaborative and

Educational

Towards an authentic self

Directive and medical oriented
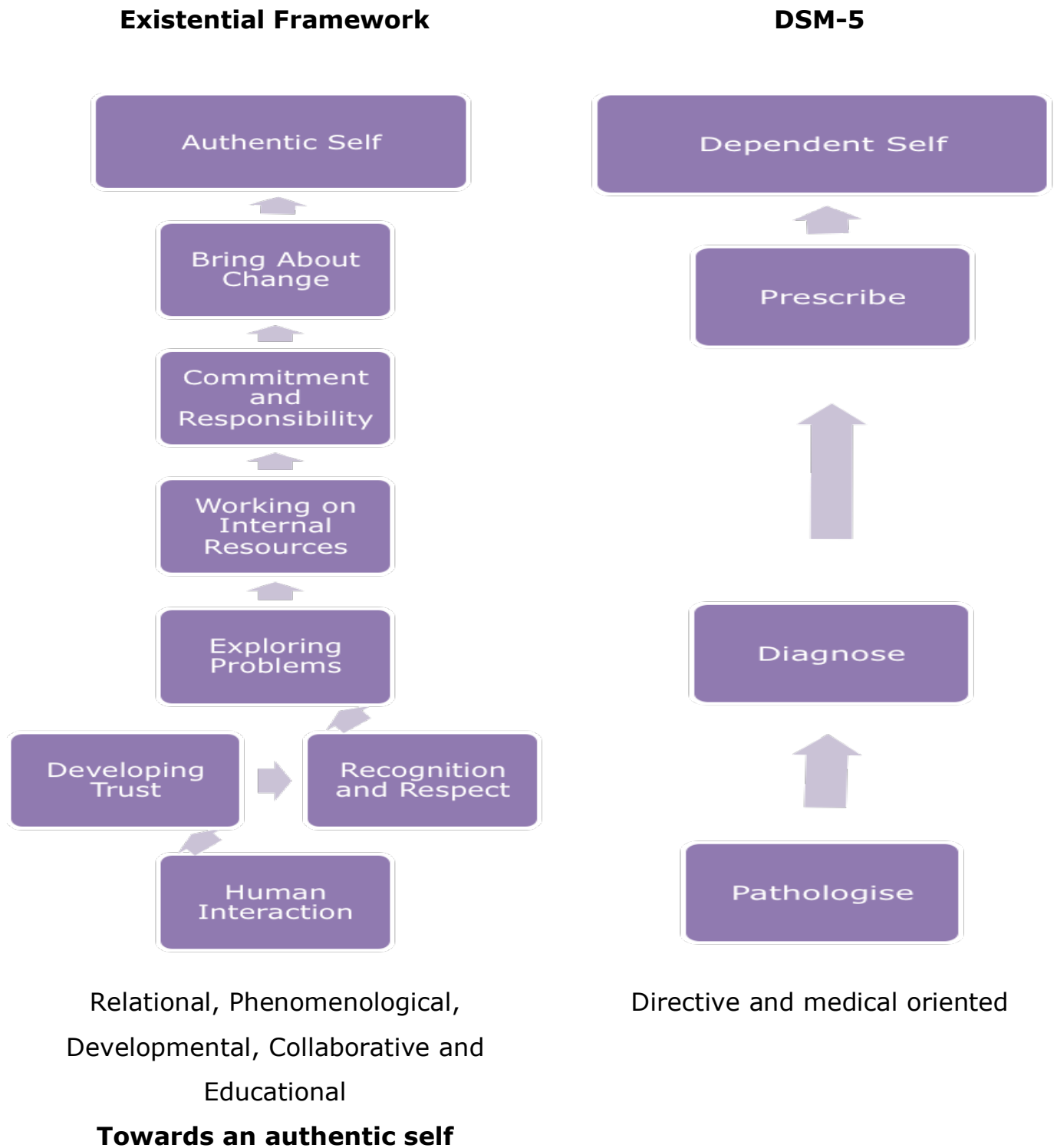
Towards an authentic self

Many writers, from ancient Greece to the Enlightenment, from Existentialism to contemporary social theory, have studied the concept of authenticity. Existentialist psychotherapists have also carried out exhaustive studies in this area. In the past three decades, authors like Taylor (2007), Ferrara (1998), Guignon (2008) and Varga (2013) have attempted to reconstruct authenticity. However, the concept specifically as a moral idea is relatively new, understood as being true to oneself for one's own benefit.

Is authenticity possible?

In this section I attempt to outline the meaning of authenticity in this study. I will briefly refer to the philosophical foundation as well as the existentialist psychotherapist's perspective.

A number of significant cultural changes in the 17th and 18th centuries led to the emergence of a new ideal in the Western world (Trilling 1972). During this period, human beings came to be thought of more as individuals than as socially oriented. At the same time, there was an increasing awareness of what Charles Taylor (1989) calls "inwardness" or "internal space". The result is a distinction between one's private and unique individuality, and one's public self (Taylor 1991).

The important issue is that the ideas of authenticity and autonomy are interrelated in many ways. The concept of autonomy emphasises the individual's self-governing abilities. It is connected to the view that moral principles and the legitimacy of political authority should be grounded in the self-governing individual, free from diverse cultural and social pressures.

Another decisive factor was that the simultaneous emergence of a distinctively modern concept of the self. This can be seen in the work of Rousseau, who

argues that the orientation toward life, which should guide the conduct one chooses, should come from an internal source.

The word 'authenticity' has become closely associated with Heidegger and Kierkegaard and was adopted by Sartre and De Beauvoir and by existentialist therapists and social theorists who followed them.

Kierkegaard's work on authenticity highlights the notion that each of us is to become what one is (Kierkegaard, 2013 [1846]). He provides a criticism of modern society as causing "inauthenticity" leading to what he calls widespread "despair," which manifests itself as spiritless-ness, denial, and defiance. In Kierkegaard's view, "becoming what one is" and evading despair and hollowness is not a matter of solitary introspection, but rather a matter of passionate commitment to a relation to something outside oneself, which gives life meaning. For Kierkegaard, this ultimate commitment was his defining relation to God.

Some existentialists say that the key to becoming authentic is to face our own death and our own limitation. In the dynamic process of opening ourselves to this reality and accepting it, we find ourselves most truly (van Deurzen, 2009; Cohn, 1997). This idea is based on the view of Heidegger.

Heidegger considered the nature of authenticity in his exploration of existence, in which he refers to human existence as 'Dasein'. The defining characteristics of Dasein's potentiality-for-being are displayed in the transformative events that lead to the possibility of being authentic. It becomes possible to see the whole of Dasein, including both its being as a "They-self" and as authentic being-one's-self (Heidegger, 1962 [1927]).

So the key to understanding authenticity lies in the characterisation of Dasein's being as a relation between two aspects or dimensions making up human existence. On the one hand, we find ourselves thrown into a world and a situation not of our own making. At the same time, however, to be human is to

move toward achieving ends understood as integral to one's overarching life-project (ibid).

Heidegger sees authenticity as being true not to oneself, but to existence. In other words, authenticity is being open to or facing the givens of existence, including our thrown-ness and inevitable death. For Heidegger, the only way to reclaim authenticity is to become transparent to our being-towards-death and to fully accept death as inevitable. He regards authenticity and inauthenticity as two different modes of being.

Sartre's view is that all values are generated by human interactions in situations, so that value is a human construct with no external forces (existence precedes essence). Inauthenticity is often associated with Sartre's (1984) 'acting in bad faith'. Sartre's account of "bad faith" is a kind of self-deception and involves believing oneself to be something while being something else. For Sartre, the project of being in good faith seems impossible, as we are always necessarily in bad faith. The inescapable nature of bad faith seems to leave no possibility of authenticity. However, Cox's summary of Sartre's view states that authentic existence is a project that has to be continually reassumed. A person is only as authentic as his present act. Authentic existence (the sustained project) is an unattainable existentialist ideal. Nevertheless, it is an ideal worth aiming at (Cox, 2007).

De Beauvoir takes up Sartre's characterisation of the human condition and expands on ideas only hinted at in Sartre's famous lecture, "Existentialism is a Humanism" (1946), in developing a conception of authenticity. According to De Beauvoir, Sartre's conception of the human being as "engaged freedom" implies not just that each individual finds his or her "reason for being" in concrete realisations of freedom, but that willing one's own freedom necessarily involves willing the freedom of all humans.

De Beauvoir also builds on Sartre's notion of engagement to extend the idea of authenticity. Following Sartre, the authentic individual will be the one who takes

up the terrifying freedom of being the ultimate source of values, embraces it, and acts with a clarity and resolve consistent with his or her best understanding of what is right in this context. In this way, the concept of authenticity is a continuation of the ideal of being true to ourselves: we are called upon to become, in our concrete lives, what we already are in the ontological structure of our being.

In my opinion there is no 'fixed' or 'authentic' self. The self is always becoming and should be understood as a process rather than a concrete thing.

Following Heidegger, existentialists therapists such as Cohn emphasise that there can be no authentic or inauthentic self, but only an authentic way of being in the world (Cohn 1997, p.125). For van Deurzen, recognising our own limitation in facing death is crucial to becoming authentic self and it is impossible to achieve authenticity as an entirety (van Deurzen, 2009). We need also consider how the level of authenticity can vary in different areas of our life.

Most existential phenomenological therapists assist their clients to be aware of their own meaning in life, to act accordingly and take responsibility for their actions. They thus achieve greater authenticity. It is a dynamic, developmental and ongoing process.

My nine participants, who were seeking freedom to make choices in the direction of their beliefs, were aware of the risk and took the responsibility to act. In Heidegger's terms, they projected their life into the future. For my participants, moving towards a high level of authenticity means following their political goals and value system. Their aspiration to individual oneness is related to their responsibility to others. Their initial task was not to focus on their own wellbeing. Their aim was to follow their value system and the meaning of their existence. This project enabled them to follow the path towards their greater authentic self. However, authenticity is not an absolute position or concrete state. In other words, to consider authenticity as a fixed phenomenon leads to inauthenticity. In this respect, authenticity and inauthenticity are part of their everyday lives.

The developmental process of authenticity involves all dimensions of existence: physical, social, psychological and spiritual.

Figure 2: Authentic self

A description of the above figure

Some Scholars formulated the human condition through the interplay of knowledge, feeling and action (Tymieniecka, 2000; Taneja, 2005; Herrmann, 1995; Corey, 2016; Kaslow & Massey, 2004). My own emphasis on responsibility encompasses these factors in the evolution of the authentic self. In my understanding, one of the pillars of Abrahamian religions is their concept of "Heaven" and "Hell", through which human responsibility inescapably manifests. Responsibility is central to the thought of philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Nietsche, Derrida, Levinas, Heidegger and Sartre (Raffoul, 2010). In Hannah Arendt's view, responsibility is defined in terms of political presence

rather than in legal or moral contexts (Arendt, 2009). I think the nature of responsibility is relational and ideological, linking self to others to become a united self (see figure 3).

Figure 3: United Self in Relation
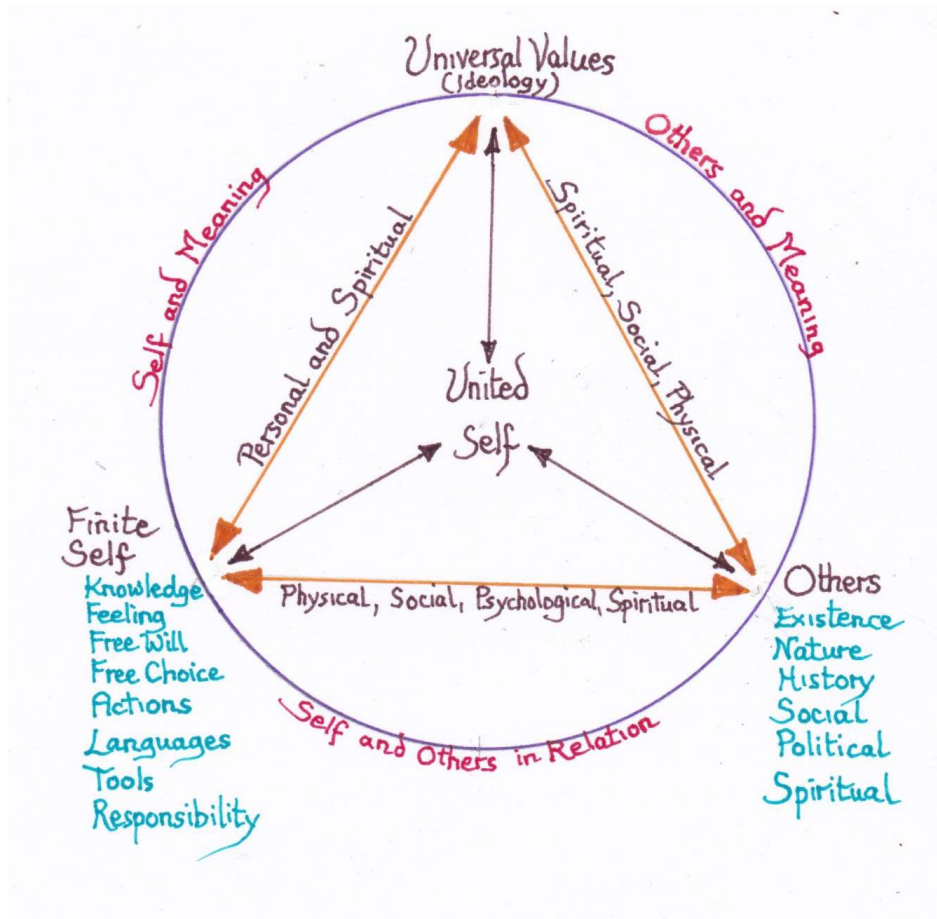
How does this study apply to the therapy world generally?

I am not in a position to supply an accurate general application of my study or establish a theory. However, my findings are based on the human capability to confront extreme situations. My nine participants' internal resources enabled them to survive potentially paralysing experiences.

They faced loss and trauma. Their sense of meaning and purpose – their service for others - enabled them to survive. They wanted to bring a change, to free

themselves and others. They came through the 'refiner's fire', and they rose from the ashes. Their story manifests the human capacity to face difficulties of any kind. They continue to survive and to manifest that resilience. They didn't give up. Identifying their purpose in life, and working on their internal problems or character, is common amongst them. If we want to make a positive change we must concentrate on what we have within ourselves, which is real. We are also aware that the dynamic process of change is relational – external, involving others - as well as internal.

My participants manifest the way we can set our life on a better course: their presence in the therapy situation amplifies this idea. Their story of the human struggle calls to all; if you want to, you can make the change.

In other words, for my participants the therapeutic situation is not confined to their own lives. Their desire is to improve the human condition. They demonstrate: if you set your bar, your meaning of life, high, your own personality will identify with and become that liberation. Mainstream psychotherapy tends to focus on the individual, but humans are social beings. The political refugee works towards a human connectivity or field, where the individual may exist and grow.

To desire the common good brings a shift within persons who feel threatened by others. The invitation to those others removes the sense of threat. Therapy should concern relationship, qualitatively. The shift is from an exclusive biological family to the world of one's chosen ideological or universal family, which includes the former.

I found with my participants, that those who kept their positive values intact, are integrators. Their desire as political refugees, is to bring society together. Sara baked loaves of bread for her new neighbours. Gila wishes to adopt Syrian children. Watan sheltered an African whom he did not know, and sent money to a stranger in Iran who was ill. This is their deep mission and message.

This direction in my study, moving from the individual to the wider community, is future focused.

What is the problem? That quality of human capability requires recognition, care and practice. Focussing on the individual cannot satisfy or reach the heart of a political refugee. That quality grows beyond the individual to the wider good. All my participants expressed in their different ways that 'my problem does not belong to myself, but to human society.'

My participants agree that clients who are political refugees were probably trained to have a clear aim. They are unlikely to feel confused or existentially divided. The ideal they dedicate their lives to, means more to them than any past parental dynamic or upbringing. Some of them are astonished when asked to consider themselves personally.

What is their therapeutic need? Ideological trauma may remain for some the main major issue, and handicap their progress. Additionally, family conflicts coming to the surface in the upheaval of resettlement in a new culture, need urgent attention. These are local features in the bigger picture which a political refugee carries.

To focus too much on self becomes stressful (Wells and Clark, 1997). Relating with others, the existential themes brought into therapy enrich the whole field. When Heidegger says we are in relation with others, it means we bring it into practice. Nietsche's 'be your own God' means to take responsibility at that level. We may say this is common ground for human beings who are political activists and refugees.

When our inner strength is recognised in this way, we join humanity, we join the world. The movement from person-centre to social-centre is towards connectivity, collectively. Human capability is restricted and even suppressed if we concentrate too much on personal self.

As long as 'my position', theory or role weighs heavier than my client's wellbeing, the therapy will not progress. To make a change we must move beyond promoting our status. My personal self-regard contradicts my availability to my client. Conversely, as I attune to my client's wellbeing, the dynamic changes. My nine participants opened these windows:

1   Meaning and purpose

2   If we want to, we can

3   Future focus

4   Social focus

Authentic selfhood cannot exist in isolation – only in social relationships, in the interactive triad, in the adventure of relationships.

The gift for others gives political refugees their energy. They need to work actively for the common good. They may be traumatised not from torture or loss or unforgettable memories, but from ideological crisis, lack of access to those in need, and from threat of isolation. They need to be useful for others.

Their presence in therapy benefits other clients. The ideas they manifest are therapeutic. In judo when people look after each other, they can learn. If one person's strength is used excessively, another gets hurt. In any group when we take responsibility for the group, we develop that combined attention. My participants incline towards collective healing. The outcome and findings of my research, might in some way undermine individual therapy, by opening the venue to a therapy which is more community oriented. In those who suffer from social phobia, the focus is on self.

I find it creative therapeutically, to see people within the family system, rather than by themselves. I believe or better to say I hope my project will make a wave or resonance through all therapy, without being limited to the problems faced by political refugees. They seem to offer their experience so a wider viewpoint may evolve. Their problems might be resolved by reminding them of

what they have already achieved: the assets they hold; and the meaningful sacrifices they made. It is essential to give voice to this reality. They might have lost it for a while when they were uprooted from their familiar environment. Therapeutic care should support their ability to rediscover it, find their existential centre of gravity, and continue to work for freedom.

Dictatorships try to isolate people from each other; the human design however, is social, interwoven and interconnected. This reality helps the individual to survive torture and upheaval.

Chapter Six

A reflection upon my assumptions and personal reflexivity

Has this investigation been conducted with sensitivity, rigour and coherence? Did I focus on the four primary domains: the participants' life in Iran, their escape, their resettlement and their future? What are the therapeutic implications of my study?

IPA aims to gain a better understanding of the phenomena (lived experiences) as they present themselves. This method argues that all description constitutes a form of interpretation. As Van Manen (1990: 180, cited in Giorgi and Giorgi, 2008: 168) put it: '… even the "facts" of lived experience need to be captured in language (the human science text) and this is inevitably an interpretative process.' In general, the relationship between the researcher and the data generates the insights. Smith wrote: the researcher is engaged in a 'double hermeneutic' as (s)he 'is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them (Smith et al. 2009: 3). In Willig's view, knowledge is only possible through the application of initial categories of meaning, which the researcher then modifies through interacting with the data; this does not mean that the researcher is biased (Willig, 2011). However, our initial categories of meaning shouldn't shape the meaning that is arising from the data.

I cannot avoid interpretation at any stage, but I can maintain a commitment to grounding my interpretation in my participants' viewpoint. To engage with my participants' experience, I need to be able to identify and reflect on my own experiences and assumptions (Harper & Thompson, 2001). This awareness has enabled me to gain a richer body of data.

The research I conducted was close to my heart. From the outset, I needed to recognise the potential influence of my strong motivation and passion for the

topic, on the research process and on the participants. I asked myself initially how to bracket my own experience and assumptions. The viewpoints of both researcher and participants have to be identified and elucidated because of issues of bias. For instance, I was aware of my tendency to focus on the more positive aspects of my participants' narratives. My way to guard against this bias was to monitor my work through my reflective journal and to have my supervisor check my interpretations and analysis as I went along. My journal is organised in book form for each year of my research. I also arranged for my supervisor to interview me at the beginning and at the end of my data analysis. However, working with Sina in the Pilot Study cleared all my doubts regarding my potential bias. His experience was quite different from my own, as were those of the other eight participants.

To clarify my view I formulated my assumptions in relation to the four dimensions. I find that in the personal and psychological context as a whole, political refugees tend to have strong, highly motivated personalities: they take risks to benefit others. In the spiritual context, they are likely to feel linked to meanings beyond the material world; helping others comes before their own personal safety. Political refugees are obliged to change their social habitat. Existentially, they face death and have to avoid arrest. Furthermore, after escaping from their home country, the environmental change to their physical world may alter their outlook. They might need to regenerate new meanings to their life in the UK. Some who recreate that meaning could survive the change, but there were many who could not. I remained open to this alternative.

It is my reflection on my interactions with participants that links their stories. Some of the research material was in the form of discussions arising spontaneously; I acknowledged my participants' creative role in the project. Developing trust was crucial to gaining rich data. A prime factor in establishing this trust was to invite its potential, by meeting my participants informally, prior to the interview. Highlighting the significance of trust at this level and paying specific attention to its development has not been sufficiently considered in IPA

literatures. I raised this matter at the IPA International Conference, discussing it with Jonathan Smith, who agreed. The significance of trust as a step in the IPA method prior to interviewing should be recognised. I consider this to be my contribution to the field of research.

As a political refugee, a human rights and women's rights advocate and a freedom fighter, I have developed a positive attitude, which enables me, in general, to recognise and focus on the positive aspects of people's personalities: this shapes every aspect of my personal and professional life and my relationships. Positive attitude, for me, means standing up for justice and freedom against dictators and fundamentalists, and a negative approach means simply giving up when events seem threatening. The pilot study revealed my tendency to focus on positive aspects of participants' narratives. I realise that I brought my political view and mission into academic research. I discovered that I did not like political refugees to be seen only as victims. I thought such an attitude could affirm the regime from which they had fled. I wanted to highlight the resilience and achievements of my participants. To offset my bias my research was self-monitored by means of my reflective journal and regular supervisory checks of my interpretations and analysis as I proceeded.

As well as recording our conversations, I noted my responses. The participant-researcher interaction is a guiding strength in IPA data analysis.

Reviewing my life story helped me to develop self-awareness and reflexivity, and to be truly attentive to what my participants had to say. My openness and degree of engagement with their stories revealed to me details of my own which I had forgotten. During the research, my self-awareness improved. The additional interviews with an IPA researcher provided rich data about my role and engagement in the process.

However, there were elements of doubt. Was it possible for me to bracket more than three decades of work with political refugees, my own experiences and my passion for the project? At a certain moment in each of the interviews I felt I

entered their world, which was an amazing experience. It helped me not only to differentiate myself from their world, but also to gain a better understanding of my own. It was inspiring and educational to meet nine deeply motivated refugees and to learn of their desire to work, to belong and to live.

In chapter three I referred to the impact of my phenomenological research on my internal mind-set. As a human rights activist, I fought in the battlefield for freedom and justice. Under those circumstances it was difficult to make an allowance for grey areas. The focus needed to be entirely on the defeat of the perceived enemy. Particularly when I was working on my pilot study, a phenomenological approach to my participants' stories helped me to recognise that there is no objective truth and that a phenomenon can be perceived in almost unlimited ways. This openness allowed me to consider 'grey' as a possible alternative to my seeing things in black and white. In other words, IPA enabled me to move away from a battlefield mentality to an approach more appropriate to everyday life. As an example, my relationship with my wife has changed, because I have realised how essential it is to respect and recognise alternative viewpoints. That realisation brought openness, coherence and flexibility to the relationship. This indicates a developmental process, which is essentially on-going. In my view, openness is not simply a 'given' but requires commitment in its pursuit. Otherwise, as I have experienced myself, previous patterns of thought can easily re-establish themselves.

Summary of the second interview conducted by an IPA researcher

For the purpose of reflexivity, I arranged two interviews with an IPA researcher, at the start of the project, following the data analysis. The first interview was very helpful for me during the pilot study. After completing my data analysis, we held the second interview.

I gave the researcher, Dr Rosemary Lodge, a brief résumé of my research. She went through every step of the research, asked several questions and made comments. The key points which emerged, are as follows:

1. She observed, 'you are investigating the refugees from inside. Your research brings you into relationships with them. These relationships continue to influence the way you view this topic, so when you go back to the literature you now see it in the light of their individual experiences.'

2. Our conversation became exploratory. 'It's you meeting the participants, learning from them and understanding their experience. It impacts powerfully in return, with a force and a truth of its own, quite independent of analysis.' In fact the research dialogue is highly creative, opening up a dynamic between researcher and participants where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. My participants perceived their situation in a fresh way, and so did I. When two persons focus on a topic together, their intellectual, emotional or spiritual convergence can sometimes guide the process in unexpected ways.

3. We discussed trauma, which has its negative connotation, but which can also be seen through an alternative lens. In medical terms, trauma is generally considered as lodged in the past. In my understanding, however, using an existential perspective, the impact of trauma can change in a positive way and become future-focused. Some medical practitioners may find it difficult to see what could move a person forward, when he or she seems to be held back. Rosemary and I agreed that trauma may be a driving force, prompting people to work for others.

I found Rosemary's deep engagement with my project inspirational and affirming.

A Reflection on my methodology and its impact on my life

Attending the IPA International conference gave me an important opportunity to meet IPA researchers from all over the world, including Jonathan Smith and his colleagues, to hear 20 presentations and to deliver my own. The outcome enhanced my knowledge of IPA and confirmed it as the right method to conduct my research. The following is a reflection on my engagement within the conference.

Over the past four years of intensive work using this methodology, my insight through IPA confirms that the whole process starts from the participant.

What does this mean?

As a researcher, I am aware that in order to be open and to receive fresh and meaningful data, I should not impose my technique, ideas or theories on my participants. This requires an understanding of my participants' situations, and for me to create a safe enclosed environment for them to explore their experiences. It requires a way of communicating that is not only cognitive, but that also works through the feelings, developing a high level of empathy.

Following the steps introduced by the IPA method, as I read and re-read the transcripts, I meet my participants again and again afresh, through their narratives. Our interaction was not only cognitive, but also reflective. This helped to deepen my understanding, and so did the act of writing my descriptive notes and re-reading what my participants had told me. The themes evolve and flourish in this natural way, without being imposed. In this process, I feel I have known each participant for a long time, engaging with their struggle, their pain, their fear and their achievements. They live within me.

Research Agendas and Feedbacks

Keeping professional boundaries is crucial to establish a working environment of safety and trust. It is vital for political refugees to feel that they are 'recognised'.

Another area of concern for me was the fact that some research projects are funded and must therefore satisfy their funding organisation. Sometimes they are obliged to use many more participants – as many as 35 - whereas IPA normally uses small samples of fewer than 10 for an in-depth investigation. The funding organisation may have its own agenda, which may interfere with the impartiality of the study and its findings.

One of the presenters at the IPA conference spoke about bracketing. I commented that, for me, bracketing doesn't mean trying to remove the sense of one's own ideas and attitudes. These are part of the researcher and being aware of them enables him or her to be more open and perceptive. Similarly, the denial of one's own agency makes it difficult to perceive the bigger picture. In my understanding of Husserl's phenomenological philosophy, the very awareness of my own limited meanings enables me to bracket and thus move beyond them. In other words, as I perceive my conditioned viewpoint, I am able to transcend it.

I was asked to describe to the conference my way of developing a trusting relationship with my participants, prior to the formal interview, taking account of their culture and their response to the environment that I had provided. Trust is a form of empowerment. My participants regard me as a professional person, and I recognise and respect the value of their experiences. They can therefore relax and be open. It is all-important to allow them to speak and to find themselves, without interruption, and to provide any reasonable information they need to ask about me, the interviewer, for the sake of transparency.

Many research studies seem to give little thought to cultivating the psychological dynamic between researcher and participant or their initial meeting and assessment of each other.

If the formal interview is also the first meeting, insufficient time is given for participants to assess the interviewer, and perhaps to discard their defensive plan. There is a great difference between talking with an unfamiliar person and with someone who has become familiar, even over a short period. In the initial meeting, a working intuitive environment is created. As Gila said, 'In our first meeting, I did not want to tell you everything, but now I trust you.'

We must not forget that some researchers find it difficult to develop this kind of relationship. Nevertheless, we cannot go far wrong if, making each participant our starting point, we consider carefully what may be most beneficial for them. Even a short, simple connection to each other before the main work begins can break the ice.

Karimi

I invited Karimi to the slide presentation of my research. For the first time, one of my participants was able to see the result of the contribution he had made.

I adjusted my introduction to reference the work I have done with political refugees since 1981 and also to provide background to my work as a therapist in the British Refugee Council. Finally, I touched on the main purpose of my research and included an overall summary of my study.

Karimi listened carefully, as I moved through the philosophical background, existential viewpoint, research process and literature review. I did not describe the technical aspects in detail, but it all came to life for him. I emphasised the issue of trust. He replied, 'That is very true. The problem of whom to trust is all-important.'

I took him through the process of super-ordinate theme development, the sub-themes and their various stages. For instance, I showed him how the 'threat to their existence' was not only physical but also ideological, psychological, political and spiritual. This had a strong impact on Karimi, who recognised that his own life-experience was being mirrored back to him.

When I moved onto the significance of the findings, he confirmed these when discussing his own resistance to the extreme pressure employed by the interrogators. Although he was tortured, his values and the knowledge that people regarded him as a hero helped him to endure it. 'Many people other than myself have undergone torture. Thousands were executed; they were martyrs. Those people inspired me. Because of them, I was not truly alone in the prison, even in solitary confinement. I was not alone, because before me, people had resisted in this place, in the prison. It was normal and natural for political refugees to resist.'

When we discussed gender ideology, Karimi commented that this was a major obstacle in his path. 'This is so true for me.' He also said there were a lot of divorces amongst Iranian political refugees in the UK, due to the men's difficulty in accepting the new role of women. He referred to the positive experiences of many female refugees, arising out of the adaptation process, when cultural challenges were inevitable.

When I moved to my clinical work with political refugees, Karimi agreed with my recognising and respecting a client's ideology and political philosophy, rather than merely focussing on his or her personality, which may not mean much to political refugees. This is an important evaluation in existential therapy.

Sara

From the beginning of my conversation with Sara, I became aware of her wider concept regarding family. The literature generally emphasises the nuclear family unit. However, Sara said she felt closer to the members of her party than to her

biological family. My participants' ideology comes before blood relationships and extends the meaning of 'family'. When Sara's children were small and very dependent on her, she was still able to prioritise her activity in the battlefield.

I presented my study, and asked her view. She said: 'I feel you acknowledged my own identity. I have felt unrecognised in the UK. Most people consider political refugees to be the same as other immigrants and refugees.' She added emphatically: 'I have been working with Iranian refugees for many years, and the issue of gender equality is crucial.'

When I asked her if she would like to add anything, she mentioned the importance of work and of physical activity in the adaptation process.

Something else came up in our conversation: male refugees tend to connect more with other men, among themselves, and also with friends and relatives still in their homeland. This doesn't encourage them to engage with or integrate in the new country.

Regarding psychotherapy, Sara said, 'I had several therapists myself. They found it hard to understand my life or what I've been through.' She repeated several times: 'they had no idea of the politics or the ideology. They were very nice people, they listened to you, but they had no idea. I couldn't form any connection with them. It is very important to have a therapist you can speak your own native language with.'

Concerning the issue of trust, Sara said, 'What you did before the interview – setting up a few meetings – helped me to trust you. Without that I couldn't have told you much. I was very open with you - I told you everything.

Summary of my Research Journal 2014-2017

Chronological Outline

The first year covered by my Research Journal explores my journey into the unknown. It felt like starting a new life; the process impacted and began to shape my personal and professional life. I also gave considerable thought to the spiritual dimension in my background, which generated my deep commitment to the project. As I worked on my proposal, the relationship with my supervisors began to develop. I was full of ideas, and then encountered fresh realities as new ideas emerged. My strong commitment to the research helped me to overcome various barriers and doubts. With the help of my supervisors I grasped the concept of 'bracketing my bias'. This gave me many opportunities for practice, which the Journal records. Presenting my pap viva was the first main hurdle, through which I entered a professional and ethical level of engagement. Working on my ethics approval was another major step.

The second year's Journal covers my early plans for the research's dissemination and recruiting my first three participants. The main focus in this year was on transcribing the interviews, working on my pilot study and engaging my methodology. Working with my first participant opened up the whole perspective of my study, showed me the bigger picture and clarified the issue of bracketing. My main initial difficulty was recruitment, because of the issue of trust.

The third year built on this foundation. I completed my course-work and could give my full attention to the IPA research method: coding, initial noting, and analysing the emerging themes. After I submitted my pilot study, for which I received a distinction, my remaining participants came forward, and I was busy for the rest of the year with translating, transcribing and coding their experiences, as recorded in the Journal.

In the fourth year, the study consolidated. I began my dissertation, collated my data analysis and focused on my literature review. My work here (under thematic

headings in the data analysis) would provide a framework for the Findings chapter, in which the participants tell their own story. My investigation by now was embodied through their voices, collectively and individually.

The role of my Reflexivity Journal

Keeping a reflective on-going record of my research activities developed my sensitivity and rigour in focusing the main questions of my study, and helped me to conduct the whole process coherently. It enabled me ultimately to give voice to my participants' lived experiences, as a contribution to the field of psychotherapy. The Journal became my constant reflexive tool.

Bracketing

My primary task was to bracket any assumptions of my own that might obscure my research. I kept up a continuous reflexivity process – through my course-work, my habit of regular contemplation, interaction with my supervisors and my Journal. The Journal records this important process, which might otherwise have been forgotten about. As my project matured, I understood that to formulate and bracket my assumptions I must become aware of them. I could then detach them, facilitating the integrity and enquiry of my work. This became an exciting developmental process in self-discipline.

Commitment

Commitment plays a major role in my study: an increasing commitment to working phenomenologically contributed to my clinical practice and research study. The overall picture gradually came into view, and within it I worked on the fine detail. I applied Yardley's criteria and IPA methodology, made an extensive study of the ontology and epistemology of my research and bracketed my bias, allowing rich data to emerge. To summarise: my aim was to serve the

project, not myself. Its character combines psychology and politics with philosophy. All nine of my participants were in many ways thoughtful people.

Recognition

These major qualitative issues arose during my course-work in 2015 and evolved into the body of the research. My findings through my participants' lived experiences benefited my course work, which supplied a commentary. The theme of recognition was highlighted extensively in my Journal. Recognition includes self-recognition and recognition of my research's actual value, once preconceptions were set aside.

Male and female participants

I recruited five men and four women. All my participants shared a deep concern for gender equality. The Journal also highlights their different responses. I learned a great deal about the ways both women and men experienced the battlefield and its impact on their lives and families.

Recording, Translating, Transcribing:

This task, which became gradually easier, is recorded in the Journal.

Literature review

My extensive reading around the topic developed organically, when I started to interview my participants and wanted to find out more about the issues they spoke about. The Journal helped me to compare my participants' data with what other scholars had written.

Feedback and Findings

In May 2017, I attended the IPA International Conference, where I met Jonathan Smith. Reflecting on this in my Journal, which records the feedback I received, gave me a sense of confidence and clarity concerning my research's contribution to the field.

From 2014 onwards, I received and recorded regular feedback from colleagues, supervisors and lecturers. This had a constructive impact on my study.

Validity and Reliability

'The validity and trustworthiness of qualitative research is related to selecting viable sources that promote a deepening of the understanding of the experiences inquired about' (Polkinghorne 2005, p.141). My purpose was not to elicit a generalized conclusion about my participants, but to cultivate a rich and in-depth perspective through relating with them.

To assess the quality of my research, I followed Yardley's criteria, as Smith (2009) suggested, which presents basic principles as follows:

• **Sensitivity to Context** – demonstrating my awareness and care from the early stage of sampling, data collection and analysis; this requires skill, knowledge and dedication. As I mentioned before, it is essential to develop trust between researcher and participant prior to formal interviewing.

• **Commitment and Rigour** – I paid careful attention to detail during data collection and the picking up of clues. I verified my research by quoting the participants directly and balancing the depth of the material with the number of participants in my analysis extracts.

- **Transparency and Coherence** – This refers to the clarity with which the stages of the research process are described, and the coherence of the study.

- **Impact and Importance** – Working with political refugees has not been sufficiently discussed in clinical literature. I hope my work will contribute to clinical practice.

Limitations of my research and reflection on them

The major limitation of my study, as an example of qualitative research, is the problem of adequate validity or reliability because of the subjective nature of qualitative data and its origin in particular contexts. The study is a qualitative research project carried out using IPA and as such does not prove any hypotheses or provide us with any generalizable findings.

It is almost impossible to reach the lived experience of my participants as it was there and then. This is one of my project's general limitations. Refugees may not want to re-live certain experiences. They might recreate the narrative, having become more detached and objective, or provide their current interpretation of events.

There are hundreds of thousands of political refugees. My research focuses on a small number. The outcome might present an in-depth view but not a more general one.

The pilot study revealed my tendency to focus on the more positive aspects of my participants' narratives. My way to guard against this bias was to monitor my work through my reflective journal and to have my supervisor check my interpretations and analysis as I went along. Nevertheless, those who came forward to participate in my study tended to be high achievers, and to have a more positive outlook. I did not have access to those whose experiences might have been more negative.

My relationship with the topic, from the outset, was a personal and intense one, and this will inevitably have affected my findings. I was passionately motivated to conduct this research and from the beginning I had to recognise the potential influence this might have had on the entire research process. In preparing me to properly conduct the research, my examiners - at several stages, including my pap viva and the process of the ethics board and the review of the pilot study - drew my attention to the potential effect that my perceived bias might have. I received valuable support from my supervisors, tutors and fellow students. I myself made strenuous efforts to work independently from my bias.

In the following four ways I hoped to access my participants' lived experience more objectively. Firstly, I reviewed my own personal background, to identify my assumptions, and to bracket my bias. Secondly, I monitored my own history's potential impact on my participants' stories, throughout the research process. Thirdly, I met my research supervisor regularly, to monitor my bias. Finally, to examine the process, I arranged for an IPA researcher to interview me twice, at the outset of my project and after completing the data analysis. I also gained two of my participants' feedback on the findings. Nevertheless, it was hard to step back and take a broader view. I was willing to find, and use any evidence that might contradict my convictions. However, I feel I was unable to fully evade the consequences of my passionate outlook.

The other question was whether my own ideological and political values could potentially lead to bias and distortion. The interpretation of my participants' data was based on my knowledge and my experiences, which had impacted the findings. IPA has two primary aims: to look in detail at how someone makes sense of their life experience, and to provide a detailed interpretation of the account in order to understand the experience. As a qualitative research method, IPA is inevitably subjective, as no two analysts working with the same data are likely to come up with an exact replication of the other's analysis.

Being from the same country as the interviewees meant I had some empathy with participants' experiences. At the same time, having lived through similar conditions and limitations, I was biased to some extent regarding the kind of answers I expected to hear. This meant that the answers I received were influenced by my actions, as the interviewees would try to give the answers they felt the interviewer expected. I became aware of this in the pilot study with the first participant.

Another concern was language, as English is not my first language. Eight of the nine interviews were conducted in Farsi, which was then translated into English. However, there is a possibility of answers losing their significance and meaning through interpretation, as this could also be influenced by the thoughts and perceptions of the translator, i.e. the researcher. Some scholars like Carla Willig (2011) highlight the limitation of language in IPA. We interpret reality through language, but we cannot make a complete statement. My translation from Farsi to English sets up an additional interpretative process.

Researchers such as Husserl primarily seek to capture the participants' experiences of a phenomenon by bracketing their own foreknowledge. As IPA acknowledges a role for interpretation, the concept of bracketing is somewhat controversial and in any event gives way to a more interpretative process. The paradoxical requirement of IPA to bracket, as well as interpret, presents some further limitations.

IPA has been criticised as mostly descriptive and insufficiently interpretative (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; HefferonK & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011)

My study is grounded in my constructivist view of reality. As I bring my worldview and subjectivity into every aspect of the study, it is essential to acknowledge my bias and to ensure that my participants' views remain in the forefront of the investigation and are the ones that drive my findings.

The recruitment of participants, data collection, transcripts, translations, analysis and interpretation are all very time-consuming.

In light of these limitations, and taking into account the research findings, the following additional areas of research deserve to be explored:

Further Study

1. How does the dynamic within the family system change, for political refugees and asylum seekers?

2. What role do children play in refugee families' adaption to their new society?

3. Exploring the developmental process of ideological families amongst political refugees.

4. Exploring refugees' sense of identity in the personal, ideological, political, spiritual, social and professional contexts.

5. What is the impact of the refugees' new language on their politics?

6. Examining the impact of gender equality when dealing with trauma.

7. Compare and contrast female and male refugees' psychological state in the adaptation process.

8. Examine the psychology of resistance party membership amongst political refugees.

9. Consider the idea of world citizenship, moving from cultural relativism to universalism in terms of psychological wellbeing.

10.   How can existential phenomenological practice be applied to extreme crisis?

Future plan

My future plan is to publish my research and to write an additional book about my participants to describe their life experience in greater depth.

For my clinical work I will bring the outcome of my study within the registered charity 'Phoenix Aid Centre' which I founded in 2010, and develop a section working for political refugees.

I will create an existential phenomenological training syllabus for counsellors and psychotherapists who wish to work with refugees, asylum seekers and others who deal with extreme cases, individually and within the family system.

I will carry on teaching phenomenology.

Conclusion

Was this investigation conducted with sensitivity, rigour and coherence? Did I focus on the four primary domains: the participants' life in Iran, their escape, their resettlement and their future? What are the therapeutic implications of my study?

Through careful preparation I became aware of and was able to bracket assumptions, such as my desire to defend political refugees by presenting them in a positive light. Working closely with my supervisors and following my research strategy, I applied IPA as the appropriate method. This enabled me to access my participants' sense of meaning in the four dimensions: personal, social, spiritual and physical. Recruiting them was a challenging process. My determination to gain their trust prompted me to create a relaxed, safe environment. I consider developing trust as a significant step before data collection is undertaken.

I elicited from 25 themes, five superordinate themes: the threat to their existence; their value system and commitment; creating possibilities for escape;

psychological rebirth and the overcoming of obstacles; and finally, their sense of self and cultural adaptation. The broad base of my literature review developed as the themes emerged from the participants' data.

Reflexivity was a key pillar of my project. I had been a political refugee myself, I had worked extensively with political refugees for more than three decades, and I had an ideographic commitment: all these elements were grounds for my reflexivity. This essential part of my study enabled me to understand my participants' experiences, to engage with them and to learn new things, which I did not expect.

This phenomenological research has enabled me to consider different ways of perceiving a phenomenon. I hold a value system of individual freedom, and I know that my own experiences influence my views of how my value system is held. This is reflected in my wish to influence other people's value systems in the direction of what I consider to be positive perspectives. I am mindful of the need for an open attitude towards others' experiences.

I find in interviews with my participants that I try to adhere to my value system, while maintaining an open perspective toward myself and toward others. This could also be described as the 'grey area'.

An IPA researcher who interviewed me confirmed my sensitivity and commitment to the subject of the study, and its coherence. The limitations of my research must also be recognised. It is not easy to grasp another's actual lived experience. My qualitative research focused on a very small number of political refugees. The outcome might give an in-depth view, but not a more general one. More importantly, those who came forward to participate in my study tended to be high achievers with a positive outlook. I was aware that some political refugees could not adapt themselves, and some even committed suicide.

The focus on internal resources is significant. I explored my participants' subjective experiences under such headings as culture, language and resettlement. The qualities of political adaptation, self for others and spiritual

crisis were also discussed. I discovered some differences in male and female experiences. The Iranian regime considers women to be inferior to men; discrimination is constitutionalised. As a result of the escape process, the woman's role begins to change. During adaptation and resettlement, women take charge of their families and men become existentially challenged by the reality of gender equality. The women in my study were keen to learn the English language and to interact. Men tended to live more in the past and to engage with their own community, whereas the women were more future-focused and enjoyed making new friends.

I suggest that a clinical model for working with political refugees should consider value systems and political identity. Refugees' trauma is mainly related to their ideological crisis. Respect for this factor is crucial to their sense of identity. The therapeutic model should recognise and remind them of their internal resources. The subjective meaning of trauma should be considered, together with the desire to work for others' benefit. Responsibility, motivation and action are familiar concepts. The sense of loss experienced by refugees relates to their political agenda rather than to material possessions. Work on gender equality is the yardstick of their adaptation process. They are not 'victims' or 'problems'. They all agreed how important it is for them to be employed.

I found that in all of them, recognition of their own sense of mission in a free society awoke their self-connection and their ability to act accordingly. In every instance, their dilemma – for example, how to adapt their political identity to the life here, while friends in Iran remained on the front-line - reminded me of the uncertainty and angst, that authentic living demands (Spinelli, 1989).

I learned from the experience of all 9 participants that their political refugee status is determined by their conscience and dignity under all circumstances. They recognise that their commitment to life prepares them to confront new dilemmas and to keep their value systems intact.

On their arrival in the UK, they all felt they were met and recognised, even though some of them experienced a protracted asylum process. They made

connections with other people in the new society. They all said it was crucial for them to develop these interactive relationships. It helped them not to brood on the past, and even to develop a fresh viewpoint.

My participants want to express gratitude and to contribute to their new social communities in practical ways. They do not put their personal interest before others.

In Iran, their values were suffocated. Even if they have managed to transfer their political activity to the new society, the situation in Iran continues to trouble them. They never feel apart from that reality, though their new freedom enriches their quality of life. Under repression, their collective or ethnic identities were forbidden.

Their message to new political refugees to this country is to understand their rights and their opportunities to establish themselves here, to learn the language, to interact with others and to work - not just to stay at home. This is bound to help their wellbeing. They all agree: it is unhelpful to try to direct and resolve refugees' situation in their stead, or to tell them what they should do. They have to find their own way, and others should recognise this.

When I presented my study to the director of a refugee organisation, she valued my work and encouraged me to publish it. This is part of my plan for the future.

All my participants found fulfilling work and say that, regardless of the new challenges, they are happy to be in the UK. They have the freedom to be themselves. They are distressed about the conditions they have left behind and passionate about their own internal revolution and rebirth.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview questions (Pilot)

My landmark questions were:

1. Could you please describe what it was like for you in Iran before you left the country? (Prompt – what did you do there? What were your political activities?)

2. How did it feel when you first arrived in the UK? (Prompt – were there any difficulties? If so, what helped you to overcome them? If it was easy for you, can you describe what happened?)

3. What did you think your way of life might be? (Prompt – what were your plans?)

4. How would you describe your life at present? (Prompt – positive and negative experiences, achievements and meanings.)

5. What have you learned? What do you hope for, in the years to come?

Through Question One, I gathered data concerning social (Mitwelt), personal (Eigenwelt), physical (Umwelt) and possibly spiritual (Uberwelt) worlds. Question Two developed the personal and spiritual dimensions. The third question gave me more information concerning all four worlds. Question Four was also regarded in the light of the four worlds, and Question Five was designed to cover any or all of their aspects.

Rather than lead the questions, I relied on analysing the data following the interviews, to interpret the four world dimensions as they emerged. This gave my participants the freedom to explore their own stories.

I was careful not to ask questions which political refugees might be over-sensitive to, such as the practical and highly secret details of their escape. This allowed them to describe this crucial process freely, in terms of how they felt during it.

Appendix 2: Participants' documentation: Information sheet/

debriefing sheet/consent form

Information sheet

Research Title:
Exploring Iranian Political Refugees' Experiences in Britain,
The Phoenix Rises from the Ashes
Being carried out by Armin H Danesh as
A requirement for a Professional Doctorate
in Existential Psychotherapy and Counselling

New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling,
61-63 Fortune Green Road,
London, NW6 1DR

Middlesex University,
The Burroughs,
London, NW4 4BT

Date:…………….. 2015

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

This research is being carried out as part of my studies at the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling. Its purpose is to discover through the lived experience of political refugees, how they felt before leaving their country and on arriving in the UK; how they imagined their life here, and what it is like for them now; what they may have learned and what they hope for in the years to come. I hope that this study may offer a deeper understanding about them.

If you would like to take part, I am looking for: Iranian ex-political prisoners, human rights activists, members of women's rights movements and students' movements. You might be a writer, author or journalist, fighting for democracy. You must be over 21 years old when you moved to the UK, and be now between 25 and 60, having been settled in the UK for 3 – 12 years. The interview can be in English or Farsi according to your choice.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Your participation will consist of an interview of approximately 1 – 1½ hours, at a time and place convenient to you. It will be recorded digitally with your permission; I will transcribe or translate it myself. During the interview I will ask some basic questions concerning your experience as a political refugee; other questions will follow in a spontaneous and organic way, during our conversation.

What will you do with the information that I provide?

The information will be treated as confidential. I will be recording the interview on a digital recorder and will transfer the information to an encrypted memory stick for storage, deleting the file from the recorder. All of the information that you provide to me will be identified only with a project code and stored either on the encrypted memory stick, or in a locked filing cabinet. I will keep the key that links your details with the project code in a locked filing cabinet. I will transcribe the interview. If you prefer to speak in Farsi I will translate the interview into English with your approval.

The information will be kept at least until 6 months after I graduate, and will be treated as confidential. If my research is published, I will make sure that neither your name nor other identifying details are used.

Data will be stored according to the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

Because of the sensitive nature of the research topic, it is possible that painful memories or emotions will arise during the interview. If this happens, please let me know, and if you wish, I will stop the interview; or you could discuss them with a therapist whom I can recommend. It is unlikely that you will tell me something that I am required by law or professional ethics to pass onto a third person, but if that happens I will have to do so. Otherwise whatever you tell me will be treated in confidence.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There is no intended benefit to you from your participation. However, I will be happy to share the findings with you upon completion of the research. It is possible through our discussion and your participation, that your contribution will provide support and help for other political refugees.

Consent

You will be given a copy of this information sheet for your personal records, and if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign the attached consent form before the study begins.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you decide to take part you may withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research study is fully self-funded.

Who has reviewed the study?

All proposals for research using human participants are subject to review by an Ethics Committee before they can proceed. This is carried out according to the ethical code of the *United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy* and the *British Psychological Society*. These can be viewed on the following websites:

UKCP: http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/code_of_ethics.html

BPS:http://www.bps.org.uk/publications/policy-guidelines/research-guidelines-policy-documents/research-guidelines-policy-docum

The NSPC research ethics sub-committee have approved this study

Expenses

This study is self-funded, and I will not reimburse participants' expenses, if any.

Thank you for spending your time and reading this information sheet. If you have any further questions or concern about the conduct of the study, you can contact me at: armin.refugeestudy@gmail.com

Otherwise, you can contact my supervisor, Prof Pam James at: pamjamesr@aol.com

Or

The Principal
NSPC Ltd. 61-63 Fortune Green Road, London NW6 1DR.
Admin@nspc.org.uk
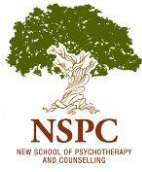
Consent Letter

New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling,
61-63 Fortune Green Road,
London, NW6 1DR

Middlesex University,
The Burroughs,
London, NW4 4BT

Written Informed Consent

Research Title:

Exploring Iranian Political Refugees' Experiences in Britain
The Phoenix Rises from the Ashes

Researcher: Armin H Danesh

Supervisor: Prof Pam James

☐   I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher, and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.

☐   I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.

☐   I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, the data collected during the research will not be identifiable, and I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.

☐   I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication, and provide my consent that this might occur.

Print name:……………………………………   **Signatur**e**:**…………………………………

                                                    Date:………………………………………….

To the participants: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Social Sciences Ethics committee of Middlesex University, if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, please tick the box if you do not wish your data to be included in audits: ☐

Debriefing Letter

New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling,
61-63 Fortune Green Road,
London, NW6 1DR

Middlesex University,
The Burroughs,
London, NW4 4BT

Research Title: Exploring Iranian Political Refugees' Experiences in Britain
The Phoenix Rises from the Ashes
Researcher: Armin H Danesh
Supervisor: Prof Pam James

Thank you for your much appreciated and valued contribution to my research dissertation.

Political refugees have a great deal to offer their host country: they are also ambassadors for human values in their homeland.

Your story will help me to lay a practical foundation for political refugees and human rights activists yet to come. Our task is educational – to develop a better understanding of where political refugees come from, and who they are.

The nature and depth of this work can bring sensitive issues to the surface. You may have painful memories. If you should need any further support and guidance, I can recommend the following sources of support and information:

BACP: **Website:** www.bacp.co.uk **Email:** bacp@bacp.co.uk T**elephone**: 01455 883300

UKCP: Website: www.psychotherapy.org.uk **Email: info@ukcp.org.uk Telephone: 020 7014 9955**

BPS: Website: www.bps.org.uk Email: enquiries@bps.org.uk **Telephone:** 0116 254 9568

If I can be of any help, please don't hesitate to contact me at: armin.refugeestudy@gmail.com or my supervisor at: rosemarynspc@gmail.com

Thank you again for your unique creative input, and for your willingness and the time you took, to assist this project.

Kind regards
Armin H Danesh

Appendix 3: Ethics Approval

Armin Danesh
26th Seaforth Gardens
London N21 3BS

17th April 2015

Dear Armin

Re: Ethics Approval

We held an Ethics Board on 18th March 2015 and the following decisions were made.

Ethics Approval

Your application was not approved.

Conditions

Please see the attached comments and resubmit your application accordingly. Yours sincerely

Prof Digby Tantam Chair Ethics Committee NSPC

Conditions:

1.   Enhance your reflexivity section to show possible alternate versions of the experience of being a refugee.

2.   Address how you will bracket your own experiences in order to be open to the participants' and amend the tone of the documents to reflect this. Use the openness of the interview questions as a guideline for setting the tone.

3.   Consider amending the title to allow for alternative viewpoints which may or may not arise in the voices of participants.

Armin Danesh
26th Seaforth Gardens
London N21 3BS

17th July 2015

Dear Armin

Re: Ethics Approval

We held an Ethics Board on 7th July 2015 and the following decisions were made.

Ethics Approval

Your application was approved.

Please note that it is a condition of this ethics approval that recruitment, interviewing, or other contact with research participants only takes place when you are enrolled in a research supervision module.

Yours sincerely

Prof Digby Tantam Chair Ethics Committee NSPC

Appendix 4		
Original transcript - sina		
1	**A**	As I mentioned, tell me a little about the situation
2		you were in, when you were in Iran, about your
3		relationship with your relatives, friends and about
4		the overall situation you were in, which ultimately
5		forced you to escape from Iran.
6		*Observation: I felt he is ready, relaxed and confident, sitting*
7		*straight in the chair. While I was asking the first question he*
8		*nodded and engaged with me. I felt he had prepared himself for the interview.*
9	**S**	Yes. Now, if I want to speak for example as a human
10		being, who reached adult age and has something to say
11		– he has a desire, he has a duty. I was about
12		seventeen. I felt myself in this situation. Since then,
13		and up until now, several points engaged my mind and
14		my life. One of them is the issue of "secularism". I
15		don't know the meaning in Farsi! (*his second language*)
16		*Observation: a shy smile on his face – gestured with his hands.*
17		After that, but more importantly, I am from an ethnic
18		minority. I believed and I believe now, even more than
19		before – as I will tell you later – in Iran we didn't have
20		free access to information. Normal information about
21		ordinary things. Those who were financially better off,
22		could use the technology. (*implies internet connection*).
23		I didn't have that. I am a member of a tribal group, we
24		were nomads. In some way, we should settle down in
25		one place, but we haven't been represented. We were
26		badly represented. This always hurt me.
27		*Observation: his posture changed as he became more emotional*
28		*and wanted to give a voice to something that matters.*

29		I complain to human society, and to those people and
30		systems – er – who had authority. Those who were
31		working from the Reza Shah era onwards, himself, his
32		son and the Khomeini and the Khamanee as a symbol
33		and also their followers; they all are guilty. They
34		represented us badly.
35		Observation: he became very serious, like giving a formal
36		statement.
37		We were a tribal society. We had thousands of
38		problems. Not only did they not solve these problems,
39		they added to them. Now I can see that all tribal
40		society, particularly ours – no one wanted to come to
41		live in a city suburb. They were brought there. It
42		started from that time until now – we were not
43		represented. This is how I describe myself, an Iranian
44		who has the right to have a government apart from the
45		religious system, in order to be reasonable, to be able
46		to make rational decisions and more importantly, to be
47		answerable.
48	**A**	As a seventeen year old young man, what did you
49		hope for, and expect?
50	**S**	I'm not so concerned individually. I expect, I expect
51		myself and my fellow citizens to receive a sensible
52		standard of living. I don't mean having more than
53		enough.
54		*Observation: He was seriously representing his fellow citizens, and*
55		*I felt his clarity and assertiveness*.
56		I am one of them. Otherwise, who am I? In the process
57		of my maturity, I have become closer to that essence.

58	A	Please correct me if I am wrong. One of your
59		motivations was to give voice to people in the
60		poorest social class, whose situation was
61		unbearable for you.
62	S	The minority is a better phrase for it. Our tribe should
63		be settled. But they *(central government)* caused
64		indescribable problems against us.
65	A	You mean, you have this expectation as a person,
66		or perhaps as a representative?
67		*Observation: He jumped to correct me*
68	S	No, just as a person, but one of about two million of my
69		own tribal group, and also one of 80 million Iranians. I
70		describe myself as Iranian and as an ethnic minority
71		within Iran. Yes.
72	A	You mean it was difficult for you? you experienced
73		inequality in social and economical –
74	S	- And also cultural.
75	A	Tell me what do you mean by cultural?
76	S	In accordance with the economy, at the time before the
77		revolution, our 'grazing lands', I tell this in quotation
78		marks, and forests were nationalized.
79		*Observation: His voice quietened, like a story teller.*
80	A	In the white revolution?
81	S	Yes, after that. It means, do you know, always the
82		central government regarded the minorities, and the

83		different ethnic groups as a threat, and continue to. If I
84		heard any different story, I wouldn't believe it. They
85		nationalized the forests. What does that mean, 'forest'?
86		The persons who depend on this grazing land for their
87		livelihood now have to get permission to use it and to
88		take their sheep there to graze, and their life depends
89		on it!
90		Do you know, this means the presence of the state in
91		the tribal peoples' daily life. Culturally, I don't know,
92		how can I describe? Now is the century of iphone and
93		technology and people have access to them. Some time
94		ago, there was this technology but people couldn't
95		access it; now they can. And now, I must not speak or
96		be familiar with my mother language *(because it is*
97		*forbidden)*. In my view, this doesn't mean anything
98		except repression, which hurts me.
99		*Observation: He was emotional, and his voice rose.*
100		Do you know? – I as a person with you – we have
101		something in common. Also we have some differences.
102		They took away the forests and our grazing lands, which
103		belonged to the tribes and they didn't teach us our
104		language and our culture. We couldn't learn it in our
105		schools, or through television.
106	**A**	You couldn't speak, It was prohibited to talk your
107		language.
108	**S**	Yes, yes! This hurt me. As a person living here,
109		perhaps in a different period of history, in a different
110		place, talking about language means something
111		different. But I can say, from the time the central
112		government took the machine guns in hand, the
113		situation of the people, of whom I am one, got worse,

114		not better. This development in technology wasn't
115		necessarily in peoples' favour.
115a	**A**	The technology was used to repress people.
116	**S**	Yes, It was used to repress people. In some places,
117		they were repressed more than us. But we are a
118		sample of many.
119	**A**	Let me summarize: the economic situation upset
120		and hurt you?
121	**S**	Yes.
122	**A**	And the cultural situation hurt you?
123	**S**	Yes
124	**A**	This situation was imposed on you?
125	**S**	Yes.
126	**A**	In this relation, the repression has an actual and
127		material impact on your family and relatives.
128	**S**	Those who were close to me, suffered. I don't want to
129		talk about this personally. My issue is more than this.
130		After I came here, my closest friends were killed in
131		suspicious circumstances. You know – this threat was
132		always with the Iranian people. I came away, but
133		amongst my relatives and my family, people suffered.
134		More than this, it is about those people who have
135		become poorer. This is my main concern. If I wanted to
136		tell you ten years ago, I would have had a different
137		view, but this is now my chief concern. I feel I am part
138		of them, although I am here. It makes no difference.

139	**A**	Please go back to the time ten years ago, when
140		you were there, and concentrate on the situation
141		then. Although it was ten years ago, and it is
142		difficult for you to go back, do it as far as you can.
143		Tell me about the situation, which forced you to
144		escape?
145	**S**	From 17 years old, as I said, I had always this question:
146		Do I belong to this country? Do they want me? Um …
147		Do you know?
148	**A**	What do you mean by belonging?
149	**S**	I mean, am I part of this society? I am talking
150		physically about myself. Do I belong here or not?
151		When you have such a feeling and you are constantly
152		under repression, this increases the pressure and forces
153		you to act, to do something. Also in this situation you
154		are young and full of energy. I have energy now, also!
155		The next thing is – if there is a way to escape - to move
156		out. Do you know, my friend who was killed, if he had
157		any opportunity, he would be sitting here now. He
158		wouldn't have lost his life at a young age … And – and –
159		and many others. I gave only one example, but there
160		are many others. The several million who escaped from
161		Iran were those who could. They were able to escape
162		from Iran, because they knew people, they had money
163		to buy a ticket – yes. They belonged to someone.
164	**A**	Do you mean, there were many young people in
165		the same situation as yours, who couldn't escape?
166		They had ambitions, they had energy, they had
167		intelligence?
168	**S**	Everyone has ambitions, energy and intelligence. Do

169		you know, I'm not talking about myself, I give a
170		sample. I'm sorry I interrupted you. There isn't any
171		way you can use your energy in a productive way there,
172		and they don't know or care whether you exist or not!
173		*Observation: He was very emotional*.
174		You know, the Shah said, take your passport and go.
175		But this government doesn't say even this, they want
176		only to take everything from you.
177	**A**	Are you saying they don't care about your
178		existence and don't accept your identity?
179	**S**	Yes. This feeling even helps you to take risks.
180	**A**	What kind of risks do you mean?
181	**S**	Yes, I felt I was putting myself in a dangerous situation.
182	**A**	Do you mean a dangerous situation for your
183		family, for your friends, for yourself?
184	**S**	Yes. When I crossed the border, I couldn't believe
185		I am going out of Iran.
186	**A**	What do you mean, you couldn't believe?
187	**S**	I couldn't believe they would let me leave the country
188		so easily. For more than two days I felt fear. I couldn't
189		believe it.
190	**A**	What did you imagine …?
191		*Observation: I didn't finish my sentence, he jumped to answer*.

192	S	About what?
193	A	About what will happen to you, leaving Iran?
194	S	About the near future? I could not imagine it.
195	A	What did you expect? What did you want to
196		achieve when you escaped?
197	S	I just wanted not to be there. I just wanted not to be
198		there.
199		*Observation: speaks quietly and very clearly*.
200	A	Do you mean there was the place where they
201		didn't recognize your existence, your identity?
202	S	Not only for myself, my generation, my fellow human
203		beings, my group. Even the 80 millions of Iranians,
204		I believe not one of those people are represented.
205	A	How did you feel when you arrived here?
206	S	Here?
207	A	Yes I mean, as soon as you arrived here, what
208		was your feeling?
209	S	*Silent for a moment*.
210	A	Did you know you were coming here?
211	S	Yes. I knew. My brother was here. One of the reasons
212		people go from one place to another place is because of
213		their social status.
214	A	Do you mean your brother being here, opened
215		your mind to come to England?

216	**S**	No. No, it made no difference. As a person I couldn't be
217		there. I was suffocating. I had this feeling of
218		suffocating. To provide basic needs was very difficult for
219		us, and I didn't want to earn money in a corrupt way. I
220		didn't feel I belonged there. This feeling was zero, and
221		it wasn't my fault. This wasn't imagination, it was real.
222		From age 17 to 21, I was searching a way of life for
223		myself … It was a dictatorship! Yes.
224		When I arrived here, the first thing I saw was the
225		symbol of here – that double decker red bus! Without
226		knowing about my future, or what might happen to me,
227		I felt comfortable and relaxed.
228	**A**	What gave you this feeling?
229	**S**	I don't know. It was a symbol, it said you have gone
230		somewhere, arrived somewhere. This is only a symbol,
231		but I felt comfortable, I felt relaxed. I felt safe and
232		secure. This was funny. The bus didn't have anything,
233		was nothing special, but when you go back to the past,
234		you look at the experience, and also the symbols, the
235		red bus was a symbol of that moment for me. Red bus!
236		I felt safe. I felt secure and relaxed.
237	**A**	Was there a bus where you lived in Iran?
238	**S**	Yes!
239		*Observation: smiling*
240	**A**	What were the differences between that bus and
241		this bus for you?
242	**S**	That bus unfortunately segregated human beings
243		according to their sex. Can you imagine?

244		*Observation: smiles sadly*
245	**A**	Are you saying that bus symbolised segregation
246		for you there? Do you mean that?
247	**S**	Yes.
248	**A**	Here, people sit freely in the bus.
249	**S**	Even the colour of the bus here is bright. Yes.
250	**A**	What else do you remember about your arrival
		here?
251	**S**	That bus was the first good feeling I found.
252	**A**	How did you perceive social relationships in this
253		country, I mean when you arrived? Tell me about
254	**S**	I will tell you about the reality for me. I saw a person,
255		a woman in the evening, ten o'clock. She was going to
256		her home. I felt very sad. At ten o'clock in Iran there
257		is no safety or security for a woman out of doors. I felt
258		very unhappy, sad. I felt very sad. Perhaps if I was a
259		woman in Iran going out alone, this was ethically
260		unacceptable, she was doing something bad or wrong.
261		For me, seeing the woman here going out at 10 o'clock,
262		it was admirable! She was respected and safe. You
263		know, when you are here, you compare everything with
264		Iran. What you see, compared with what you had,
265		when I saw that woman, even my relatives are
266		frightened to go out at night time.
267		*Observation: While he was talking about this, he looked sad*
268		*and emotional*.

269	A	What else did you compare? – as far as you
		remember?
270	S	I don't remember anything now. For an Iranian person
271		the expense of seeing a doctor makes things very
272		difficult and troubled, but here, no. There is some
273		guarantee, more or less: in Iran there is none, and
274		people suffer painfully.
275	A	In Iran, you felt your identity and existence were
276		not accepted. How did you find yourself when you
		were here?
277	S	Here in fact in London, it is a different world. For me it
278		was a new start. It was a new birth.
279	A	Are you saying you felt this?
280	S	It wasn't just a feeling. You can see it, you can start
281		again. It was a feeling of birth. It was a new birth, it
282		was real. It wasn't only a feeling, it was birth. It was a
283		discovery for me, that refugeeing brings a new birth
284		and a new life, not necessarily physically.
285	A	How did you find yourself psychologically when
286		you arrived here? Was everything unfamiliar for
287		you, or did your brother tell you?
288	S	Here is a different world. It is different – significantly
289		different. There is no comparison.
290	A	How is it different? What are the differences?
291	S	Here, as an example, I feel perhaps my memory is not
292		supporting me sometimes, there is the freedom to

293		access information, a circle of free information. This is
294		an example. Unbelievable.
295	**A**	Did you feel this at the beginning?
296	**S**	Yes, from the beginning. Here it is totally different.
297		The issue is no longer 'they don't want me'. Here,
298		everything is different; here the economy is not
299		politically prejudiced. In Iran your economical status is
300		politicized, and that also determines your national
301		security. Here it is not like that. Here, you go out, you
302		come back in the evening with two bags of shopping,
303		but in Iran it is not like that. In Iran you are or you are
304		not, and we were not! Yes.
305		*Observation: While he was talking he moved his head, very*
306		*assertive and clear. Emotional, breathes deeply, sighs.*
307	**A**	What did you imagine about England, before you
308		came here?
309	**S**	I didn't imagine anything. I had no idea I would see
310		these things. I simply wanted not to be there. Even if I
311		didn't have my brother here to come to, if I went to a
312		different part of the world, it wouldn't have made much
		difference.
313	**A**	You mean you wanted to be in any place which is
314		not Iran?
315	**S**	Yes. I just wanted not to be there. I just wanted not to
316		be there. It is not simply that I didn't want, and I had a
317		choice, it was impossible. You know? They didn't want
318		us. We were not the only second class people, low class
319		people, I am sure many people are in the same

320	**A**	What about the people who agreed with the
321		regime and worked for them?
322	**S**	I'm not sure even if they went with the regime
324		ideologically. Do you know, perhaps they were given
325		money, bribed to go with the regime, but didn't believe
326		in the ideology. It is far from my mind – I cannot
327		believe that the regime was able to convince people
328		ideologically. This is my view.
329	**A**	What did you have in your mind about coming to
330		England, of what you might want to do?
331	**S**	I had no idea. I just wanted not to be there. I couldn't
332		live there. I came to live here. I had no ideas in my
333		mind about what I should do or achieve. At that time I
334		had no idea at all what I should do. From that point I
335		began to study here, but I had no idea. I just came
336		here to breathe and to live, and I can do this more or
337		less, here. From that period the situation was like this;
338		I had no idea about it, but later on, this changed.
339		In Iran I couldn't breathe, I was being suffocated. I
340		couldn't satisfy my basic everyday needs without
341		compromising my freedom. It is my right to have an
342		ordinary life. Here I have been given the right to live as
343		a human being. I didn't have that possibility there. Do
344		you know, I value the situation here, and what I have!
345		I am grateful to people here, and to the system, from
346		the bottom of my heart. In Iran there are many good
347		people, despite the system; but because the system is
348		corrupt, the Afghani people in Iran are suffering, the
349		Kurds are suffering. Here, if the government didn't
350		respect human rights, if there was no human rights
351		convention functioning, if the government had no
352		respect, ordinary individuals here could not do a lot.

353		The government and the people, the system is OK, I
354		have seen many liberated people – liberated, liberated
356		I would like to express my feelings here; I would like to
357		express my gratitude to the government and to the
358		people here. To me and to many of us, it gave a new
359		chance, as human beings. I wish billions of people who
360		suffer in the world, could have a better life.
361	**A**	How do you see your current situation nowadays?
362		We moved from the period when you arrived in
363		this country, and now we concentrate on a
364		different stage.
365	**S**	Now I feel both emancipated, and strengthened. Interestingly, these two parameters do not conflict each other. I feel the strength of course, not to exploit other people. As a person, I feel emancipated. I feel I have freedom. I have freedom. I have been liberated.
366	**A**	What do these feelings mean to you? Can you
367		describe this?
368	**S**	I feel I am able, er … perhaps I can't express myself in
369		Farsi, I mix Farsi, English and Turkish! (*laughing*)
370	**A**	Yes, you can talk in Turkish !
371	**S**	I feel I have strength and ability. I feel the debt I owe
372		to other people. I wish, and I don't want actually to put
373		aside my motivation, I have this dream, I don't want it
374		to stay only in my mind like a fantasy, I want to act. I
375		hope and I will put it into action. Those people whose
376		situation was the same as mine, and ours, the tribes
377		and religious and ethnic minorities, who were
378		discriminated against, also gender discrimination and
379		religious discrimination, I want to do something for
380		them. This is my 'tomorrow plan' – my future. This is

381		my ideology for tomorrow – at least through working in
382		cultural and educational activities for others, I want to
383		do everything I can, and I will – in small or large steps.
384		*Observation: When he was talking, his posture changed. He sat up*
385		*straight and became very serious and confident. All the time, he*
386		*moved his head affirmatively.*
387	**A**	What are you doing here now?
388	**S**	Talking about my work and my study?
389	**A**	Yes
390	**S**	I work as a mini-cab driver in an Iranian car agency. I
391		am very happy in my work, it is a good job, I love it, it
392		is the best job in the world! Financially I can stand on
393		my feet, and I can be in touch with the rest of the
394	**A**	It seems you love your job?
395	**S**	Yes, I love my job. I love my job! About my studies –
396		part of my strength comes from my education. It
397		helped me to stand on my feet.
398	**A**	You said you had no idea when you came here,
399		about doing anything or achieving anything or
400		studying. What made you study?
401	**S**	After a while when I had settled down, from the start, I
402		studied, but not very seriously; my brother and other
403		people advised me to study. I don't consider education
404		to be only for obtaining a bachelor's or master's degree.
405		As long as you freely use the internet to learn, perhaps
406		it is not very organized, but you can enjoy learning and
407		make yourself more able and powerful and useful.

408		Education is not just academic education. When I go
409		out, I have conversations with different people, and I
410		always learn through these interactions.
411	**A**	You mean, in social relationships you can learn
412	**S**	Yes, I learn from others. When I came here, my native
413		language improved. You know, in this place, you can
414		communicate with many different groups of people,
415		even in Kurdish and other languages and with Indian
416		people – but my native language improved
417		considerably. In my own land, we didn't have this
418		chance! They don't recognize us, we are nothing to
419		them. Our native language was persecuted.
420	**A**	Are you saying that here is not your country, but your native language improves? What do you mean?
421	**S**	Yes. My native language is much stronger and richer
422	**A**	What is the reason for this?
423	**S**	Yes. Here, we are encouraged. We can take lessons
424		and go to many classes. For example I can go to school to
425		learn Turkish. My way of speaking it is slightly different, but
426		there are similarities. They arranged classes and started to
427		teach people. I don't need to get permission or a license to
428		learn to speak my language! And the music! I was too poor
429		to learn music. Those who were financially able to study
430		music in Iran had to do it secretly, they were afraid of being
431		caught. *(In Turkish)* To whom can I tell my pain? It is
432		shameful that people are stopped from learning or performing
433		music. Can you imagine people being scared to learn to play
434		music? I couldn't afford the money to go to learn music.
435	**A**	You highlighted your future plan. Would you like

436		to tell me a bit more, about what you want to do, personally
437		and socially?
438	**S**	I don't have a clear picture in my mind. My wish is for
439		my future to become more than just the daily round. This is
440		what I want.
441	**A**	What do you mean?
442	**S**	I would like to do something valuable for others, and to
		benefit others.
443	**A**	You would like to do something valuable for
		others?
444	**S**	Yes.
445	**A**	With what we have said in this respect, what else
446		would you like to add? I hope I didn't make you
		tired!
447	**S**	No, not at all. I don't have anything in my mind, but if
448		you have any questions I will answer them. What I have told
449		you in this interview wasn't only saying. It is what I live.
450		(*laughing, smiling*) If you want me to explain or explore
451		anything else, please ask me.
452	**A**	Thank you. If you like, I will summarize what we
453		have done so far; then if you want to add
454		something, please do it. We talked about your
456		circumstances within Iran. To put it in one
457		sentence you said you couldn't breathe and you
458		were suffocating.
459	**S**	Yes.
460	**A**	Socially and personally, in all aspects of your life.

	S	
461	**S**	My identity was under attack.
462	**A**	You couldn't think of anything but the need to
463		breathe again.
464	**S**	Yes.
465	**A**	Because of this situation you couldn't stay there,
466		and you escaped.
467	**S**	Exactly.
468	**A**	When you arrived in this country you saw the
		differences, and you started to compare what you
		country, and also you saw the respect and
		humanity with which women are treated here.
		You are not under persecution, and you are
		valued as a person. Your identity was recognized
		in this country. This helps you to celebrate it.
		Even your language improved!
469	**S**	Yes! Yes, my language improved.
470	**A**	Also you studied, and you felt overall empowered.
471		You feel relaxed and able to choose your future.
472	**S**	Yes, exactly.
473	**A**	You can invest in your future without fear or
474		obstacles. You can make choices. You are now
475		taking responsibility to do something for others,
476		and you are expanding in this way, the meaning
477		in your life. You said you don't want actually to
478		concentrate on an everyday life style, but to
479		develop a life that has meaning. Transcending

480		your everyday life into a meaningful life for others …
481	**S**	Exactly.
482	**A**	What else would you like to add?
483	**S**	Yes, I agree completely with what you have said.
484	**A**	Thank you for the time you have given.
485	**S**	You are welcome.

Appendix 5	Initial noting - Sina		
Initial Note	**Original transcript**		
	1	**A**	As I mentioned, tell me a little about the situation
	2		you were in, when you were in Iran, about your
	3		relationship with your relatives, friends and about
	4		the overall situation you were in, which ultimately
	5		forced you to escape from Iran.
	6		*Observation: I felt he is ready, relaxed and confident, sitting*
	7		*straight in the chair. While I was asking the first question he*
	8		*nodded and engaged with me. I felt he had prepared himself for the interview.*
"If I want to speak": having voice. "Reached adult age": *responsibility. Talking as a third person. "he has a desire, he has a duty." Defending his right. "Secularism": The religious dictatorship. Meaning and purpose.*	9	**S**	Yes. Now, if I want to speak for example as a human
	10		being, who reached adult age and has something to say
	11		– he has a desire, he has a duty. I was about
	12		seventeen. I felt myself in this situation. Since then,
	13		and up until now, several points engaged my mind and
	14		my life. One of them is the issue of "secularism". I
	15		don't know the meaning in Farsi! (*his second language*)
	16		*Observation: a shy smile on his face – gestured with his hands.*
	17		After that, but more importantly, I am from an ethnic
"more importantly, I am from an ethnic minority".	18		minority. I believed and I believe now, even more than

He spoke proudly about his ethnicity. He has strong feelings about his ethnic rights and dignity, about the censorship and lack of information. The government have not recognized his people, they are marginalized. His ethnicity is related to the power of access to normal information: he feels deprived in many aspects, and this hurts him. He says his people are not represented. This means they are treated as if they do not exist. He feels very emotional about his right to defend values and oppose an oppressive system. His individual identity feels interwoven with that of the group or society to which he belongs. He asserts his ethnicity three times in different ways: nomad, tribe, and ethnic origin.	19	before – as I will tell you later – in Iran we didn't have
	20	free access to information. Normal information about
	21	ordinary things. Those who were financially better off,
	22	could use the technology. (*implies internet connection*).
	23	I didn't have that. I am a member of a tribal group, we
	24	were nomads. In some way, we should settle down in
	25	one place, but we haven't been represented. We were
	26	badly represented. This always hurt me.
	27	*Observation: his posture changed as he became more emotional*
	28	*and wanted to give a voice to something that matters.*
	29	I complain to human society, and to those people and
	30	systems – er – who had authority. Those who were
	31	working from the Reza Shah era onwards, himself, his
	32	son and the Khomeini and the Khamanee as a symbol
	33	and also their followers; they all are guilty. They
	34	represented us badly.
Sina defends his rights to social justice and to give voice, against those who had authority.	35	Observation: he became very serious, like giving a formal
	36	statement.
For the fourth time, his stress on tribal society, defending the right of his tribe to live and express itself in its own way. His ethnicity is deeply embedded in his psyche. Not only are the	37	We were a tribal society. We had thousands of
	38	problems. Not only did they not solve these problems,
	39	they added to them. Now I can see that all tribal

tribe's basic needs unrecognized, they are being forced to leave their way of life for an urban one. He repeats for the third time, that they are not represented. He recognizes himself as Iranian: his strong concern is to detach religious practices from the governing body (secularism). In his view, a dogmatic religious government is not answerable to people. Historically, central governments have tried to justify eradicating minorities, such as the Kurds, whom they accuse of being separatist, or uncontrollable.	40		society, particularly ours – no one wanted to come to
	41		live in a city suburb. They were brought there. It
	42		started from that time until now – we were not
	43		represented. This is how I describe myself, an Iranian
	44		who has the right to have a government apart from the
	45		religious system, in order to be reasonable, to be able
	46		to make rational decisions and more importantly, to be
	47		answerable.
	48	**A**	As a seventeen year old young man, what did you
	49		hope for, and expect?
His concern about the rights of the citizen transcends his individual interest. He recognises his own needs, but not at the expense of the needs of others. He gives voice to the community. In his view and culture, the individual should think collectively for the group, for the society. He is talking ontologically about being in the world and how it feels to be himself. He has a vision for the historical continuity and wellbeing of his tribe. *'I am one of them. Otherwise, who am I?'*	50	**S**	I'm not so concerned individually. I expect, I expect
	51		myself and my fellow citizens to receive a sensible
	52		standard of living. I don't mean having more than
	53		enough.
	54		*Observation: He was seriously representing his fellow citizens, and*
	55		*I felt his clarity and assertiveness.*
	56		I am one of them. Otherwise, who am I? In the process
	57		of my maturity, I have become closer to that essence.
	58	**A**	Please correct me if I am wrong. One of your
	59		motivations was to give voice to people in the
	60		poorest social class, whose situation was
	61		unbearable for you.

	62	**S**	The minority is a better phrase for it. Our tribe should
His pride in his origin: he stresses the tribe as a minority, for the sixth time.	63		be settled. But they *(central government)* caused
	64		indescribable problems against us.
	65	**A**	You mean, you have this expectation as a person,
	66		or perhaps as a representative?
	67		*Observation: He jumped to correct me*
	68	**S**	No, just as a person, but one of about two million of my
	69		own tribal group, and also one of 80 million Iranians. I
	70		describe myself as Iranian and as an ethnic minority
	71		within Iran. Yes.
Strong sense of his culture and ethnic minority.	72	**A**	You mean it was difficult for you? you experienced
	73		inequality in social and economical –
	74	**S**	- And also cultural.
	75	**A**	Tell me what do you mean by cultural?
	76	**S**	In accordance with the economy, at the time before the
	77		revolution, our 'grazing lands', I tell this in quotation
	78		marks, and forests were nationalized.
	79		*Observation: His voice quietened, like a story teller.*

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By nationalizing the forest, the government wanted to bring the nomads into the cities in order to control them, and to destroy their historical identity: their link with the ancestors. Sina speaks now like a traditional "story teller": he picks up the narrative rhythm, as he conveys something of deep value to him: to keep the record for the tribal memory. He feels responsible to the tribal memory which is threatened; he is its representative.	80	**A**	In the white revolution?
	81	**S**	Yes, after that. It means, do you know, always the
	82		central government regarded the minorities, and the
	83		different ethnic groups as a threat, and continue to. If I
	84		heard any different story, I wouldn't believe it. They
The tribe is labeled by central government as a threat. By nationalizing the forest and grazing land, the habitat and social structure of the tribe is destroyed. Central government hopes to force them into the cities as cheap labour. The tribe identity was interwoven with the confiscated land.	85		nationalized the forests. What does that mean, 'forest'?
	86		The persons who depend on this grazing land for their
	87		livelihood now have to get permission to use it and to
	88		take their sheep there to graze, and their life depends
	89		on it!
	90		Do you know, this means the presence of the state in
There are different ways of interpreting Sina's account of the white revolution.	91		the tribal peoples' daily life. Culturally, I don't know,
	92		how can I describe? Now is the century of iphone and
	93		technology and people have access to them. Some time
	94		ago, there was this technology but people couldn't
	95		access it; now they can. And now, I must not speak or

	96		be familiar with my mother language (because it is
Suppression of his voice, and his right to speak his own language	97		forbidden). In my view, this doesn't mean anything
	98		except repression, which hurts me.
	99		*Observation: He was emotional, and his voice rose.*
	100		Do you know? – I as a person with you – we have
	101		something in common. Also we have some differences.
The means for Sina's tribe's existence was removed.	102		They took away the forests and our grazing lands, which
	103		belonged to the tribes and they didn't teach us our
	104		language and our culture. We couldn't learn it in our
	105		schools, or through television.
	106	**A**	You couldn't speak, It was prohibited to talk your
	107		language.
	108	**S**	Yes, yes! This hurt me. As a person living here,
His voice rises with the question of free speech and expression. The central government did not support education for Sina's ethnic group, and did not allow them to develop their literacy.	109		perhaps in a different period of history, in a different
	110		place, talking about language means something
	111		different. But I can say, from the time the central
	112		government took the machine guns in hand, the
	113		situation of the people, of whom I am one, got worse,
The central government threatened violence against their identity, ethnicity and existence.	114		not better. This development in technology wasn't
	115		necessarily in peoples' favour.

	115a	**A**	The technology was used to repress people.
	116	**S**	Yes, It was used to repress people. In some places,
Technology was used to manipulate and disempower people. The central government attacked these people.	117		they were repressed more than us. But we are a
	118		sample of many.
	119	**A**	Let me summarize: the economic situation upset
	120		and hurt you?
	121	**S**	Yes.
	122	**A**	And the cultural situation hurt you?
	123	**S**	Yes
	124	**A**	This situation was imposed on you?
	125	**S**	Yes.
	126	**A**	In this relation, the repression has an actual and
	127		material impact on your family and relatives.
	128	**S**	Those who were close to me, suffered. I don't want to
It is difficult for him to speak of himself apart from the wider context of the group and its wellbeing, with which he is identified. He feels guilty because his closest friends and relatives were killed or suffered, but he was able to escape. This increases his feeling of responsibility to do what he can for his people. They become poorer and get no support from the regime. His concern and connection with his people and	129		talk about this personally. My issue is more than this.
	130		After I came here, my closest friends were killed in
	131		suspicious circumstances. You know – this threat was
	132		always with the Iranian people. I came away, but
	133		amongst my relatives and my family, people suffered.
	134		More than this, it is about those people who have

their circumstances has increased since he came to this country. 'I feel I am part of them, although I am here. It makes no difference.'	135		become poorer. This is my main concern. If I wanted to
	136		tell you ten years ago, I would have had a different
	137		view, but this is now my chief concern. I feel I am part
	138		of them, although I am here. It makes no difference.
	139	**A**	Please go back to the time ten years ago, when
	140		you were there, and concentrate on the situation
	141		then. Although it was ten years ago, and it is
	142		difficult for you to go back, do it as far as you can.
He has developed a sensitivity concerning the threat to his people. He lost his trust in an authoritative infrastructure, and feels the threat to Iranian people is constant under any circumstance. He is still in touch with his relatives, and is aware of their difficulties. He feels strongly about not being able to assist them, as he now lives safely overseas - 'Do I belong to this country?' (National identity). 'Do they want me?' (belonging: rejection)	143		Tell me about the situation, which forced you to
	144		escape?
	145	**S**	From 17 years old, as I said, I had always this question:
	146		Do I belong to this country? Do they want me? Um …
	147		Do you know?
Although he has settled here in the UK, he is emotionally deeply engaged in what is going on there. He regards himself not as an individual, but as part of his community there. In this respect, although he is physically here, he is psychologically engaged there. This situation might not allow him to engage fully with his life here.	148	**A**	What do you mean by belonging?
	149	**S**	I mean, am I part of this society? I am talking
	150		physically about myself. Do I belong here or not?

	151		When you have such a feeling and you are constantly
He now tries to talk about himself. From age 17 he was searching to find himself and the overall meaning in his life. He wants to defend himself, and constantly analyses himself in relation to the regime. Does he belong to his country? Has he a role in society? Developing this sensitivity, he felt and feels constantly under pressure. Ontologically he seeks recognition. He wonders if he is wanted. He has a deep sense of purpose, of destiny. He looks towards the future, and wonders where he can play a significant role.	152		under repression, this increases the pressure and forces
	153		you to act, to do something. Also in this situation you
	154		are young and full of energy. I have energy now, also!
	155		The next thing is – if there is a way to escape - to move
	156		out. Do you know, my friend who was killed, if he had
	157		any opportunity, he would be sitting here now. He
	158		wouldn't have lost his life at a young age … And – and –
	159		and many others. I gave only one example, but there
Sina states again the importance of his community and tribal identity. This strong sense of where he belongs, might come between him and this country. He would prefer to be within his natal community. Although he has gained many things here, there is much that he has crucially lost. Sina constantly compares his cultural values with what he finds her – he has the freedom here to say, "I am part of my tribal society." His tribal identity was given to him, and in Iran he defended it, it was ignored by the regime. In the current circumstances he is not under the political pressure of the regime's repression, but his tribal identity is threatened with the loss of its values in the western way of life.	160		are many others. The several million who escaped from
	161		Iran were those who could. They were able to escape
	162		from Iran, because they knew people, they had money
	163		to buy a ticket – yes. They belonged to someone.
	164	**A**	Do you mean, there were many young people in
	165		the same situation as yours, who couldn't escape?
	166		They had ambitions, they had energy, they had
	167		intelligence?

Sina feels the younger generation has more energy, desire and potential to create new ideas, to bring about a change. In this way he might blame the older generation for their inability to act.			
	168	**S**	Everyone has ambitions, energy and intelligence. Do
Misrecognition was unbearable for Sina, and forced him to act. Although he escaped, his friend and many others who wanted to escape, didn't have that opportunity. Escaping itself is a big project requiring others' support and the readiness to find an opportunity for oneself. Sina didn't want to say this, but his attitude at the time was positive; he wanted to take the life-threatening risk. Escaping and putting himself at risk, confirms his strong opposition to the regime's values and political system, and his commitment and desire to seek a meaning outside of that system. Sina might not realize that the search for meaning doesn't end.	169		you know, I'm not talking about myself, I give a
	170		sample. I'm sorry I interrupted you. There isn't any
	171		way you can use your energy in a productive way there,
	172		and they don't know or care whether you exist or not!
	173		*Observation: He was very emotional.*
Sina thinks people may have ambitions and intelligence which, cannot be used at present in Iran. Every door is closed against them. Their existence is under threat. He thinks any central government there would be repressive to his group, but the current one is the worst. It is impossible under it, to be recognized as human: 'they don't know or care whether you exist or not. This is because the current government is a religious dictatorship. This might be why Sina mentioned secularism from the beginning. He thinks it is impossible to exist there without			
	174		You know, the Shah said, take your passport and go.
	175		But this government doesn't say even this, they want
	176		only to take everything from you.

being the regime's tool; there is no middle way.			
	177	**A**	Are you saying they don't care about your
	178		existence and don't accept your identity?
Here I see again Sina's purpose and his strong sense of self. He requires recognition not only for his ethnicity, but for himself and his values.	179	**S**	Yes. This feeling even helps you to take risks.
	180	**A**	What kind of risks do you mean?
The feeling of not being recognized or accepted as human, is itself life threatening, and drove Sina to risk his life. There was an opportunity to survive, and he had no choice but to take it. This situation for Sina is a kind of death compared with life. Yet he believed there was a place he could go, because hijs brother had survived and was there. Also his knowledge that many millions had survived kept the idea open.	181	**S**	Yes, I felt I was putting myself in a dangerous situation.
	182	**A**	Do you mean a dangerous situation for your
It was clear for Sina that he was putting himself in a dangerous situation, with possible consequences for his friends and relatives. He couldn't believe he could escape so easily. In fear, he couldn't know if he would survive or not. That fear is always there. For a moment there is a detachment from that fear – this experience of being free is unbelievable for him. Although he had ideas about it, he had never actually embraced freedom: the unknown. He was able to touch and experience that freedom. For two days he lived in fear. It takes time to take in the fact of freedom and detach from the paranoia which is very common in people who live under dictatorship and feel all the time at risk. Only through freedom	183		family, for your friends, for yourself?
	184	**S**	Yes. When I crossed the border, I couldn't believe
	185		I am going out of Iran.
	186	**A**	What do you mean, you couldn't believe?

can there be any escape from fear. For Sina, an environment without fear was almost inconceivable. He freed himself, and faced a new environment which continued to require him to free himself – from prejudices and attitudes. He searches for meaning in his life.			
	187	**S**	I couldn't believe they would let me leave the country
From being nothing, he goes somewhere to be recognized. He arrived into a new world.	188		so easily. For more than two days I felt fear. I couldn't
	189		believe it.
	190	**A**	What did you imagine …?
Sina might feel confused, comparing aspects of his past in the tribe, with the situation he finds here, away from his community. This might sometimes make him feel he had lost more than he gained, … … and motivate him to do something positive.			
	191		*Observation: I didn't finish my sentence, he jumped to answer*.
Crossing the border for Sina was not only geographical, it was psychological. In fact he was able to cross that border before he took the risk itself. The physical and psychological worlds merged: this generated excitement and new experience.			
	192	**S**	About what?
	193	**A**	About what will happen to you, leaving Iran?
Sina couldn't believe he had made it. He was used to living in a world of paralysing fear. He can find no words for it, for his liberation has no language. He "just wanted not to be there". When escaping, when seizing the	194	**S**	About the near future? I could not imagine it.
	195	**A**	What did you expect? What did you want to
	196		achieve when you escaped?

opportunity, he could not imagine what the future might hold. He was focused on the instinct or will to survive, which acts without any concept of "future" or "past". Sina consciously puts others before himself – his community, his nation. He prefers to perceive the situation collectively, rather than to advance his own interest. By saying, "I just wanted not to be there', Sina conveys his sense of nothingness 'there'. For himself and the way he wanted to be, there was no room 'there'. His existence there was under threat. He describes the situation not only for his tribe, but for all Iranians. In this way, Sina presents his sense of social justice and his concern for individual rights. He conceptualises 'there' as being void of justice, individual rights or recognition and there is therefore no place for him because he has a purpose: a reason to be.	197	**S**	I just wanted not to be there. I just wanted not to be
	198		there.
	199		*Observation: speaks quietly and very clearly.*
	200	**A**	Do you mean there was the place where they
	201		didn't recognize your existence, your identity?
When a people are not represented, it means they are nothing; they are invisible; they are not viable as human beings. This sense of nothingness propelled him to act. Sina acknowledges and defends his individual, tribal and national identity. For him, it is essential to integrate the tribal identity within the national identity.			
	202	**S**	Not only for myself, my generation, my fellow human
	203		beings, my group. Even the 80 millions of Iranians,
	204		I believe not one of those people are represented.
	205	**A**	How did you feel when you arrived here?
	206	**S**	Here?
	207	**A**	Yes I mean, as soon as you arrived here, what
A silence. The moment of arriving in the UK was crucial for Sina. He now starts to think carefully and to review his	208		was your feeling?
	209	**S**	*Silent for a moment.*

memory. Sina did not escape because his brother was here and gave him the opportunity, but because 'he couldn't be there.' He wants to highlight the reality of his situation, by repeating, 'I was suffocating'. Sina's purpose concerning social justice and human rights and values gives meaning to his life.			
	210	**A**	Did you know you were coming here?
	211	**S**	Yes. I knew. My brother was here. One of the reasons
He recognizes the importance of his brother being here as a 'social asset'. This may carry some reference to tribal custom and the hierarchy of those whose higher level of recognition in the tribe, gives them the leadership to travel from place to place. However, his main emphasis is on the fact that he couldn't breathe and he had no choice but to move to a place where he might be able to.	212		people go from one place to another place is because of
	213		their social status.
	214	**A**	Do you mean your brother being here, opened
	215		your mind to come to England?
	216	**S**	No. No, it made no difference. As a person I couldn't be
Sina also mentions the difficulty of obtaining basic needs and providing for one's family when one is not with the regime; he refused to compromise his dignity. He reiterates the fact that he did not belong there, psychologically or physically. From age 17 he searched a way of living which was forbidden by the dictatorship. There were for him two choices; to die under the regime or to live outside it.	217		there. I was suffocating. I had this feeling of
	218		suffocating. To provide basic needs was very difficult for
	219		us, and I didn't want to earn money in a corrupt way. I
	220		didn't feel I belonged there. This feeling was zero, and
	221		it wasn't my fault. This wasn't imagination, it was real.
	222		From age 17 to 21, I was searching a way of life for
Sina created his own opportunity to move: a positive motivation.	223		myself … It was a dictatorship! Yes.
The double decker red bus symbolizes Sina's sense of security, comfort and relaxation. He compares what he remembers	*224*		When I arrived here, the first thing I saw was the
	225		symbol of here – that double decker red bus! Without

in his country with what he sees here. The metaphor releases his expressive language in images; he speaks with power and clarity and from the heart. The plight of women in his country is a fundamental abuse of legitimacy, social justice and human rights. While the regime's ideology is based on discrimination against women, the sight of women here who sit safely with men in the bus symbolizes their freedom to travel, to circulate and to communicate. This gives Sina a deep sense of security; he can relax.	226		knowing about my future, or what might happen to me,
	227		I felt comfortable and relaxed.
	228	**A**	What gave you this feeling?
	229	**S**	I don't know. It was a symbol, it said you have gone
	230		somewhere, arrived somewhere. This is only a symbol,
	231		but I felt comfortable, I felt relaxed. I felt safe and
	232		secure. This was funny. The bus didn't have anything,
	233		was nothing special, but when you go back to the past,
	234		you look at the experience, and also the symbols, the
	235		red bus was a symbol of that moment for me. Red bus!
	236		I felt safe. I felt secure and relaxed.
The first thing Sina noticed here, was womens' freedom to circulate. The comparison with the situation of women in Iran shows how crucially embedded the issue is in Sina's psyche and in his values. This suggests that in the nomadic life, women work with the men while raising the children, and are treated with respect. Perhaps he left behind a deep feeling for his mother, or for a potential bride. He speaks with passionate emotion about the way women are treated in Iran. He describes the bright colour of the bus he saw, signaling prosperity, hope and happiness.			
	237	**A**	Was there a bus where you lived in Iran?
	238	**S**	Yes!
	239		*Observation: smiling*
	240	**A**	What were the differences between that bus and
	241		this bus for you?
It was impossible for Sina to live under a misogynous government.	242	**S**	That bus unfortunately segregated human beings
	243		according to their sex. Can you imagine?
	244		*Observation: smiles sadly*

In his creative language the red bus symbolised that he arrived; that he moved from danger into a place of safety and comfort. It is in his nature as a nomad, to be able to move freely: to find fresh grazing land: to be not trapped or confined.	245	**A**	Are you saying that bus symbolised segregation
	246		for you there? Do you mean that?
	247	**S**	Yes.
	248	**A**	Here, people sit freely in the bus.
	249	**S**	Even the colour of the bus here is bright. Yes.
	250	**A**	What else do you remember about your arrival here?
	251	**S**	That bus was the first good feeling I found.
The sight of women going about their business or pleasure, unmolested, aroused in Sina a deep sorrow about how women in Iran are taught to feel they are 'ethically unacceptable, they are doing something bad or wrong.' This is an example of how stepping outside his culture enables him to see it more clearly: a society in which women are afraid to go out at night. They are regarded as immoral if they should step beyond the control of husband or father on a necessary errand, or to visit a relative. The legislation penalizes them for being female, for leading men astray, and regards them as at best, subhuman.	252	**A**	How did you perceive social relationships in this
	253		country, I mean when you arrived? Tell me about
	254	**S**	I will tell you about the reality for me. I saw a person,
	255		a woman in the evening, ten o'clock. She was going to
	256		her home. I felt very sad. At ten o'clock in Iran there
	257		is no safety or security for a woman out of doors. I felt
	258		very unhappy, sad. I felt very sad. Perhaps if I was a
	259		woman in Iran going out alone, this was ethically
Sina's attitude as a man towards womens' issues further demonstrates that he does not belong there. For example, from the beginning the regime imposed hijab dress code on women, and was very strict about	260		unacceptable, she was doing something bad or wrong.
	261		For me, seeing the woman here going out at 10 o'clock,
	262		it was admirable! She was respected and safe. You

it. Government officials consider hijab as a measure for national security. Therefore, hundreds of thousands of police and religious guards patrol the streets to enforce it.	263		know, when you are here, you compare everything with
	264		Iran. What you see, compared with what you had,
The society he escaped from is polarized on the basis of this attitude towards women. Hijab became a political ikon and not a personal choice. The majority in Iran are Moslem, but the government uses the Hijab issue to control the society as a whole, both men and women.	265		when I saw that woman, even my relatives are
	266		frightened to go out at night time.
	267		*Observation: While he was talking about this, he looked sad*
	268		*and emotional.*
Feeling overwhelmed by the women issue, Sina felt unable to remember anything else. After a few minutes' silence, he spoke about the health service, making a comparison with the NHS here. People suffer under a government, which cares only about ideology and its own power. Sina, as a member of an ethnic group was marginalized, and his people suffered the more. This brings up the issue of intersectionality: a combination of interwoven factors.	269	A	What else did you compare? – as far as you
			remember?
	270	S	I don't remember anything now. For an Iranian person
	271		the expense of seeing a doctor makes things very
	272		difficult and troubled, but here, no. There is some
	273		guarantee, more or less: in Iran there is none, and
	274		people suffer painfully.
	275	A	In Iran, you felt your identity and existence were
	276		not accepted. How did you find yourself when you
			were here?
Beyond any doubt, Sina's arrival in this country was and is for him an unexpected new birth. Not only did he survive personally, but the new birth implies the emergence and recognition of his strong sense of purpose which brought him here. He stresses that it was not just a feeling; it was an actual birth: he uses this	277	S	Here in fact in London, it is a different world. For me it
	278		was a new start. It was a new birth.
	279	A	Are you saying you felt this?
	280	S	It wasn't just a feeling. You can see it, you can start

word more than six times. This follows on from what he said earlier, about being suffocated and unable to breathe. He treasured the opportunity "to start again" and for him it was miraculous. He says he had no preconceptions, nor could he imagine this rebirth. It was a leap into the unknown. It was a leap from having no existence, into existence, purpose, freedom to move and to be. Starting again brings up the metaphor of the Phoenix rising from the ashes	281		again. It was a feeling of birth. It was a new birth, it
	282		was real. It wasn't only a feeling, it was birth. It was a
	283		discovery for me, that refugeeing brings a new birth
	284		and a new life, not necessarily physically.
	285	**A**	How did you find yourself psychologically when
	286		you arrived here? Was everything unfamiliar for
	287		you, or did your brother tell you?
	288	**S**	Here is a different world. It is different – significantly
	289		different. There is no comparison.
Sina says there is no comparison between the world he left and the world he finds himself in now. It is so different, that he cannot describe it. However, he brings out a factor of primary importance to himself: free access to information, and to be allowed to educate himself: freedom of speech. For him, access to information is power and self entitlement. He also describes the economic environment, and how an Iranian's national security is politicized, according to his economic status and (by implication) ability to buy favours. He makes a very powerful statement: "In Iran you are or you are not, and we were not!" Reading between the lines, corruption and ethnic cleansing can be detected. The aggression against the ethnic minorities	290	**A**	How is it different? What are the differences?
	291	**S**	Here, as an example, I feel perhaps my memory is not
	292		supporting me sometimes, there is the freedom to
	293		access information, a circle of free information. This is
	294		an example. Unbelievable.
	295	**A**	Did you feel this at the beginning?
	296	**S**	Yes, from the beginning. Here it is totally different.
	297		The issue is no longer 'they don't want me'. Here,
	298		everything is different; here the economy is not
	299		politically prejudiced. In Iran your economical status is

finds every way it can to strip them of human rights. Sina felt that the systematic deprivation of access to information was an act of aggression to people in general, and in particular to his group.	300		politicized, and that also determines your national
	301		security. Here it is not like that. Here, you go out, you
	302		come back in the evening with two bags of shopping,
	303		but in Iran it is not like that. In Iran you are or you are
	304		not, and we were not! Yes.
	305		*Observation: While he was talking he moved his head, very*
	306		*assertive and clear. Emotional, breathes deeply, sighs.*
	307	**A**	What did you imagine about England, before you
	308		came here?
	309	**S**	I didn't imagine anything. I had no idea I would see
	310		these things. I simply wanted not to be there. Even if I
'I simply wanted not to be there.'	311		didn't have my brother here to come to, if I went to a
	312		different part of the world, it wouldn't have made much
			difference.
	313	**A**	You mean you wanted to be in any place which is
	314		not Iran?
'I just wanted not to be there.'	315	**S**	Yes. I just wanted not to be there. I just wanted not to
	316		be there. It is not simply that I didn't want, and I had a
	317		choice, it was impossible. You know? They didn't want
'They didn't want us.' Sina expresses the reality of being not	318		us. We were not the only second class people, low class

wanted, which is a form of extermination. Under this threat, he is indifferent to where he will escape to; survival alone moves him. After he has refuged, and the new society becomes a reality around him, there come the reasons and the rationale for his escape. He believes that no one willingly would stay with the regime's ideology, unless bribed.	319		people, I am sure many people are in the same
	320	**A**	What about the people who agreed with the
	321		regime and worked for them?
	322	**S**	I'm not sure even if they went with the regime
	324		ideologically. Do you know, perhaps they were given
	325		money, bribed to go with the regime, but didn't believe
	326		in the ideology. It is far from my mind – I cannot
	327		believe that the regime was able to convince people
	328		ideologically. This is my view.
	329	**A**	What did you have in your mind about coming to
	330		England, of what you might want to do?
	331	**S**	I had no idea. I just wanted not to be there. I couldn't
'I just wanted not to be there. I couldn't live there.'	332		live there. I came to live here. I had no ideas in my
	333		mind about what I should do or achieve. At that time I
	334		had no idea at all what I should do. From that point I
	335		began to study here, but I had no idea. I just came
'I just came here to breathe and to live.' Sina continues to state that he didn't want to be there. Ontologically his existence was under threat. There was no freedom, no recognition, his basic needs were severely violated. He had a sense of purpose, and bravely maintained his values; he took a risk to make a change. He had no other choice – he was	336		here to breathe and to live, and I can do this more or
	337		less, here. From that period the situation was like this;
	338		I had no idea about it, but later on, this changed.
	339		In Iran I couldn't breathe, I was being suffocated. I

suffocating. 'I couldn't breathe.' He was uncertain what future if any, lay ahead for him.	340	couldn't satisfy my basic everyday needs without
	341	compromising my freedom. It is my right to have an
	342	ordinary life. Here I have been given the right to live as
Freedom and social justice. Human rights.	343	a human being. I didn't have that possibility there. Do
He believes his rights and values are recognized here, and expresses his gratitude. He understands the democratic system, the relation between government and people in this country. 'I am grateful to people here, and to the system.' He expresses his view of the possibilities which are naturally created under these circumstances, to liberate people. He wishes to communicate with others, and with the society in general which has refuged him. He has a chance to practice his values: care, respect, integrity. He could not have reached this point without being interested in people, in communicating with them, and appreciating their liberty and his own.	344	you know, I value the situation here, and what I have!
	345	I am grateful to people here, and to the system, from
	346	the bottom of my heart. In Iran there are many good
	347	people, despite the system; but because the system is
	348	corrupt, the Afghani people in Iran are suffering, the
	349	Kurds are suffering. Here, if the government didn't
	350	respect human rights, if there was no human rights
	351	convention functioning, if the government had no
	352	respect, ordinary individuals here could not do a lot.
	353	The government and the people, the system is OK, I
	354	have seen many liberated people – liberated, liberated
In Iran it was dangerous for him to talk to people freely. Here he can learn with people and from them. He is greatly appreciative of his new friends and of the system here. 'I would like to express my gratitude to the government and to the people here.' At this point he makes a strong move for his voice to be heard in this study.		
	356	I would like to express my feelings here; I would like to
	357	express my gratitude to the government and to the
	358	people here. To me and to many of us, it gave a new
	359	chance, as human beings. I wish billions of people who
	360	suffer in the world, could have a better life.

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	361	**A**	How do you see your current situation nowadays?
	362		We moved from the period when you arrived in
	363		this country, and now we concentrate on a
	364		different stage.
	365	**S**	Now I feel both emancipated, and strengthened. Interestingly, these two parameters do not conflict each other. I feel the strength of course, not to exploit other people. As a person, I feel emancipated. I feel I have freedom. I have freedom. I have been liberated.
'emancipated and strengthened'. *'I have freedom. I have been liberated.'*			
	366	**A**	What do these feelings mean to you? Can you
This is the confirmation of his new birth. He rises again as the Phoenix. He feels empowered and liberated. He was able to be born again: the ability to relate and interact with his new environment and the people he met. A new born baby can only survive through interaction with the mother or caregiver and the world. In the same way, Sina embraced and made his own connections with the society which refuged him. This feeds back to him in ways which nourish his desire to learn and to make a contribution to society and to represent his people.	367		describe this?
	368	**S**	I feel I am able, er … perhaps I can't express myself in
	369		Farsi, I mix Farsi, English and Turkish! (*laughing*)
	370	**A**	Yes, you can talk in Turkish !
	371	**S**	I feel I have strength and ability. I feel the debt I owe
He was able to receive care and support, and to grow, to flourish and to give. He has a mission for his future: his 'tomorrow plan' to help others to become liberated, and to extend a healthy and caring society. He is determined	372		to other people. I wish, and I don't want actually to put
	373		aside my motivation, I have this dream, I don't want it
	374		to stay only in my mind like a fantasy, I want to act. I

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to put his theory and purpose into action.	375		hope and I will put it into action. Those people whose
	376		situation was the same as mine, and ours, the tribes
	377		and religious and ethnic minorities, who were
Tribal, religious and ethnic minorities. Gender and religious discrimination.	378		discriminated against, also gender discrimination and
	379		religious discrimination, I want to do something for
	380		them. This is my 'tomorrow plan' – my future. This is
	381		my ideology for tomorrow – at least through working in
He speaks of his empowerment to benefit others, not to exploit them, and explains clearly his definition of ethical strength, to create hope for others, and to empower them	382		cultural and educational activities for others, I want to
	383		do everything I can, and I will – in small or large steps.
	384		*Observation: When he was talking, his posture changed. He sat up*
The Phoenix cannot rise in isolation	385		*straight and became very serious and confident. All the time, he*
	386		*moved his head affirmatively.*
	387	**A**	What are you doing here now?
	388	**S**	Talking about my work and my study?
	389	**A**	Yes
	390	**S**	I work as a mini-cab driver in an Iranian car agency. I
He loves his job as a cab driver, he loves to circulate and to communicate with people, he loves to move around in the open as a nomad. At this point in the interview, the Phoenix starts to fly. There has been an organic development through suffocation, birth among the ashes and now mobility. My question leading	391		am very happy in my work, it is a good job, I love it, it
	392		is the best job in the world! Financially I can stand on
	393		my feet, and I can be in touch with the rest of the
	394	**A**	It seems you love your job?

into Sina's expression of his present condition, was carefully timed. Earlier he was still absorbed in the feelings aroused by the past.	395	**S**	Yes, I love my job. I love my job! About my studies –
	396		part of my strength comes from my education. It
	397		helped me to stand on my feet.
	398	**A**	You said you had no idea when you came here,
Financially he is now independent; this means a great deal to him. His job enables him to build upon his strength of purpose: his interest in people led him to take a degree in anthropology. He enjoys his conversations in the cab.	399		about doing anything or achieving anything or
	400		studying. What made you study?
	401	**S**	After a while when I had settled down, from the start, I
	402		studied, but not very seriously; my brother and other
	403		people advised me to study. I don't consider education
	404		to be only for obtaining a bachelor's or master's degree.
	405		As long as you freely use the internet to learn, perhaps
	406		it is not very organized, but you can enjoy learning and
	407		make yourself more able and powerful and useful.
	408		Education is not just academic education. When I go
	409		out, I have conversations with different people, and I
	410		always learn through these interactions.
Sina sorted out his basic needs here, and settled down with the support and advice of his brother and his new friends, to study. He has his independent view of education, and doesn't consider it in a formal way. He spent a considerable time on the internet, to follow the news in Iran, and			
	411	**A**	You mean, in social relationships you can learn
	412	**S**	Yes, I learn from others. When I came here, my native
	413		language improved. You know, in this place, you can

considers this a valuable form of education. He did mention that obtaining his university degree empowered him.	414		communicate with many different groups of people,
	415		even in Kurdish and other languages and with Indian
	416		people – but my native language improved
His view of education is not compartmentalized, it is integrative of his whole way of life and interaction with others. Ironically, he believes his natal language is enriched in this country, far from his own, because he can speak it without fear. In Iran it was prohibited. Observing his natal culture from a different continent, he develops a clearer understanding which enables him to use his language freely, more creatively, and more effectively.	417		considerably. In my own land, we didn't have this
	418		chance! They don't recognize us, we are nothing to
	419		them. Our native language was persecuted.
	420	**A**	Are you saying that here is not your country, but your native language improves? What do you mean?
	421	**S**	Yes. My native language is much stronger and richer
Sina follows his native pattern, enjoying the conversation, company and stimulus of others. This is very common within tribal cultures. He learns with and from others.			
	422	**A**	What is the reason for this?
	423	**S**	Yes. Here, we are encouraged. We can take lessons
For Sina, the systematic availability here to learn languages and the use language, presents a major contra with his homeland. *This inspires him to take opportunities: becoming expressive his own language develops his opposition to the regime, who suppressed it. He then speaks about the opportunity to develop a gift, s as music.* *For a tribe, the music is essential. the life-blood, which expresses the rhythms, their history and their connectedness with nature and in themselves. In Iran, all non-religi*	424		and go to many classes. For example I can go to school to
	425		learn Turkish. My way of speaking it is slightly different, but
	426		there are similarities. They arranged classes and started to
	427		teach people. I don't need to get permission or a license to
	428		learn to speak my language! And the music! I was too poor
	429		to learn music. Those who were financially able to study
	430		music in Iran had to do it secretly, they were afraid of being

music – national, classical, or west – is prohibited.	431		caught. *(In Turkish)* To whom can I tell my pain? It is
	432		shameful that people are stopped from learning or performing
	433		music. Can you imagine people being scared to learn to play
Sina gives vent to his frustration a disappointment.	434		music? I couldn't afford the money to go to learn music.
	435	**A**	You highlighted your future plan. Would you like
	436		to tell me a bit more, about what you want to do, personally
	437		and socially?
	438	**S**	I don't have a clear picture in my mind. My wish is for
	439		my future to become more than just the daily round. This is
	440		what I want.
	441	**A**	What do you mean?
	442	**S**	I would like to do something valuable for others, and to
'I would like to do something valuable for others.'			benefit others.
	443	**A**	You would like to do something valuable for
			others?
	444	**S**	Yes.
	445	**A**	With what we have said in this respect, what else
	446		would you like to add? I hope I didn't make you
			tired!
	447	**S**	No, not at all. I don't have anything in my mind, but if

	448		you have any questions I will answer them. What I have told
	449		you in this interview wasn't only saying. It is what I live.
	450		(*laughing, smiling*) If you want me to explain or explore
	451		anything else, please ask me.
	452	**A**	Thank you. If you like, I will summarize what we
	453		have done so far; then if you want to add
	454		something, please do it. We talked about your
	456		circumstances within Iran. To put it in one
	457		sentence you said you couldn't breathe and you
	458		were suffocating.
	459	**S**	Yes.
	460	**A**	Socially and personally, in all aspects of your life.
	461	**S**	My identity was under attack.
	462	**A**	You couldn't think of anything but the need to
	463		breathe again.
	464	**S**	Yes.
	465	**A**	Because of this situation you couldn't stay there,
	466		and you escaped.
	467	**S**	Exactly.
	468	**A**	When you arrived in this country you saw the
			differences, and you started to compare what you
			country, and also you saw the respect and

			humanity with which women are treated here.
			You are not under persecution, and you are
			valued as a person. Your identity was recognized
			in this country. This helps you to celebrate it.
			Even your language improved!
	469	S	Yes! Yes, my language improved.
	470	A	Also you studied, and you felt overall empowered.
	471		You feel relaxed and able to choose your future.
	472	S	Yes, exactly.
	473	A	You can invest in your future without fear or
	474		obstacles. You can make choices. You are now
	475		taking responsibility to do something for others,
	476		and you are expanding in this way, the meaning
	477		in your life. You said you don't want actually to
	478		concentrate on an everyday life style, but to
	479		develop a life that has meaning. Transcending
	480		your everyday life into a meaningful life for others …
	481	S	Exactly.
	482	A	What else would you like to add?
	483	S	Yes, I agree completely with what you have said.
	484	A	Thank you for the time you have given.
	485	S	You are welcome.

Appendix 6

Emergent Themes - Sina			
	Original transcript		**Themes**
1	*A*	As I mentioned, tell me a little about the situation	
2		you were in, when you were in Iran, about your	
3		relationship with your relatives, friends and about	
4		the overall situation you were in, which ultimately	
5		forced you to escape from Iran	
6		*Observation: I felt he is ready, relaxed and confident, sitting*	
7		*straight in the chair. While I was asking the first question he*	
8		*nodded and engaged with me. I felt he had prepared himself for*	
		the interview	
9	*S*	Yes. Now, if I want to speak for example as a human	Social justice; right to speak; self-expression and responsibility. Giving voice to his people.
10		being, who reached adult age and has something to say	
11		– he has a desire, he has a duty. I was about	
12		seventeen. I felt myself in this situation. Since then,	
13		and up until now, several points engaged my mind and	
14		my life. One of them is the issue of "secularism". I	Secularism; religious dictatorship;
15		don't know the meaning in Farsi! (*his second language*)	
16		*Observation: a shy smile on his face – gestured with his hands*	
17		After that, but more importantly, I am from an ethnic	Ethnic minority; identity; recognition; Meaning and purpose;
18		minority. I believed and I believe now, even more than	
19		before – as I will tell you later – in Iran we didn't have	
20		free access to information. Normal information about	Access to information;
21		ordinary things. Those who were financially better off,	
22		could use the technology. (*implies internet connection*).	

23		I didn't have that. I am a member of a tribal group, we	Ethnicity;
24		were nomads. In some way, we should settle down in	Ethnicity;
25		one place, but we haven't been represented. We were	Misrepresentation; being treated as if they don't exist; resistance; suffering; purpose and meaning;
26		badly represented. This always hurt me	
27		*Observation: his posture changed as he became more emotional*	
28		*and wanted to give a voice to something that matters*	
29		I complain to human society, and to those people and	Defending human rights and social justice; Ethnicity; identity; recognition;
30		systems – er – who had authority. Those who were	
31		working from the Reza Shah era onwards, himself, his	
32		son and the Khomeini and the Khamanee as a symbol	
33		and also their followers; they all are guilty. They	
34		represented us badly.	
35		*Observation: he became very serious, like giving a formal*	
36		*statement*	
37		We were a tribal society. We had thousands of	Ethnicity; Social justice; Defending the rights of his tribe: Ethnicity; Recognition; freedom; suppression; Ethnicity; identity; recognition; His ethnicity and nationality; Secularism and religious dictatorship; Defending his ethnic group: Social justice
38		problems. Not only did they not solve these problems,	
39		they added to them. Now I can see that all tribal	
40		society, particularly ours – no one wanted to come to	
41		live in a city suburb. They were brought there. It	
42		started from that time until now – we were not	
43		represented. This is how I describe myself, an Iranian	
44		who has the right to have a government apart from the	
45		religious system, in order to be reasonable, to be able	
46		to make rational decisions and more importantly to be	
47		answerable	
48	*A*	As a seventeen year old young man, what did you	
49		hope for, and expect?	

50	*S*	I'm not so concerned individually. I expect, I expect	Defending his ethnic group; Social justice
51		myself and my fellow citizens to receive a sensible	
52		standard of living. I don't mean having more than	
53		enough	
54		*Observation: He was seriously representing his fellow citizens, and*	
55		*I felt his clarity and assertiveness*	
56		I am one of them. Otherwise, who am I? In the process	Ethnic minority; defending his ethnic group
57		of my maturity, I have become closer to that essence	Conscious choice;
58	*A*	Please correct me if I am wrong. One of your	
59		motivations was to give voice to people in the	
60		poorest social class, whose situation was	
61		unbearable for you.	
62	*S*	The minority is a better phrase for it. Our tribe should	Defending social justice; Nationality and ethnicity;
63		be settled. But they *(central government)* caused	
64		indescribable problems against us.	
65	*A*	You mean, you have this expectation as a person,	
66		or perhaps as a representative?	
67		*Observation: He jumped to correct me*	
68	*S*	No, just as a person, but one of about two million of my	Human rights and social justice for his tribe;
69		own tribal group, and also one of 80 million Iranians. I	Ethnicity and nationality;
70		describe myself as Iranian and as an ethnic minority	
71		within Iran. Yes	
72	*A*	You mean it was difficult for you? you experienced	
73		inequality in social and economical –	
74	*S*	- And also cultural	Culture;
75	*A*	Tell me what do you mean by cultural?	

76	S	In accordance with the economy, at the time before the	Misrecognition and suppression Social justice:
77		revolution, our 'grazing lands', I tell this in quotation	Cultural roots;
78		marks, and forests were nationalized.	
79		*Observation: His voice quietened, like a story teller*	
80	A	In the white revolution?	
81	S	Yes, after that. It means, do you know, always the	Suppression; Misrecognition: the regime labelled
82		central government regarded the minorities, and the	them as a threat; Threat to their existence and
83		different ethnic groups as a threat, and continue to. If	identity;
84		I heard any different story, I wouldn't believe it. They	
85		nationalized the forests. What does that mean, 'forest'?	Human rights a social justice;
86		The persons who depend on this grazing land for their	
87		livelihood now have to get permission to use it and to	
88		take their sheep there to graze, and their life depends	
89		on it!	
90		Do you know, this means the presence of the state in	Repression and violation of human rights;
91		the tribal peoples' daily life. Culturally, I don't know,	Ethnicity;
92		how can I describe? Now is the century of iphone and	
93		technology and people have access to them. Some time	Violation of right to speak mother tongue;
94		ago, there was this technology but people couldn't	Language; Misrecognition undermines the self;
95		access it; now they can. And now, I must not speak or	
96		be familiar with my mother language *(because it is*	Repression; Misrepresentation; being treated as if they don't exist;
97		*forbidden*). In my view, this doesn't mean anything	resistance; suffering; purpose and meaning;
98		except repression, which hurts me	Defending his people: violence against their existence;
99		*Observation: He was emotional, and his voice rose*	
100	S	Do you know? – I as a person with you – we have	
101		something in common. Also we have some differences.	

102		They took away the forests and our grazing lands, which	Repression; Ethnicity; Language; culture;
103		belonged to the tribes and they didn't teach us our	
104		language and our culture. We couldn't learn it in our	
105		schools, or through television	
106	**A**	You couldn't speak, It was prohibited to talk your	
107		language	
108	**S**	Yes, yes! This hurt me. As a person living here,	
109		perhaps in a different period of history, in a different	Misrepresentation; being treated as if they don't exist; identity; resistance; suffering; purpose and meaning; Living under fear and terror;
110		place, talking about language means something	
111		different. But I can say, from the time the central	
112		government took the machine guns in hand, the	
113		situation of the people, of whom I am one, got worse,	
114		not better. This development in technology wasn't	
115		necessarily in peoples' favour	
115a	**A**	The technology was used to repress people	
116	**S**	Yes, It was used to repress people. In some places,	
117		they were repressed more than us. But we are a	Repression;
118		sample of many	
119	**A**	Let me summarize: the economic situation upset	
120		and hurt you?	
121	**S**	Yes.	
122	**A**	And the cultural situation hurt you?	
123	**S**	Yes.	

124	*A*	This situation was imposed on you?	
125	*S*	Yes.i	
126	*A*	In this relation, the repression has an actual and	
127		material impact on your family and relatives.	
128	*S*	Those who were close to me, suffered. I don't want to	Human rights violation; personal experience;
129		talk about this personally. My issue is more than this	Friends and relatives being killed or suffering; survivors guilt;
130		After I came here, my closest friends were killed in	Family responsibility
131		suspicious circumstances. You know – this threat was	Human rights violation; Poverty;
132		always with the Iranian people. I came away, but	Ethnicity; loyalty to his people; escalating his concern; commitment;
133		amongst my relatives and my family, people suffered.	
134		More than this, it is about those people who have	
135		become poorer. This is my main concern. If I wanted to	
136		tell you ten years ago, I would have had a different	
137		view, but this is now my chief concern. I feel I am part	
138		of them, although I am here. It makes no difference	
139	*A*	Please go back to the time ten years ago, when	
140		you were there, and concentrate on the situation	
141		then. Although it was ten years ago, and it is	
142		difficult for you to go back, do it as far as you can	
143		Tell me about the situation, which forced you to	
144		escape?	
145	*S*	From 17 years old, as I said, I had always this question:	Belonging; identity; recognition; threat to existence;
146		Do I belong to this country? Do they want me? Um …	
147		Do you know?	

148	**A**	What do you mean by belonging?	
149	**S**	I mean, am I part of this society? I am talking	Belonging; identity; recognition; threat to existence; Repression forced him to act; Opportunity and the energy to use it: seeking recognition, purpose and meaning: Future focus; Defending his tribal group; Commitment to human rights and social justice; Access to social assets and connections; Defending human rights and social justice; Constant threat to existence;
150		physically about myself. Do I belong here or not?	
151		When you have such a feeling and you are constantly	
152		under repression, this increases the pressure and forces	
153		you to act, to do something. Also in this situation you	
154		are young and full of energy. I have energy now, also!	
155		The next thing is – if there is a way to escape - to move	
156		out. Do you know, my friend who was killed, if he had	
157		any opportunity, he would be sitting here now. He	
158		wouldn't have lost his life at a young age … And – and	
159		and many others. I gave only one example, but there	
160		are many others. The several million who escaped from	
161		Iran were those who could. They were able to escape	
162		from Iran, because they knew people, they had money	
163		to buy a ticket – yes. They belonged to someone	
164	**A**	Do you mean, there were many young people in	
165		the same situation as yours, who couldn't escape?	
166		They had ambitions, they had energy, they had	
167		intelligence?	
168	**S**	Everyone has ambitions, energy and intelligence. Do	
169		you know, I'm not talking about myself, I give a	
170		sample. I'm sorry I interrupted you. There isn't any	Exploitation; Power and control; freedom;
171		way you can use your energy in a productive way there,	
172		and they don't know or care whether you exist or not!	

173		*Observation: He was very emotional.*	
174		You know, the Shah said, take your passport and go.	
175		But this government doesn't say even this, they want	
176		only to take everything from you	
177	**A**	Are you saying they don't care about your	
178		existence and don't accept your identity?	
179	**S**	Yes. This feeling even helps you to take risks	Human rights violation forces him to risk his life to bring a change; Making change; Meaning and purpose;
180	**A**	What kind of risks do you mean?	
181	**S**	Yes, I felt I was putting myself in a dangerous situation	Fear of risk;
182	**A**	Do you mean a dangerous situation for your	
183		family, for your friends, for yourself?	
184	**S**	Yes. When I crossed the border, I couldn't believe	Fear he might get caught;
185		I am going out of Iran.	
186	**A**	What do you mean, you couldn't believe?	
187	**S**	I couldn't believe they would let me leave the country	Fear of the unknown; Uncertainty;
188		so easily. For more than two days I felt fear. I couldn't	
189		believe it	
190	**A**	What did you imagine …?	
191		*Observation: I didn't finish my sentence, he jumped to answer*	
192	**S**	About what?	

193	A	About what will happen to you, leaving Iran?	
194	S	About the near future? I could not imagine it	Unknown;
195	A	What did you expect? What did you want to	
196		achieve when you escaped?	
197	S	I just wanted not to be there. I just wanted not to be	Existence, identity under threat;
198		there	
199		*Observation: speaks quietly and very clearly*	
200	A	Do you mean there was the place where they	
201		didn't recognize your existence, your identity?	
202	S	Not only for myself, my generation, my fellow human	Defending social justice, human rights;
203		beings, my group. Even the 80 millions of Iranians,	Tribal identity, group identity;
204		I believe not one of those people are represented	
205	A	How did you feel when you arrived here?	
206	S	Here?	
207	A	Yes I mean, as soon as you arrived here, what	
208		was your feeling?	
209	S	*Silent for a moment*	
210	A	Did you know you were coming here?	
211	S	Yes. I knew. My brother was here. One of the reasons	Social connection and status; Knowing where he was going;
212		people go from one place to another place is because of	Possibilities; Hope.
213		their social status	
214	A	Do you mean your brother being here, opened	
215		your mind to come to England?	

216	**S**	No. No, it made no difference. As a person I couldn't be	Sense of suffocation, being there. Social justice
217		there. I was suffocating. I had this feeling of	Threat to his existence Sense of suffocation in being there;
218		suffocating. To provide basic needs was very difficult for	Social justice; Threat to his existence;
219		us, and I didn't want to earn money in a corrupt way. I	Human rights; Keeping his values;
220		didn't feel I belonged there. This feeling was zero, and	Misrecognition; Suppression;
221		it wasn't my fault. This wasn't imagination, it was real	Condemning the regime; Desire to develop his way of life;
222		From age 17 to 21, I was searching a way of life for	Trusting a new environment;
223		myself … It was a dictatorship! Yes.	
224		When I arrived here, the first thing I saw was the	
225		symbol of here – that double decker red bus! Without	
226		knowing about my future, or what might happen to me,	
227		I felt comfortable and relaxed	
228	**A**	What gave you this feeling?	
229	**S**	I don't know. It was a symbol, it said you have gone	
230		somewhere, arrived somewhere. This is only a symbol,	
231		but I felt comfortable, I felt relaxed. I felt safe and	
232		secure. This was funny. The bus didn't have anything,	
233		was nothing special, but when you go back to the past,	
234		you look at the experience, and also the symbols, the	
235		red bus was a symbol of that moment for me. Red bus!	Hope and rebirth.
236		I felt safe. I felt secure and relaxed	Hope and rebirth.
237	**A**	Was there a bus where you lived in Iran?	
238	**S**	Yes!	
239		*Observation: smiling*	

240	A	What were the differences between that bus and	
241		this bus for you?	
242	S	That bus unfortunately segregated human beings	His values on gender equality;
243		according to their sex. Can you imagine?	
244		*Observation: smiles sadly*	
245	A	Are you saying that bus symbolised segregation	
246		for you there? Do you mean that?	
247	S	Yes.	
248	A	Here, people sit freely in the bus	
249	S	Even the colour of the bus here is bright. Yes	
250	A	What else do you remember about your arrival here?	
251	S	That bus was the first good feeling I found	Connecting to the new society; Trust - that he can live in this environment; Finding himself and his values;
252	A	How did you perceive social relationships in this	
253		country, I mean when you arrived? Tell me about your feeling	
254	S	I will tell you about the reality for me. I saw a person,	Womens' rights; oppression of women; segregation; misogyny;
255		a woman in the evening, ten o'clock. She was going to	The rule of fear;
256		her home. I felt very sad. At ten o'clock in Iran there	Gender discrimination made him sad;
257		is no safety or security for a woman out of doors. I felt	
258		very unhappy, sad. I felt very sad. Perhaps if I was a	Meaning and values
259		woman in Iran going out alone, this was ethically	Womens' rights brings respect and safety to the community;
260		unacceptable, she was doing something bad or wrong.	There is a place for values here; Trust;

261		For me, seeing the woman here going out at 10 o'clock,	
262		it was admirable! She was respected and safe. You	
263		know, when you are here, you compare everything with	
264		Iran. What you see, compared with what you had,	
265		when I saw that woman, even my relatives are	
266		frightened to go out at night time.	
267		*Observation: While he was talking about this, he looked sad*	
268		*and emotional*	
269	*A*	What else did you compare? – as far as you	
		remember?	
270	*S*	I don't remember anything now. For an Iranian person	Social justice; Corruption (bribery);
271		the expense of seeing a doctor makes things very	
272		difficult and troubled, but here, no. There is some	
273		guarantee, more or less: in Iran there is none, and	
274		people suffer painfully.	
275	*A*	In Iran, you felt your identity and existence were	
276		not accepted. How did you find yourself when you	
		were here?	
277	*S*	Here in fact in London, it is a different world. For me it	New world; new birth, new start;
278		was a new start. It was a new birth	
279	*A*	Are you saying you felt this?	
280	*S*	It wasn't just a feeling. You can see it, you can start	
281		again. It was a feeling of birth. It was a new birth, it	Rebirth (emphasized many times);
282		was real. It wasn't only a feeling, it was birth. It was a	
283		discovery for me, that refugeeing brings a new birth	

284		and a new life, not necessarily physically	
285	**A**	How did you find yourself psychologically when	
286		you arrived here? Was everything unfamiliar for	
287		you, or did your brother tell you?	
288	**S**	Here is a different world. It is different – significantly	Different world – new birth;
289		different. There is no comparison	
290	**A**	How is it different? What are the differences?	
291	**S**	Here, as an example, I feel perhaps my memory is not	Freedom is a sense of new birth; Freedom to communicate and to circulate; Freedom of information;
292		supporting me sometimes, there is the freedom to	
293		access information, a circle of free information. This is	
294		an example. Unbelievable	
295	**A**	Did you feel this at the beginning?	
296	**S**	Yes, from the beginning. Here it is totally different.	Receives recognition; Social justice; One's financial status is not politically prejudiced; Existence and suppression of existence; Misrecognition; Violation of human rights;
297		The issue is no longer 'they don't want me'. Here,	
298		everything is different; here the economy is not	
299		politically prejudiced. In Iran your economical status is	
300		politicized, and that also determines your national	
301		security. Here it is not like that. Here, you go out, you	
302		come back in the evening with two bags of shopping,	
303		but in Iran it is not like that. In Iran you are or you are	
304		not, and we were not! Yes.	
305		*Observation: While he was talking he moved his head, very*	
306		*assertive and clear. Emotional, breathes deeply, sighs*	

307	**A**	What did you imagine about England, before you	
308		came here?	
309	**S**	I didn't imagine anything. I had no idea I would see	Nothingness; Conscious choice; motivation; commitment to meaning and values; being driven by the circumstances;
310		these things. I simply wanted not to be there. Even if I	
311		didn't have my brother here to come to, if I went to a	
312		different part of the world, it wouldn't have made much difference	
313	**A**	You mean you wanted to be in any place which is	
314		not Iran?	
315	**S**	Yes. I just wanted not to be there. I just wanted not to	Threat to existence; to self Psychological paralysis; death; Conscious choice Rejection; misrecognition;
316		be there. It is not simply that I didn't want, and I had a	
317		choice, it was impossible. You know? They didn't want	
318		us. We were not the only second class people, low class	
319		people, I am sure many people are in the same circumstances.	
320	**A**	What about the people who agreed with the	
321		regime and worked for them?	
322	**S**	I'm not sure even if they went with the regime	Corruption; fear;
324		ideologically. Do you know, perhaps they were given	
325		money, bribed to go with the regime, but didn't believe	Terror;
326		in the ideology. It is far from my mind – I cannot	
327		believe that the regime was able to convince people	
328		ideologically. This is my view	
329	**A**	What did you have in your mind about coming to	
330		England, of what you might want to do?	
331	**S**	I had no idea. I just wanted not to be there. I couldn't	ldn't be there;

332		live there. I came to live here. I had no ideas in my	Loss of identity;
333		mind about what I should do or achieve. At that time I	Suffocation; threat to existence;
334		had no idea at all what I should do. From that point I	
335		began to study here, but I had no idea. I just came	In a positive way the spur to make a change; A hope for life;
336		here to breathe and to live, and I can do this more or	Social justice;
337		less, here. From that period the situation was like this;	Freedom; Human right to live;
338		I had no idea about it, but later on, this changed.	Meaning and purpose;
339		In Iran I couldn't breathe, I was being suffocated. I	Living in harmony; Possibilities;
340		couldn't satisfy my basic everyday needs without	
341		compromising my freedom. It is my right to have an	Human rights;
342		ordinary life. Here I have been given the right to live as	Care and respect; integrity in the social order;
343		a human being. I didn't have that possibility there. Do	Interaction with the new society; Trusting others;
344		you know, I value the situation here, and what I have!	
345		I am grateful to people here, and to the system, from	
346		the bottom of my heart. In Iran there are many good	Desire for the greater good of humanity;
347		people, despite the system; but because the system is	
348		corrupt, the Afghani people in Iran are suffering, the	
349		Kurds are suffering. Here, if the government didn't	
350		respect human rights, if there was no human rights	
351		convention functioning, if the government had no	
352		respect, ordinary individuals here could not do a lot	
353		The government and the people, the system is OK, I	
354		have seen many liberated people – liberated, liberated genuinely	
356		I would like to express my feelings here; I would like to	
357		express my gratitude to the government and to the	
358		people here. To me and to many of us, it gave a new	
359		chance, as human beings. I wish billions of people who	

360		suffer in the world, could have a better life	
361	**A**	How do you see your current situation nowadays?	
362		We moved from the period when you arrived in	
363		this country, and now we concentrate on a	
364		different stage	
365	**S**	Now I feel both emancipated, and strengthened. Interestingly, these two parameters do not conflict each other. I feel the strength of course, not to exploit other people. As a person, I feel emancipated. I feel I have freedom. I have freedom. I have been liberated	Emancipation and strength; Freedom and liberation; Non exploitation; Equality; Value system; Signs of new birth;
366	**A**	What do these feelings mean to you? Can you	
367		describe this?	
368	**S**	I feel I am able, er … perhaps I can't express myself in	
369		Farsi, I mix Farsi, English and Turkish! (*laughing*)	
370	**A**	Yes, you can talk in Turkish !	
371	**S**	I feel I have strength and ability. I feel the debt I owe	Receiving and giving; Motivation to make a positive change; Hope, purpose and action; Determination to end discrimination; Determination to implement human rights and social justice; Future focus; Helping others; The tomorrow plan; Importance of culture and education for others;
372		to other people. I wish, and I don't want actually to put	
373		aside my motivation, I have this dream, I don't want it	
374		to stay only in my mind like a fantasy, I want to act. I	
375		hope and I will put it into action. Those people whose	
376		situation was the same as mine, and ours, the tribes	
377		and religious and ethnic minorities, who were	
378		discriminated against, also gender discrimination and	
379		religious discrimination, I want to do something for	
380		them. This is my 'tomorrow plan' – my future. This is	
381		my ideology for tomorrow – at least through working in	

382		cultural and educational activities for others, I want to	
383		do everything I can, and I will – in small or large steps	
384		*Observation: When he was talking, his posture changed. He sat up*	
385		*straight and became very serious and confident. All the time, he*	
386		*moved his head affirmatively*	
387	**A**	What are you doing here now?	
388	**S**	Talking about my work and my study?	
389	**A**	Yes	
390	**S**	I work as a mini-cab driver in an Iranian car agency. I	In harmony with the new society, and contributing actively to it;
391		am very happy in my work, it is a good job, I love it, it	
392		is the best job in the world! Financially I can stand on	Enjoying his job and his studies;
393		my feet, and I can be in touch with the rest of the world	
394	**A**	It seems you love your job?	
395	**S**	Yes, I love my job. I love my job! About my studies –	Strength with education; Self reliance;
396		part of my strength comes from my education. It	Determination;
397		helped me to stand on my feet.	
398	**A**	You said you had no idea when you came here,	
399		about doing anything or achieving anything or	
400		studying. What made you study?	
401	**S**	After a while when I had settled down, from the start, I	
402		studied, but not very seriously; my brother and other	Learning for its own sake, and to widen his world; Using the technology freely;
403		people advised me to study. I don't consider education	
404		to be only for obtaining a bachelor's or master's degree.	

405		As long as you freely use the internet to learn, perhaps	Access to information; interaction with people; knowledge is power and freedom;
406		it is not very organized, but you can enjoy learning and	
407		make yourself more able and powerful and useful.	
408		Education is not just academic education. When I go	
409		out, I have conversations with different people, and I	
410		always learn through these interactions.	
411	*A*	You mean, in social relationships you can learn from others	
412	*S*	Yes, I learn from others. When I came here, my native	Freedom of speech improved his native language – rich ideas being exchanged; Persecution – being silenced;
413		language improved. You know, in this place, you can	
414		communicate with many different groups of people,	
415		even in Kurdish and other languages and with Indian	
416		people – but my native language improved	
417		considerably. In my own land, we didn't have this	
418		chance! They don't recognize us, we are nothing to	
419		them. Our native language was persecuted.	
420	*A*	Are you saying that here is not your country, but your native language improves? What do you mean?	
421	*S*	Yes. My native language is much stronger and richer here	Language can be used creatively; Recognition;
422	*A*	What is the reason for this?	
423	*S*	Yes. Here, we are encouraged. We can take lessons	His identity is respected;
424		and go to many classes. For example I can go to school to	
425		learn Turkish. My way of speaking it is slightly different, but	
426		there are similarities. They arranged classes and started to	Creative expression and freedom; Access to music, art, language, good teachers, instruments;
427		teach people. I don't need to get permission or a license to	

428		learn to speak my language! And the music! I was too poor	Violation of human rights and of basic freedom;
429		to learn music. Those who were financially able to study	
430		music in Iran had to do it secretly, they were afraid of being	
431		caught. *(In Turkish)* To whom can I tell my pain? It is	
432		shameful that people are stopped from learning or performing	
433		music. Can you imagine people being scared to learn to play	
434		music? I couldn't afford the money to go to learn music	
435	*A*	You highlighted your future plan. Would you like	
436		to tell me a bit more, about what you want to do, personally	
437		and socially?	
438	*S*	I don't have a clear picture in my mind. My wish is for	Working for others; Sharing and developing values; Creating and developing his own community;
439		my future to become more than just the daily round. This is	
440		what I want	
441	*A*	What do you mean?	
442	*S*	I would like to do something valuable for others, and to	
		benefit others	
443	*A*	You would like to do something valuable for	
		others?	
444	*S*	Yes	
445	*A*	With what we have said in this respect, what else	
446		would you like to add? I hope I didn't make you	
		tired!	
447	*S*	No, not at all. I don't have anything in my mind, but if	
448		you have any questions I will answer them. What I have told	
449		you in this interview wasn't only saying. It is what I live.	

450		(*laughing, smiling*) If you want me to explain or explore	
451		anything else, please ask me	
452	**A**	Thank you. If you like, I will summarize what we	
453		have done so far; then if you want to add	
454		something, please do it. We talked about your	
456		circumstances within Iran. To put it in one	
457		sentence you said you couldn't breathe and you	
458		were suffocating	
459	**S**	Yes	
460	**A**	Socially and personally, in all aspects of your life	
461	**S**	My identity was under attack	
462	**A**	You couldn't think of anything but the need to	
463		breathe again	
464	**S**	Yes	
465	**A**	Because of this situation you couldn't stay there,	
466		and you escaped	
467	**S**	Exactly	
468	**A**	When you arrived in this country you saw the differences, and you started to compare what you	
		had with what you were now facing in this	
		country, and also you saw the respect and	
		humanity with which women are treated here.	
		You are not under persecution, and you are	
		valued as a person. Your identity was recognized	

		in this country. This helps you to celebrate it.	
		Even your language improved!	
469	*S*	Yes! Yes, my language improved	
470	*A*	Also you studied, and you felt overall empowered.	
471		You feel relaxed and able to choose your future	
472	*S*	Yes, exactly	
473	*A*	You can invest in your future without fear or	
474		obstacles. You can make choices. You are now	
475		taking responsibility to do something for others,	
476		and you are expanding in this way, the meaning	
477		in your life. You said you don't want actually to	
478		concentrate on an everyday life style, but to	
479		develop a life that has meaning. Transcending	
480		your everyday life into a meaningful life for others …	
481	*S*	Exactly	Engaging with our interview and trusting me. Wants it to be a positive mouthpiece for his values and to help others.
482	*A*	What else would you like to add?	
483	*S*	Yes, I agree completely with what you have said	
484	*A*	Thank you for the time you have given	
485	**S**	You are welcome.	

Appendix 7

Initial List of Themes - Sina
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Commitment to meaning and values; 24.311-312
Being driven by the circumstances; 24.311-312
Threat to existence; to self;   24.315-319
Psychological paralysis; death; 24.315-319
Rejection; 24.315-319
Misrecognition; 24.315-319
Corruption; fear; 24.324; 25.325-328
Terror; 25.327-328
Couldn't be there; 25.331-332
Loss of identity; 25.331-332
Suffocation; threat to existence; 25.335-339
In a positive way the spur to make a change; A hope for life; 25.335-337
Social justice; 25.331-340
Freedom; 26.341-343

Human right to live; 26.342
Meaning and purpose; 26.344
Living in harmony;   26.345
Possibilities; 26.343
Human rights; 26.349-353
Care and respect; integrity in the social order; 26.349-353
Interaction with the new society; 26.345-358
Trusting others; 26.345-358
Desire for the greater good of humanity; 27.360
Emancipation and strength; 27.365
Freedom and liberation; 27.365
Non exploitation; 27.365
Equality; 27.365
Value system; 27.365
Signs of new birth; 27.365
Receiving and giving; 28.371-372
Motivation to make a positive change; 28.372-383
Hope; 28.372-383
Purpose and action; 28.374-375
Determination to end discrimination; 28.371-383
Determination to implement human rights and social justice;   28.373-383
Future focus;   28.373-380
Helping others; 28.371-383
The tomorrow plan; 28.380
Importance of culture and education for others; 28.381-382
In harmony with the new society, and contributing actively to it; 29.390-393
Enjoying his job and his studies; 29.390-393
Strength with education; 29.395-396; 30.397
Self reliance; ; 29.395-396; 30.397
Determination; 30.397

Learning for its own sake, and to widen his world; Use the technology freely; 30.401-410
Access to information; interaction with people; knowledge is power and freedom; 30.401-410
Freedom of speech improved his native language – rich ideas being exchanged; 31.412-418
Persecution – being silenced; 31.418-419
Language can be used creatively; 31.421
Recognition; 31.421
His identity is respected; 32.423-428
Creative expression and freedom; 32.423-428
Access to music, art, language, good teachers, instruments; 32.423-434
Violation of human rights and of basic freedom; 32.427-434
Work for others; Share and develop values; Create and develop his own community; 33.439-440
Engaging with our interview and trusting me; Wants it to have a positive effect;
A mouthpiece for his values and to help others;

Appendix 8

Clustering Process - Sina
Human rights and social justice; 7.84-89 suppression; 3.37 suppression (3); 6.76-78 ; 6.81-83; 7.84-89 ; 17.217-223 Repression and violation of human rights; 7.84-98
Repression; 7.90-98 Repression; 8.102-105 Suffering; 8.108-115 Suffering; 2.26 Suffering; 7.98 Repression; 9.116-118 Human rights violation; 110.128-129 Human rights violation; 10.128-138 Violation of human rights and social justice; 17.218-219 Social justice; 1.9 Social justice; 3.37-38 Social justice; 3.37-45; 4.46-47 Social justice; 4.50-53 Social justice; 6.76-78 Social justice; 17.217-221 Violation of human rights and of basic freedom; 32.427-434 Social justice; Corruption (bribery); 21.270-274 Violation of human rights; 23.296-301 Social justice; 25.331-340 Corruption; 24.324; 25.325-328 Personal experience; 10.113-131 Friends and relatives being killed or suffering; 10.130-138 Poverty; 10.134-135 Exploitation; 13.170-176 Persecution – being silenced; 31.418-419

Defending human rights and social justice; 3.29 Defending the rights of his tribe; 3.37-39 Right to speak, self- expression; 1.9-11
Defending his ethnic group; 3.37-45; 4.46-47 Defending his ethnic group; 4.50-53
Defending his ethnic group 4.56-57 Defending social justice; 5.62-64
Human rights and social justice for his tribe; 5.68-71 Defending his people: violence against their existence; 7.84-98 Loyalty to his people; 10.137-138 Defending his tribal group; 12.158-160 Commitment to human rights and social justice; 12.154-163 Defending human rights and social justice; 12.154-163 Defending social justice, human rights; 15.202-203 Social connection and status; 16.211-213 Condemning the regime; 17.221 Human right to live; 26.342 Social justice; 23.293-304 Human rights; 26.349-353 Giving voice to his people; 1.9-13. Human rights violation forces him to risk his life to bring a change; 13.179 Repression forced him to act; 11.152-

153 Opportunity and the energy to use it; 11.152-153; 12.154-155 Being driven by the circumstances; 24.311-312 Escalating his concern; 10.137-138

Secularism; 2.14 Religious dictatorship; 2.24 Secularism and religious dictatorship; 3.44-45; 4.46-47 Power and control; 13.175-176

Ethnic minority; 2.17-18 Ethnicity; 2.23 Ethnicity; 2.24 Ethnicity; 3.34

Ethnicity; 3.37 Ethnicity; 3.39 Ethnicity; 3.43 his ethnicity and nationality; 3.43-44

Ethnic minority; 4.56 Nationality and ethnicity; 5.62-64 Ethnicity and nationality; 5.68-71 Ethnicity; 7.96 Ethnicity; 8.103 Ethnicity; 10.137-138

Recognition; 2.17-18 Recognition; 3.29-34 Recognition; 3.37-43 recognition; 3.37-45 Recognition; 11.146 Recognition; 11.149-150 Seeking recognition 12.155-156 recognition; 13.172 Misrecognition; 17.217-223 Misrecognition; 23.297 Misrecognition; 24.315-319 Recognition; 31.421 His identity is respected; 32.423-428 Misrecognition; 6.76-78 Misrecognition: the regime labelled them as a threat; 6.83 Misrecognition undermines the self; 7.97-98 Receives recognition

Freedom; 3.40-41 Freedom; 13.170-171 Creative expression and freedom; 32.423-428 Freedom to communicate and to circulate; 22.291-293 Freedom of information; 22.291-293 Freedom; 26.341-343 Access to information; 2.19-22

Culture; 6.74 Cultural roots; 6.76-78

Living under fear and terror; 8.111-115 Fear of risk; 14.181 Fear he might get caught; 14.184 Fear of the unknown; 14.184-185 Fear; 14.187-189 The rule of fear; 20.256-266 fear; 24.324; 25.325-328 Terror; 25.327-328

Survivors Feeling of guilt; 10.130-138

Making change; 13.179 Purpose and action; 28.374-375 Motivation to make a positive change; 28.372-383 Determination to end discrimination; 28.371-383 Determination to implement human rights and social justice; 28.373-383 Determination; 30.397

Hope; 16.211-213 Hope; 28.372-383 Knowing where he was going; 16.211-213 Possibilities; 16.211-213 Future focus; 12.155-156 Future focus; 28.373-380 In a positive way the spur to make a change; A hope for life; 25.335-337 The tomorrow plan; 28.380 Desire to develop his way of life; 17.222-223

Meaning and purpose; 13.179 purpose and meaning; 12.155-156 Meaning and purpose; 2.18

Purpose and meaning; 2.26 Purpose and meaning; 7.90-98 purpose and meaning; 8.108-115 Keeping his values; 17.222 Meaning and values; 20.256-266 Motivation; 24.311-312 Commitment to meaning and values; 24.311-312 Meaning and purpose; 26.344 Value system; 27.365

Identity; 2.17-18 Identity; 3.34 identity; 3.37-45 Identity; 8.111-114 Identity; 11.146 Identity; 11-149-150 Identity; 13.172 Tribal identity, group identity; 15.204 Belonging; 11.146 Belonging; 11.149-150 Loss of identity; 25.331-332 Misrepresentation; 2.26 Misrepresentation; 7.90-98 Misrepresentation; 8.111-114 Rejection; 24.315-319

Language; 8.103-105 Language can be used creatively; 31.421 Language; 7.96 Language; 8.103-105 Violation of right to speak mother tongue; 7.96-98

Conscious choice; 4.56-57 Conscious choice; 24.311-312; 24. 317

Responsibility; 1.11 Commitment; 10.137-138

Resistance; 2.17-26 Resistance; 7.90-98 Resistance; 8.111-114

Being treated as if they don't exist; 2.25-26 Threat to their existence and identity; 6.81-83 Threat to his existence; 17.219-221 45 Being treated as if they don't exist; 7.90-98 Being treated as if they don't exist; 8.111-114 Constant threat to existence; 12.155-163 Threat to his existence; 17.220 Threat to existence; 11.146 Threat to existence; 11.151-152 Existence, identity under threat; 15.197-198 Existence and suppression of existence; 23.297 Threat to existence; to self; 24.315-319 Psychological paralysis; death; 24.315-319 Sense of suffocation in being there; 17.217-221 Sense of suffocation, being there; 17.217-218 Couldn't be there; 25.331-332 Suffocation; threat to existence; 25.335-339 Unknown; 15.194 nothingness 'there'; 15.197-198 Nothingness; 23.310

His values on gender equality; 18.242-243 Womens' rights; 20.256-266 Oppression of women; segregation; misogyny; 20.256-266 Gender discrimination made him sad; 20.256-266 Womens' rights bring respect and safety to the community; 20.256-266

Trusting a new environment; 17.224-227 Connecting to the new society; 19.251 Trust - that he can live in this environment; 19.251 Finding himself and his values; 19.251 There is a place for values here; 20.256-266 Trust; 20.256-266 Living in harmony; 26.345 Care and respect; integrity in the social order; 26.349-353 Interaction with the new society; 26.345-358 Trusting others; 26.345-358 Desire for the greater good of humanity; 27.360 Non exploitation; 27.365 Equality; 27.365 In harmony with the new society, and contributing actively to it; 29.390-393

One's financial status is not politically prejudiced; 23.297-299 Enjoying his job and his studies; 29.390-393 Strength with education; 29.395-396; 30.397 Self reliance; 29.395-396; 30.397 Learning for its own sake, and to widen his world; Use the technology freely; 30.401-410 Access to information; interaction with people; knowledge is power and freedom; 30.401-410 Freedom of speech improved his

native language – rich ideas being exchanged; 31.412-418 Access to music, art, language, good teachers, instruments; 32.423-434

New world; new birth, new start; 21.277-282 Rebirth (emphasized many times); 21.277-282 Different world – new birth; 22.288-289 Freedom is a sense of new birth; 22.292-293 Hope and rebirth; 17.229-232; 18.233-236 Signs of new birth; 27.365

Helping others; 28.371-383 Importance of culture and education for others; 28.381-382 Emancipation and strength; 27.365 Freedom and liberation; 27.365 Work for others; Share and develop values; Create and develop his own community; 33.439-440 Receiving and giving; 28.371-372

Access to social assets and connections; 12.162-163

Engaging with our interview and trusting me; Wants it to have a positive effect;

A mouthpiece for his values and to help others;

Appendix 9

Clustering of Themes - Sina
Violation of human rights and social justice.
Defending human rights and social justice and loyalty to his people.
Secularism, religious dictatorship controlling people through abuse of power.
Corruption, poverty and exploitation.
Living under fear and terror.
Sense of suffocation in being there and threat to existence.
Ethnic minority and nationality.
Recognition and respect for his identity; misrecognition.
Culture.
Identity and being misrepresented.
Women's rights and gender discrimination.
Language and expression.
Motivation to make a positive change.
Hope, focusing on the future and desire to develop his way of life.
Commitment to meaning and purpose.
Conscious choice.
Responsibility and commitment.
Access to social asset and connection and community.
Survivors' Feeling of guilt.
Freedom and access to information.
Resistance.
Interacting and adapting meaningfully with the new environment.
Rebirth in the new world.
Emancipation, strength and liberation; helping others.

Appendix 10

3. 8 Table of the super-ordinate themes in Sina's transcript		
Super-ordinate Themes		
	Page/line	**Key words**
Violation of human rights and social justice as a threat to Sina's existence:		
Violation of human rights and social justice	10/130	'were killed'
Corruption, poverty and exploitation	10/135; 25/325	'become poorer'; 'bribed'
Living under fear and terror	8/112	'machine gun'
Sense of suffocation in being there and threat to existence.	17/217	'I was suffocating'
Secularism, religious dictatorship controlling people through abuse of power	2/14	'secularism'
Women's rights and gender discrimination	20/257	'security for a woman'
Sense of self is rooted in his ethnicity and culture		
Ethnic minority and nationality	5/70	'ethnic minority within Iran'
Recognition and respect for his identity	11/146;	'do I belong';
Misrecognition.	17/220	'belonged'
Culture	8/104	'culture'
Identity and being misrepresented	15/204; 34/461	'represented'; 'identity'
Language and expression	7/96	'language'
By following his values Sina made a conscious choice and took responsibility to develop his way of life		
Motivation to make a positive change.	28/373	'my motivation'

Hope, focusing on the future and desire to develop his way of life.	17/222	'searching a way of life'
Commitment to meaning and purpose.	23/310	'wanted not to be there'
(Continued)		
Conscious choice.	24/317	'conscious choice'
Responsibility and commitment.	12/158	'lost his life'
Freedom is the essence of Sina's existence; his life's purpose is to defend human rights and social justice and to remain loyal to his people.		
Defending human rights and social justice and loyalty to his people.	4/51; 3/29	'my fellow citizens' 'human society'
Freedom and access to information.	22/292-3	'freedom to access information'
Resistance.	2/26	'always hurt me'
Sina experienced a psychological rebirth; in the UK his values were respected, enabling him to adapt himself and to help others.		
Interacting and adapting meaningfully with the new environment.	19/251	'first good feeling'
Rebirth in the new world.	21/282	'it was birth'
Emancipation, strength and liberation; helping others.	27/365	'emancipated, and Strengthened'
Access to social assets and connection and community.	163	'belonged to someone
Survivors' Feeling of guilt.	10/130	'After I came here, my closest friends were killed'

Appendix 11

Frequency of Themes - Sina (Themes/Frequency)
Violation of human rights and social justice**/28**
Defending human rights and social justice and loyalty to his people**/25**
Secularism, religious dictatorship controlling people through abuse of power**/4**
Corruption, poverty and exploitation**/3**
Living under fear and terror**/8**
Sense of suffocation in being there and threat to existence**/20**
Ethnic minority and nationality**/14**
Recognition and respect for his identity; misrecognition**/17**
Culture**/2**
Identity and being misrepresented**/15**
Women's rights and gender discrimination**/5**
Language and expression**/5**
Motivation to make a positive change**/6**
Hope, focusing on the future and desire to develop his way of life**/9**
Commitment to meaning and purpose**/12**
Conscious choice**/2**
Responsibility and commitment**/2**
Access to social asset and connection and community**/1**
Survivors' Feeling of guilt**/1**
Freedom and access to information**/7**
Resistance**/3**
Interacting and adapting meaningfully with the new environment**/22**
Rebirth in the new world**/6**
Emancipation, strength and liberation; helping others**/6**

Appendix 12   **Collective 229 Themes - Nine participants**

Participant	Themes
Sina	Violation of human rights and social justice.
	Defending human rights and social justice and loyalty to his people.
	Secularism, religious dictatorship controlling people through abuse of power.
	Corruption, poverty and exploitation.
	Living under fear and terror.
	Sense of suffocation in being there and threat to existence.
	Ethnic minority and nationality.
	Recognition and respect for his identity; misrecognition.
	Culture.
	Identity and being misrepresented.
	Women's rights and gender discrimination.
	Language and expression.
	Motivation to make a positive change.
	Hope, focusing on the future and desire to develop his way of life.
	Commitment to meaning and purpose.
	Conscious choice.
	Responsibility and commitment.
	Access to social asset and connection and community.
	Survivors' guilt.
	Freedom and access to information.
	Resistance.
	Interacting and adapting meaningfully with the new environment.
	Rebirth in the new world
	Emancipation, strength and liberation; helping others
Darius	Being alone and missing family
	Human rights and social justice and violation of these values
	Meaning and purpose and his value system
	Fear, danger, threat to his life and risking his life to escape
	Responsibility, action and Motivation

	Hope and patience
	Process of adaptation in his new life
	Religious dictatorship
	Moral Dilemma and Psychological conflict
	You can make changes if you want
	Considering cultural differences
	Language and his skill in adaptation stage
	Spirituality
	Rejection and misrecognition
	Uncertainty, Confusion and lack of control
	Depression
	Identity and recognition
	Turning point and Conscious choice
	Freedom
	Not to confront the regime directly and Naivety
	False personality to survive
	Became dangerous to the regime
	Trust and safety
	Loss
	Importance of working
Hiva	Violation of Human Rights, Women's Rights and Social Justice
	Defending Human Rights and Social Justice
	Religious dictatorship
	Meaning and purpose and his value system
	Fear, threat and risk to escape
	False personality to survive
	Responsibility, action and Motivation
	Conscious choice
	Ethnic rights
	Identity and selfhood
	Rejection and misrecognition
	Culture
	Freedom
	Escaping process
	Community support
	New birth
	Survival guilt

	Uncertainty
	Hope
	Process of adaptation, facing a new conflict
	Language and his skill in adaptation stage
	Interior strength and resources
	Family responsibility
Karimi	Violation of human rights and social justice
	Defending Human Rights and Social Justice
	Women's rights and gender equality
	Religious dictatorship
	Meaning and purpose and his value system
	Fear, threat, unbearable situation and risk to escape
	Responsibility; Action and Motivation
	Conscious choice
	Ethnic rights
	Identity and selfhood
	Culture
	Freedom
	Family responsibility
	Escaping process
	Interior strength and resources
	New birth
	Survival guilt
	Uncertainty
	Hope
	Process of adaptation, facing a new conflict
	Language and his skill in adaptation stage
	Recognition and respect
	Positive future
	False personality to survive
Sara	Violation of Human Rights, Women's Rights and Social Justice
	Defending Human Rights and Social Justice
	Religious dictatorship
	Meaning and purpose and his value system
	Fear, threat, unbearable situation and risk to escape
	Responsibility; Action and Motivation

	Conscious choice
	Ethnic rights
	Identity and selfhood
	Culture
	Freedom
	Motherhood and family responsibility
	Escaping process
	Interior strength and resources and overcome psychological barriers
	New birth
	Survival guilt
	Guilt
	Hope
	Process of adaptation, facing a new conflict
	Language and his skill in adaptation stage
	Recognition and respect
	Motherhood and battlefield
	Loss
	Supportive network
	Overcoming psychological barriers
Watan	Violation of Human Rights, Women's Rights and Social Justice
	Defending Human Rights and Social Justice
	Religious dictatorship
	Meaning and purpose and his value system
	Ethnic rights
	Fear, threat, unbearable situation and risk to escape
	Responsibility; Action and Motivation
	Conscious choice
	Identity and selfhood
	Culture
	Freedom
	Escaping process
	Uncertainty
	Interior strength and resources and overcome psychological barriers
	New birth
	Hope

	Process of adaptation, facing a new conflict
	Langua
Parya	Violation of Human Rights, Women's Rights and Social Justice
	Religious dictatorship
	Cultural repression of women
	Defending her women's rights within the family
	Psychological injury for women
	Fear and threat
	Unbearable situation
	Freedom
	Meaning and purpose and his value system
	Family Dynamic
	Motherhood and family responsibility
	Responsibility, action and commitment to make a change
	Conscious choice
	Recognition and respect
	Hope and bright future
	Escaping process
	Adaptation process, facing a new conflict
	Phoenix Moment
	Supportive network
	Future Plan
	Receiving Asylum - Identity
	Selfhood and interior strength
	Interview Process
Lida	Religious dictatorship
	Violation of Human Rights, Women's Rights and Social Justice
	Defending Human Rights and Social Justice
	Supportive family network
	Identity
	Ethnicity
	Freedom
	Language
	Purpose, meaning and value system
	Changes
	Responsibility, action and commitment
	Conscious choice

	Collective movement
	Marriage and interior strength
	Intolerable situation
	Fear, risk, threat forced her to escape
	Escaping process
	Adaptation Process
	Respect and recognition
	New Birth
	Family conflict
	Culture
Gila	Religious dictatorship
	Violation of Human Rights, Women's Rights and Social Justice
	Defending Human Rights and Social Justice
	Loss
	Trust
	Trauma
	Fear, risk, threat forced her to escape
	Survivor's guilt
	Family responsibility, Motherhood and battlefield
	Identity (Group, Political)
	Ethnicity
	Freedom
	Language
	Purpose, meaning and value system
	Self for others
	Responsibility, action and commitment
	"If I want to, I can"
	Hope
	Conscious choice
	Escaping process
	Supportive network
	Uncertainty
	Adaptation Process
	Respect and recognition
	Importance of working
	New Birth

Appendix 13

Table 3. 10 Clustering themes for the group (26 themes)
Violation of human rights and social justice
Women's rights and gender equality
Religious Dictatorship
Fear, threat, unbearable situation and risk to escape
Ethnic Rights
Meaning and purpose and value system
Freedom
Responsibility; Action and Motivation
Conscious choice
Motherhood and battlefield
Family responsibility
Loss
Fear and Risk in escaping
Hope
Uncertainty
New birth
Recognition and respect
Process of adaptation, facing a new conflict
Language and skill in adaptation
Supportive network
Positive future
The importance of being in work
Survival guilt
Identity and selfhood
Culture
Internal strength and resources

Appendix 14

Table 3. 11 Master table of five super- ordinate themes for the group	
Threat to their existence **Violation of human rights as a threat to the self**	
Violation of human rights and social justice	
Karimi: I was in prison for a long time, and I have been tortured severely	10-11
Sina: I must not speak or be familiar with my mother language	95-96
Darius: The government tried to control everything and never let the young people tell or say what they want	29-30
Hiva: At the end of 2005 I was arrested, and imprisoned.	41-42
Sara: Women, with no rights at all, not even towards their children.	86-87
Watan: I was arrested and they asked me to write that I would not do it again, not to involve with any political activities.	65-67
Parya: You mustn't let any of your hair show!	110-111
Lida:I wasn't allowed to wear my national costume or to speak my language.	39-40
Gila:I was tortured to give information. I didn't.	144
Women's rights and gender equality	
Karimi: the regime attacks, separates the women from the men.	36-37
Sina: That bus unfortunately segregated human beings according to their sex.	242-243
Hiva: Gradually they accepted the rights of women, and encouraged them to fight against the regime.	223-225

Sara: As a woman I must fight inequality.	93
Watan: Relationships here – for example, between men and women – here it is very much better.	439-440
Parya: For a woman the first obstacle is to be a political activist and the other is to overcome the culture which limits women in this way	50-53
Lida: When I was there, I was invisible. I had never been understood or accepted.	257-259
Gila: The way I was living, made other people come to me and confirm I'm no second class citizen as a woman.	377-379
Religious Dictatorship	
Karimi: You are fighting an enemy who has no humanity. They torture children.	
Sina: Perhaps if I was a woman in Iran going out alone, this was ethically unacceptable, she was doing something bad or wrong	259-260
Darius: walking in the street, you know, they caught you if you had short sleeves or long hair or tee-shirts	119-120
Hiva:They kept us in prison; we were declared guilty on five counts: insulting the Islamic religion …	46-50
Sara:The sight of police or religious guard in Iran was horrifying	119
Watan:At the school they tried to involve me in religious activities	105-106
Parya: When I talked with the children in my room, there was a religious guard spying.	179-181
Lida:A lot of innocent people and youngsters were getting killed. They even killed babies	50-52
Gila:The Islamic regime started the repression; we didn't start anything.	27-28

Fear, threat, unbearable situation and risk to escape	
Karimi: You have to accept either to die there – but it's not only you, you have your family – or to live, that is, to escape.	20-21
Sina: from the time the central government took the machine guns in hand, the situation of the people, of whom I am one, got worse, not better	111-114
Darius: they used very bad languages to my dad, looking for me	81-8
Hiva: I was always under their observation	22-23
Sara: the government attacked our region	12
Watan: The regime created a situation where you can't trust anyone	55-56
Parya: you are all the time under surveillance	195-196
Lida: I was in danger. I couldn't stay	66-67
Gila: The regime attacked us and began to kill our people	20-21
Ethnic Rights	
Sina: central government regarded the minorities, and the different ethnic groups as a threat, and continue to	82-83
Hiva: My ethnicity, my identity, was under threat.	72
Sara: I am from an ethnic minority	10
Watan: I suffered because of my ethnic minority.	128-129
Lida: I learned about injustice and persecution, In particular towards our ethnic group.	21-23
Gila: I stood against the regime, not only for my ethnicity, although my ethnic identity is dear to me.	11-13

Their value system and commitment	
Meaning and purpose and value system	
Karimi: Seeing those things, I couldn't sit aside.	88
Sina: This feeling even helps you to take risks	179
Darius: I never lived like that	57-58
Hiva: I thought about the justice and values and meaning we will bring to the people	77-79
Sara: As a human being I have to do something. As a woman I must fight inequality.	92-93
Watan: I can't actually convince myself or justify myself to be politically inactive.	341-342
Parya: I wanted to do everything to help the students. But I wasn't allowed to!	251-253
Lida: Those things pressed me to get involved, the path I should take.	23-25
Gila: I wanted freedom for all Iranian people	13-14
Freedom	
Karimi: have no right to talk of freedom	25
Sina: I feel I have freedom. I have freedom. I have been liberated	
Darius: I mean the style of life, yes. Freedom of speech; everything	140-141
Hiva: God created humans in freedom to be free – men and women	217
Sara: My house became a freedom fighters' centre in our city	20

Watan: No one can stop me to ask me what I'm thinking about, what I wear, or where am I going – I am free.	322-324
Parya: I had no freedom to express my views	175-176
Lida: fighting for justice and freedom	47
Gila: For as long as I have blood in my veins I will fight for freedom.	62-63
Responsibility; Action and Motivation	
Karimi: I fought for freedom – freedom of speech, social justice, work and equal opportunity for everyone. A home for everyone. Health service for	81-83
Sina: I want to do something for them. This is my 'tomorrow plan' – my future. This is my ideology for tomorrow	379-381
Darius: I try to change everything	446
Hiva: My political activities did not allow me to have a family	40-41
Sara: I decided I can also be a freedom fighter, not only a follower. I too can fight against that suffering which the regime inflicts.	67-69
Watan: I joined the political movement, but I wanted to find, to do something.	58-59
Parya: I always respected my ideas and my views. When I was in Iran I was fighting for them.	580-582
Lida: I was a member of the organised Movement against the regime in Iran.	84-85
Gila: I stood against them! I carried on, and I will carry on against them! I don't want the regime to think that by executions they can survive	52-54
Conscious choice	

Karimi: I couldn't ignore what was going on against the people.	78
Sina: I just wanted not to be there. I just wanted not to be there. It is not simply that I didn't want, and I had a choice, it was impossible.	315-317
Hiva: Before me, many people chose this way, and they also inspired us. Our martyrs inspired us.	80-82
Darius: because I was not such a person, I couldn't do like that	57
Sara: I joined their party, and received military training and political education.	69-70
Watan: I joined different political groups against this injustice	53
Parya: I made my own decision.	215
Lida: I seriously wanted to do something.	31-32
Gila: I was a member of political parties against the regime, and in the underground activity.	108-109
Motherhood and battlefield	
Sara: I was worried, anxious, especially as a mother with three children	51-52
Gila: I had little children, I always think of them.	31-32
Parya: I was scared for the children.	311
Lida: My God, where am I going – my son at that time was 15 years old	179-180
Family responsibility	
Karimi: But it is not only yourself. It's your relatives, your family under threat.	10-11

Sina:I came away, but amongst my relatives and my family, people suffered.	132-133
Darius: always I supported the family	308
Hiva: Unfortunately, I was badly stressed because of my brother and sister.	243-4
Sara: The situation was really difficult. I had to combine my responsibility in the party, with being a mother	138-140
Watan: we lost many members of the family and relatives by the regime.	114-115
Parya: My children – particularly my son. I couldn't see any future for him in Iran	239-240
Lida: I was worried for them	188
Gila: I had a responsibility to my siblings and my children. I had to look after everyone.	106-108
Loss	
Karimi: I felt I lost my control as head of family	282
Sina: I came away, but amongst my relatives and my family, people suffered.	132-133
Darius: will you be able to see your family again or … not?	382-383
Hiva: I arrived in London, I felt – how can I start all over again?	143-144
Sara: For seven years I didn't see my eldest daughter. Seven years!	174-175
Watan: I lost many relatives; and many were put into prison.	22-23
Parya: I do all the jobs, with the children, everything. It isn't easy living here.	547-549

Lida: I was a stranger, a foreigner … I lost everything	31,134
Gila: I lost my husband, my father and my mother my three brothers also were executed. They were 23, 21 and 19 years old	214-216

Creating possibilities	
Fear and Risk in escaping	
Karimi: it was not easy to leave my country.	67
Sina: The several million who escaped from Iran were those who could.	160-161
Darius: My hope was just to stay alive	320
Hiva: Those who escape might aim to carry on their political activities. If they stay, they cannot be active, lest they lose their life.	97-99
Sara: As soon as my husband got his refugee status here, I came and joined him.	189-190
Watan: To help me escape from Iran, my parents, my family borrowed money.	246-247
Parya: A relative acted as a go-between and helped us to organize our escape plan.	298-299
Lida: I had to escape, urgently	67
Gila: escaping was very problematic I had a lot of difficulty in reaching here but if I have to do something, I will. I never give up in the middle, even if I die.	169-171
Hope	
Karimi: I had no experience of it, but I knew I was going somewhere where I would be respected as a human being.	177-178
Sina: For me it was a new start.	277-278

Darius: That hope kept me alive	378
Hiva: I was apprehensive, but I had hope	166
Sara: I had relatives and friends in the UK, the situation here wasn't totally unfamiliar.	326-328
Watan: I have hope!	260
Parya: I could also see my brother's life in Germany – he's a doctor there.	217-218
Lida: The waves brought the wood to the coast and I hoped I would then find my own way.	205-207
Gila: Before coming here, I hoped for a better life, because my sister was here.	422-423
Uncertainty	
Karimi: When I came here I was thinking a lot, I was alone, what would I do	190-191
Sina: I couldn't believe they would let me leave the country so easily. For more than two days I felt fear. I couldn't believe it.	187-189
Hiva: how can I start all over again? I felt I am a baby.	143-144
Darius: Uncertainty. Yes. No control over your own life …	358
Watan: I didn't know we were in England – I thought at first it was another country.	193-194
Parya: Worrying where we are going – can we go anywhere?	323-324
Lida: Everything was unknown. I was a stranger, a foreigner.	130-131
Gila: I wondered would they be accepted, would they would get asylum.	172-173

Psychological rebirth and overcoming obstacles

New birth	
Karimi: In another country where you weren't born there, they treat you as a citizen. It is a huge difference.	188-190
Sina: It was a new birth.	278
Darius: I can change things.	535
Hiva: This was a new birth for me, and I was apprehensive, but I had hope.	165-166
Sara: My decision to fight, to be a freedom fighter, gave me energy! Before I came to this decision it was extremely difficult for me.	152-154
Watan: I can have a life here.	204-205
Parya: I felt I was saved, rescued. I'll never forget this feeling.	375-376
Lida: This was like a new birth for me. The very day of my birthday I received my leave to remain.	318-320
Gila: Here is now my country also	243
Recognition and respect	
Karimi: I felt there are people who can understand you.	187
Sina: we haven't been represented	25
Darius: the police, border agency came. Actually when we saw them treating us like that, with respect and very polite	393-395
Hiva: It is very painful not to be recognized as a political refugee.	347-348
Sara: If you want to do anything for others, they won't stop you	236
Watan: I felt I was in heaven.	222
Parya: I'll never forget it. Someone recognised me, respected me.	382-384

Lida: They recognised me as a human.	322
Gila: I am very grateful to this country for accepting us; they treat us as equal citizens.	394-396
Process of adaptation, facing a new conflict	
Karimi: I grew up in my culture. It was really hard to adjust	259-260
Sina: My native language is much stronger and richer here.	421
Darius: I did a lot of things to change the situation.	460
Hiva: We set up a business, which in two years became very successful. I created it!	359-360
Sara: According to our culture, a woman must obey and follow her husband. When she arrives here, she becomes more autonomous and independent	301-303
Watan: The first thing you must learn is the language, and also to follow your legal case to get your asylum, and to live in a healthy way, and to work.	476-479
Parya: My husband finds it hard to accept the situation here	480-481
Lida: But my husband is not happy!	360
Gila: When I see how the boys and girls are free here, there are tears in my eyes.	294-295
Language and skill in adaptation	
Karimi: I went to the college, the teachers respected me, when I did my engineering course I was respected – I have learned a lot here.	291-293
Sina: I have conversations with different people, and I always learn through these interactions.	409-410
Darius: Someone who doesn't know any English, he might find this situation very, very hard.	766-768

Hiva: engage with this society, get close to it. To interact, language is crucial.	469-470
Sara: It is much easier for a woman to adapt in this society than it is for a man. She can learn the language more easily.	271-273
Watan: The basic thing here is to learn the language.	474-475
Parya: They speak perfect English now	620
Lida: I have to fight to learn the language, to adapt myself to new ways.	241-243
Gila: The first thing I would say to the person is, Go and learn the language.	363-364
Supportive network	
Karimi: I was a member of a left wing party. I'm still with them.	74
Sina: my brother and other people advised me to study	402-403
Darius: English friends in Stoke on Trent, they wrote me a letter	470-471
Hiva:First I created the business with a friend. It worked well.	362-363
Sara: to find your own community; through it you can get support and information about your basic rights.	680 681
Watan: I opened a restaurant in 2012, in Kent, with one of my friends.	350-351
Parya: Of course it helps to have relatives outside. I could also see my brother's life in Germany – he's a doctor there.	216-218
Lida: Without my cousin's help, and my friends, things could have been very difficult.	463-464
Gila: Before coming here, I hoped for a better life, because my sister was here.	422-423

Positive future	
Karimi: I feel our family and my future is bright, I am very optimistic.	450-451
Sina: I want to do something for them. This is my 'tomorrow plan'	379-380
Darius: you can change things if you want	662
Hiva: When you have no recognition from the Home Office you can't think about future.	424-426
Sara: You must make yourself a useful member of society.	761
Watan: if you face difficulties, don't give up. Carry on, keep going.	474-475
Parya: I would like to resolve the problem with my husband	644-645
Lida: I want to work and to integrate more with the people here, and to carry on my political activities. I'm thinking to write a novel!	458-461
Gila: Another way is to stand against the regime. I stood, and I will stand.	435,438
The importance of being in work	
Karimi: It is your duty to work in this country, to be a useful citizen, and also you can help the people here, and the people in your homeland	456-458
Sina: I am very happy in my work, it is a good job, I love it	390-391
Darius: if someone is working there is a variety, he goes out, he comes in, he creates …	749-750
Hiva: I spent four years developing successful business plans for different people and I was able to survive.	377-379
Sara: I am active here, working for womens' rights. We established an organisation.	332-334

Watan: A person who doesn't work is like a dying flower. They get weaker and weaker.	480-482
Parya: He says he can't accept menial work.	509-510
Lida: he or she must work. They must get themselves a job, somewhere to live – be active, not sit at home.	473-475
Gila: I want to be useful. I pay my taxes, I work here, my children are decent people, they work hard.	260-262
Survival Feeling of guilt	
Karimi: I feel guilty because I'm not in the battlefield.	399-400
Sina: I came away, but amongst my relatives and my family, people suffered	132-133
Darius: It's hard, because my mother you know, passed away. I didn't want to leave my family.	299-300
Hiva: I don't feel I'm fighting now. I feel guilty.	300
Sara: I felt guilty, a bad mother, I felt shame.	494
Watan: I couldn't do a lot – I didn't attend meetings but I try now always to attend them and keep active.	343-345
Gila: I thought of my brother I left behind. I wasn't comfortable about it.	234-235
## Their sense of self and cultural adaptation	
Identity and selfhood	
Karimi: I have my own identity. My rights won't be violated.	365-366
Sina:I don't need to get permission or a license to learn to speak my language!	427-428
Darius: because I was not such a person, I couldn't do like that. I	57-58

never lived like that.	
Hiva: When you are in prison in Iran, you ARE a hero! You are fighting for your values. You are a living martyr.	290-292
Sara: Your identity was under threat	436
Watan: I suffered for my identity!	129
Parya: I found my identity.	386
Lida: if I wanted to go anywhere, I wasn't allowed to wear my national costume or to speak my language.	38-40
Gila: my ethnic identity is dear to me	12-13
Culture	
Karimi: You go from one country to another country – from one culture to another.	243-244
Sina: they didn't teach us our language and our culture.	103-104
Darius: I do Yoga, meditation and things like that	590-591
Hiva:I came from my own culture, and I keep those values which are important for me.	490-492
Sara: I came from a different culture	737
Watan: I follow my own values.	316-317
Parya: That culture regards a woman as a person who should stay at home.	37-38
Lida: In this country you are regarded as equal to men.	430-431
Gila: My ethnic origin is my heart.	16
Interior strength and resources	
Karimi: These things forced me to fight, and I will carry on until the end of my life	91-92
Sina: This feeling even helps you to take risks.	179
Darius: always I try to think positively about changes and whatever I go through.	591-592
Hiva: I have created more than six businesses for other people in Europe, and they did well.	360-362

Sara: My belief; and my passion for humanity and equality. Fighting against injustice – these things make people strong	635-636
Watan: Human beings can fight against anything they have to face.	262-263
Parya: If I wanted to do something, no one could stop me.	134-135
Lida: I found myself. I found my position.	231-232
Gila: I am confident I can go through any difficulty.	440-441

Appendix 15

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages.

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to

security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.