Asylum 2.0?
A qualitative study on Afghan refugees in the Netherlands

by

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Author Note

I was first drawn to the topic of this thesis because of my background as a child of Afghan refugees who came to the Netherlands seeking for asylum. This thesis came to be more challenging than I had ever anticipated because it came along with one of the toughest periods in my life. In the midst of finding the course of this thesis changing by the harsh realities of people being forced to leave their country while at the same time being restricted by border control, I suddenly found myself being confronted with the meaning of a single document and the freedom that it comes with, often taken for granted by many. I want to give thanks to those who have always supported me, my parents who have always pushed me to study, above all other things and to realize that it is a true privilege, the love of my life for whom I will continue to fight for despite the many bureaucratic as well as cultural obstacles, and not to mention those who were willing to participate in this study and relive their not always so happy experiences. A very special thank you to my supervisor dr. M. Spotti, for his guidance in my work and for believing in me even when I didn’t do so myself, but also for his incredible patience while I was dealing with setback after setback. Even though finishing this thesis seemed impossible at times, I am happy to say that I have learned from every step of the way, and “the beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you” – B.B. KING.
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Abstract

In today’s world, characterized by globalization, superdiversity and continuous rapid developments in technology, forced migration remains a harsh reality for many. This research aims to explore and understand the process of forced migration and asylum seeking and the role of the internet and advanced communication technologies in the lives of refugees today. This study focuses on the lived experiences of Afghan refugees in the Netherlands comparing them between two different points in time; the early 1990’s just before the rise of the Internet and in present times. In this relatively small timespan big changes have taken place regarding the global interconnectedness through the internet and the integration of modern communication technologies in everyday life. Through interviews this study densely describes what is learned about refugee experiences, what the impact of modern communication technologies is and if it has altered the meaning that is attributed to being an asylum seeker. An intensive data analysis showed an online aspect to be completely absent. However, in line with studies on increased border control and securitization, this study did reveal that journeys of refugees nowadays have become more difficult and dangerous, more fragmented and involved more smugglers compared to journeys in the 1990’s – concluding this study with a discussion on the autonomy of migration.

Keywords: Globalization, technology, forced migration, asylum, Afghan refugees, smuggler, autonomy of migration
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The many facets of Globalization and its complexity

Over centuries, people from different countries have settled elsewhere with reasons ranging from socio-economic issues to simply having no other choice because of life threatening circumstances. In the beginning of the nineties there has been a remarkable *immigration flow* in the European Union (formerly known as the European Commission) reaching its peak in 1992 with 679 000 people seeking for asylum (CBS, 2015). This immigration flow was mainly the result of the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in 1991. Since that time the number of asylum seekers have not been as high, until very recently (CBS, 2015). In 2014 the number of people seeking asylum in the European Union was 562 000. The current situation in the Middle East, and with that the Syrian conflict and more so the political instability that has been born out of the fall of totalitarian regimes, has led to even more people seeking for asylum in Europe (United Nations, 2015; Bahçekapılı & Četin 2015).

Alongside this occurrence, there has been a major *technology revolution* over the past twenty years which is closely linked to and a key element of globalization. Globalization is defined as the continuous and multidirectional flow of people, goods and communication across borders made possible through increased mobility and advanced technologies. Moreover, it is a term “to represent the perception of the world as an interconnected whole and the consciousness that a growing number of issues can no longer be addressed purely at a local level” (Papastergiadis, 2000: 76). Through rapid developments in communication and information retrieval the world and its inhabitants whether the settled ones or those on the move, have become more networked and connected than ever. Computer mediated communication has been integrated into our everyday lives and we have come to rely on communication technologies as we are no longer bound by time and space. Mobile phones which back then were a luxury for some, have quickly become smart and a necessity for the mass. The internet has developed into a social medium tying together the contributions of millions of people and continues to grow every second as media content is both consumed and produced by people worldwide (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Shirky, 2011).
Furthermore, the accessibility of the Internet has increased greatly, smartphones in particular have changed the communication infrastructure in a great way as they are portable and have a wide range of affordances. Vertovec (2004) critically notes that nothing has stimulated global linkage more than the burst of cheap international telephone calls. However, applications such as Skype and instant messaging further reduced the costs of international communication while at the same time allowing for richer and more intimate communication (Komito, 2011; Shirky, 2011; Rigoni & Saitta, 2012). Furthermore, social media usage has broadened the range of possibilities to keep in touch with people leading to even more complex network structures and networked societies (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Technologies in today’s world range from data to mass communication means that all together form a multimediatic scape with a global reach at an incredible speed (van Dijk & Spoorenberg, 1999).

The increased interpenetration of technology in contemporary societies has brought along changes in all aspects of our everyday world, it has changed social, political, economic as well as cultural structures (van Dijk & Spoorenberg, 1999; Barney, 2004). We now live, in what Castells (2004; 2010) calls the network society as society is increasingly structured in and around (information) networks mainly driven and facilitated by technology. Digital communication and information technologies that are globally networked form the basic infrastructure of the network society that both shape as well as connect different domains of society (van Dijk & Spoorenberg, 1999; Barney, 2004). Where a social network used to rely a great deal on face-to-face communication in the network society these social relations are increasingly maintained or established in media networks (van Dijk & Spoorenberg, 1999). The global reach of these media networks allows social networks to stretch internationally (van Dijk & Spoorenberg, 1999).

The presence of a dance network structure has led to the deterritorialization of different realms of society as society has become so interconnected that domains which were once separated, such as economics, politics, education but also public and private spheres, now flow into one another. It is exactly this dynamic network structure pervading every aspect of society tying it into a complex whole and transforming social organization (van Dijk & Spoorenberg, 1999). One of the key features of a network society is that it is not simply the presence of technology that shapes the modern society but it is the interaction of technology with society (Castells, 2004; Castells, 2010). Where Castells (2010) believes that networks are the
fundamental elements that comprise society, van Dijk and Spoorenberg (1999) explain that it is still human beings that make up society, people who live in families, who work in groups, associations and organizations. As people build and maintain relations, both internal and external, they become linked in and by networks. Essentially van Dijk and Spoorenberg argue that networks indeed influence how society is organized but they do not equal (the actual content of) society.

The global interconnectedness and the deterritorialization of different domains of society have been further intensified by globalization. Economic exchanges and activities increasingly take place on a global scale and state control is increasingly challenged to operate and co-operate internationally (Barney, 2004). In addition to the foregoing, improved technologies of transport along with the decrease in the costs of travel have enhanced mobility. Migration – whether circular or provoked by war, whether temporary, transient or permanent - in contemporary societies across the globe has become an everyday practice (Papastergiadis, 2000; Barney, 2004). Migration patterns are now far more intricate and can no longer just be understood as a single one directional move. In the light of this fact, Papastergiadis (2000) speaks of the ‘globalization of migration’ which he defines as; the “multiplication of migratory movements; differentiation in the economic, social and cultural background of immigrants; acceleration of migration; expansion in the volume of migrants; feminization of migration; deterritorialization of [settled:SA] cultural communities and multiple loyalties of diaspora.” (Papastergiadis, 2000: 86).

The combined effects of the rise of the network society, the complexity of today’s migration patterns and intensified processes of globalization have led to mainstream society becoming highly diverse (Papastergiadis, 2000; Blommaert, 2013). What used to be diversity in terms of an ‘ethnic minorities’ paradigm has since the 1990’s gradually turned into ‘superdiversity’ (Vertovec, 2007; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). Vertovec (2004) describes superdiversity in terms of the ‘diversification of diversity’ as over the past twenty years variables have raised that have altered the dynamics of society considerably. Not only is there now more diversity in terms of the multiplication of the number of countries of origin or the number of nationalities (within a society), but the convergence of different social backgrounds have also brought along more cultural, linguistic as well as religious diversity (Vertovec, 2004; Castles, 2002). On a global scale countries of origin differ in their levels of wealth, education, prosperity et cetera, but within
any ethnic minority there will also be diversity with regards to social class, culture, language, religion, income and political divisions (Vertovec, 2004).

When discussing migration it should be noted that it is not a neutral concept, “the experience of migration varies from the traumatic to the opportunistic” (Papastergiadis, 2000: 23). One could very well understand that migration for the purpose of working and having a well payed job in a high status country is advantageous and appealing. However, migration can also be a dangerous enterprise for the disadvantaged, as it is often the case with refugees. Reasons for migration differ from person to person and people with different migration purposes will also have different migration experiences (Vertovec, 2004). However, in most cases reasons for migration are blurred. Conflicts of war or other life threatening situations for example often come hand in hand with economical motivation for migration (Castles, 2003). Different forms of migration have given rise to numerous migrant categories and immigration statuses which are accordingly tied to specific rights, conditions and restrictions (Vertovec, 2004). Thus in the same way people within the same ethnic minority might belong to different migrant categories.

All of these factors condition how people live, where they live who they interact or establish social relations with (Vertovec, 2004). The social surroundings will more or less determine who they interact or establish social relations with. Not only are immigrants in contact with the 'host society' but they also come into contact with people from different backgrounds who, just like themselves, have immigrated. People with the same cultural or ethnic background often group themselves together (Vertovec, 2007). In the same way people within a certain migrant category will also accumulate in the same geographical and or demographical area (Vertovec, 2007). The gender and age distribution of immigrants often corresponds to other variables such as a specific migrant category, nationality or ethnicity but perhaps also to a specific geographical or demographical area. These different backgrounds and different experiences affect immigrants' identities but also their relations with non-migrants as well as with each other. The social surroundings and the social interactions that arise from it will often determine their access to accommodation, education, employment or other facilities and in turn their social-economic position in society (Vertovec, 2004).

It follows that the host society can no longer be considered homogenous as the very presence of the immigrants themselves has reshaped society. It is exactly the interplay of numerous variables that have led to diverse societies gradually turning into superdiverse societies.
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(Vertovec 2004; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). Diversity has become so complex that it can no longer simply be measured by the number of countries of origin or the number of nationalities present within a society (Vertovec, 2004; Vertovec, 2007).

The previously discussed advanced developments in technologies of communication, the internet and the rise of the network society only make the notion of superdiversity even more complex as they have made way for transnational communities to arise (Castles, 2002; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Blommaert, 2013). Transnationalism is defined as “the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement.” (Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton, 1992: 1)

Back in the day, when the technologies that are available today hardly existed, long-distance migration often meant an abrupt ending of close relations and cultural spheres (Hiller & Franz, 2004). Posting letters and later on audio tapes made it possible to keep in touch with friends and relatives. Later on telephones made synchronous communication possible, however maintaining continuous communication was still limited by costs (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). In most cases visiting the home country was also not an option because of high travel costs. (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

People who are geographically dispersed from one another are now able to participate in transnational activities as they are no longer bound by borders (Rigoni & Saitta, 2012). As communication technologies have advanced, there are various possibilities to reactivate, maintain or even deepen social ties. Migrants are now able to reconnect with the communities they had left behind and to reintegrate their cultural heritage. Furthermore, migrants use the internet to stay updated about happenings, events and news in the home country, but also about trends in for example music, television and fashion (Elias & Lemish, 2009). “In the situation of relocation and resettlement, when old links have been torn asunder and the new ones have yet to be established, the internet is used by immigrant adolescents for virtual reconnecting to the homeland, thus preserving some continuity between the past and the present, keeping alive their original life story” (Elias & Lemish, 2009, p. 542).

Through the internet it is not only possible to maintain existing ties in the home community but it also gives space for connecting with other transmigrants around the world as well as creating new relations in the host society (Komito, 2011; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014;
Elias & Lemish, 2009; Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). Improved mobility and advanced communications enables migrants to be part of the home community while building and maintaining relations in the new society at the same time (Castles, 2003; Elias & Lemish, 2009; Komito, 2011). In the complex network of migrants the host country and the home country are merely nodes. The web has moved people from faraway places from diasporic to being transnationally linked (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

Cultures therefore become deterritorialized as belonging to a specific community or culture no longer depends on being physically present in a location and having a common territory. People feel that they belong to a certain cultural community even though they are physically not present. It also implies that cultures can no longer be characterized in terms of a common and distinct identity tied to a specific national or regional area. Transnational communities and the deterritorialization of cultures make the notion of superdiversity more complex, because as transmigrants engage in complex activities across national borders it shapes their lives and potentially transforms their identities. Thus superdiversity is more complicated as migrants are increasingly part of multiple communities. They maintain links with their home country, they might maintain links with other transmigrants across the globe and at the same time they might have relations in the direct environment where they live (Papastergiadis). As migrants increasingly engage in complex activities across national borders, it shapes their lives and potentially transforms their identities (Papastergiadis, 2000; Castles, 2002; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). The extent to which migrants engage in transnational activities, the nature of the relation (economic, familial, social) and the degree to which transmigrants identify with the host society versus other forms of collective belonging, all add further dimension to migrant’s identities.

1.2 Asylum 2.0
The ongoing civil war in Syria that started in 2010 has led to large numbers of people fleeing the country causing a huge flow of asylum seekers into Europe (Bahcekapili & Cetin 2015). The huge flow of war refugees trying to reach Europe caused a humanitarian crisis as large numbers of refugees including children unfortunately did not survive to make it to their intended destination. Many countries in Europe, and in the countries bordering Syria are not able to handle the large number of asylum seekers or refuse to offer asylum and it has become a serious
issue on humanitarian, political and economic grounds. This most recent immigration flow is right in the middle of the Internet era (Gladwell & Shirky, 2011). Nowadays refugees too have smartphones with google maps, they too are updating their Facebook status and through the Internet they too are connected with the rest of the world. Za’atari refugee camp in Syria, close to the border to Jordan, opened up in 2012. It was reported that within the first 3 months, 30,000 refugees stayed there and among them were approximately 10,000 mobile phones (Maitland & Xu, 2015). This goes to show the abundance of modern communication technologies among people worldwide. As one could imagine, mobile phones and its possibilities for connecting with relations through instant messaging applications and social media is of crucial value to those who are forcefully displaced. The affordances of smartphones are not only limited to connecting to friends and family, but the use of geographic mapping technologies such as Google maps facilitates the journey to a safer place (Brunwasser, 2015).

1.3 The aim of this research
Within the context of globalization, superdiversity and modern technologies in everyday life, this study sets out to examine the impact of new communication technologies on migration, particularly when it comes to forced migration and their usage in the lives of both refugees and asylum seekers. How does one experience being a refugee in a world where there are numerous ways for communication and information retrieval? Has global interconnectedness through advanced technologies and the internet changed the meaning of being an asylum seeker and has it changed how one does ‘asylum seeking’? In order to identify the effects of modern communication technologies on refugee’s lives today and the effects that it may have on how people become asylum seekers and do asylum seeking it is interesting to look at stories of refugees who came just before the rise of the Internet and compare them with those of refugees who came in more recent years, belonging to marginal streams of society but who are yet networked. How did people manage the process (of migration) at a time when communication by technological means was limited? Questions that arise immediately are for example: where did refugees get their information? How did they network? What were their motives to migrate and how did they arrive at their intended destination? Thus, the focus here is on confronting and comparing the process of forced migration and asylum seeking during two specific times in between which major changes have taken place in terms of communication, networking and
information retrieval. More specifically, the focus is on the contrast (if there is any) between immigration flows during the pre-Internet era versus immigration flows during the Internet era.

1.4 Relevance of this study

Over the years migration studies have focused more and more on the social networks of both migrants and non-migrants, which will be elaborated on in the conceptual framework of this thesis. The reason for this focus is that research on experiences of established migrants showed the importance of communication networks in reaching where they stand today (Schapendonk, 2014). Although studies have shown the benefits of communication technologies for migrants reviving or maintaining long distance relationships, this qualitative study differs in that it provides insight into the definite contrast between migrants’ experiences prior to the transformation in communication technologies and the rise of the Internet and migrants’ experiences in present day society where having your smartphone with you is as important as having your wallet with you. Keep in mind that all these migrants have been engaged in the asylum procedure.

Migrants are not a homogenous group of people, they do not only differ in their national, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds, but they also differ in their motives for migration. To be able to say anything about the impact of the internet and modern communication technologies on migration and integration in general we need to zoom in on migrants’ lives and report about their experiences and networking strategies, in the pre-internet era versus in today’s digitalized world. As Castles (2003: 22) puts it; “There can be no local studies without an understanding of the global context and no global theorization without a basis in local research”. Focusing on Afghan refugees in the Netherlands, as a case in point, this study forms a great starting point for research on the effects of modern communication technologies on a micro level.

One of the reasons for choosing the Afghan population in the Netherlands is that most existing research on this particular topic is on the bigger cultural groups in the Netherlands whereas relatively less qualitative research has been done in the Afghan cultural community. The Afghan population in particular form an interesting group of people for the purpose of this research as the citizen war in Afghanistan led to a major flow of Afghans seeking for asylum in the early 1990’s. Up until this day, Afghanistan remains a country of war and over the years the
number of Afghans leaving their country in hope for a better life continued to grow. The current instability in the Middle East, mainly in Syria, has led to another major flow of people seeking for asylum in Western Europe. Among this flow are also many Afghans who see the ‘open refugee passages’ as an opportunity to flee the continuous political instability in the country and the possible (second) rise of the Taliban (van der Laan, 2015). Thus Afghans being part of both the major flow of refugees in the 1990’s as well as the current flow, makes them particularly interesting for the purpose of this research. My own cultural background, being born in Afghanistan and privileged to be brought up in the Netherlands, puts me in an excellent position to carry out this research as my own social network enables me to collect data from Afghans migrating to the Netherlands during two specific time periods; in the early 1990’s just before the digital era and in present times.

1.5 Overview

Having sketched the context for this research explaining the goal and the relevance of this research, a conceptual framework will follow in chapter 2. As this thesis focuses on refugees and asylum seekers, the conceptual framework will begin with discussing forced migration and what exactly distinguishes forced migrants from other migrants. Subsequently, the concepts of migration and integration will be discussed and how these concepts are susceptible to the modernization of communication technologies through which migrants can nourish their roots. Chapter 3 presents an overview of policies, laws and regulations concerning forced migration and asylum procedures in the Netherlands during the studied time period. Considering the aim of this research is to confront two major migration flows against one another mediated by the internet and social media, it is important to look at how migration patterns have affected policy changes or perhaps how policy changes have influenced migration flows. Chapter 4 covers the methodology section. Chapter 5 consists of an in-depth analysis of the collected data and will be followed by a discussion and conclusion in chapter 6.
Chapter 2: Conceptual framework

2.1 Forced migration

It is endemic to people all over the world to abandon their home country hoping to find a safer place (Bahcekapili & Cetin 2015). Forced migration “refers only to people forced to leave their countries due to individual persecution on specific ground” (Castles, 2003, p. 14). Forced migrants differ in that they left their home country unwillingly which is often accompanied by traumatic experiences (de Vroome & van Tubergen, 2014; Castles, 2003). Forced migration has a big impact on people’s lives as it often leads to communities breaking up, disrupting social relations, economic resources and traditional lifestyles (Castles, 2003). In the attempt to improve their lives, or save as often is the case when discussing forced migration, home is left behind taking nothing along but memories (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). These people have been completely detached from their former lives causing a disruption of both social and symbolic ties which are difficult or rather impossible to transfer to the new destination (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Faist, 2000; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). As they are displaced from their home community, the lives of migrants are most susceptible to the modernization of communications (Komito, 2011).

2.2 Internet and integration

When people arrive at their destination a world of insecurities, confusion, and barriers opens up. Resettlement, especially in the initial stages are usually hard to come by. It is often accompanied by the loss of social status, language and cultural familiarity, which puts migrants in an extremely vulnerable position (Faist, 2000; Elias & Lemish, 2009). The process of integration is challenging and is considered to be one of the most intricate experiences a person can encounter in their life (Elias & Lemish, 2009). Depending on migration motives (voluntariness), personal background and information you have about the host society, adapting to a host society might be easier for the one than for the other.

Forced to leave behind the country of origin and adapting to a host society is often stressful and can result in health problems such as anxiety and depression (Walker, Koh, Wollersheim & Liamputtong, 2015; Berry, 1997; Yakusho, 2010). It is exactly in this stage where the internet can truly support integration into the host society. According to Elias &
Lemish (2009) the internet in particular is of great value in the initial stages of resettlement as the former life has been cut off abruptly and at the same time connections in the host society are limited. Walker et al. (2015) marked the importance of social support and social involvement for overall health. Social networks help support refugees to overcome the difficulties that one faces when being a forced migrant (2009 Elias & Lemish). A reliable communication channel helps refugees communicating with both the host community and their heritage community. It helps them to build and maintain a social network on which they can rely for both social support and social engagement in the host society (Walker et al., 2015).

The internet is also considered to be a valuable means to support the integration of immigrants because it acts as a pool of information. Information in many languages that anyone can easily access, either directly or through the means of automated translation, and which can assist in multiple aspects of life from the bread and butter question to questions about documentation, jobs and places where to find shelter. (Elias & Lemish, 2009). Thus from more practical information useful for surviving everyday life in a new and unfamiliar society to more general information, the internet is a valuable source to gain knowledge about the host society, lowering feelings of anxiety and insecurity and making migrants more independent (Elias & Lemish, 2009).

Russian immigrants in Israel reported that they use the internet on a regular basis to share their migration experiences and to express their struggles in adapting to the host society. Studies have shown the importance of the internet in supporting (especially young) immigrants in the complicated process of identity construction - constructing a ‘new’ identity in the host society as their former identity has been ripped out of its original context. The internet is seen as a cultural resource which can lead to social empowerment (2009 Elias & Lemish).

2.3 The migration network: technologies influencing migration

The impact of new technologies and the internet on migration processes has been increasingly discussed in recent studies, in particular the importance of social networks with the function of bonding and bridging migrants among themselves and with the host society members are extensively identified for both migration intentions and migration processes (Komito, 2011; Hiller & Franz, 2004; Dolfin & Genicot, 2010).
New communication technologies have made so called ‘snowball migration’ easier, as the number of social contacts abroad increase the possibility of assistance in migration also improves (Komito, 2011). Once migrants have settled somewhere, through their social networks they become resources for others in their home country (Komito, 2011). According to Dolfin and Genicot (2010) social networks influence and aid the process of migration from forming the decision to migrate to arriving at the intended destination. The network can provide information crucial to the migration process which is often not readily available to the ‘pre-migrant’ (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). This can be information concerning for example the actual migration process or information on financial possibilities in the host country. Through social media information is exchanged amongst existing social ties but also among newly established social ties (Dekker, Engbersen & Faber, 2015). An important notion when discussing migration is the possession of social capital. Internet applications and social media support migrants in developing bridging social capital as it helps to reinforce and build weak ties (Komito, 2011; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Having bridging social capital is of particular importance for migrants because it is more likely that new and important information circulates through weak ties than through strong ties (Hiller & Franz, 2004; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

Dolfin and Genicot’s (2010) research on Mexican immigrants in the United States of America show that larger social networks are associated with a higher migration rate. Liu (2013) found similar results and additionally found that the larger the social network of non-migrants the higher the migration prospects. However, social media makes it easier to build new relations thus widening the spectrum of possible destinations for migrants (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

An important function of social media is that it acts as a source of information which is quite valuable to migrants. There are many forms of social media, such as blogs and open webpages on which there is a lot of open access information and although at times the quality of the information given can be misleading, it can also work as help to society. Important information concerning migration processes (legal information, informal job information, the (illegal) crossing of borders) can spread easily at high speeds reaching millions of people. Alongside information from official institutions, through social media people have the opportunity to exchange ‘streetwise knowledge on migration’ (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). “Social media form underground communication structures in the domain of illegality, where information can be shared.” (Dekker & Engbersen, 2012, p. 12). Therefore information is less
formal and more understandable thus increasing accessibility (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). This open source of information is also relevant for non-migrants and illegal migrants. As they are not able to approach officials in order to receive information on illegal migration or assistance in settling into a new society.

This information affects the migration strategies that people use. Prospective migrants who are better informed about the possibilities of crossing national borders, might not be needing a smuggler and might choose to travel alone. According to Dolfin & Genicot (2010) this information will increase the chances of migrating successfully and decrease the chance of using a smuggler to arrive at the intended destination. Thus it can lead to the strengthening of people’s capabilities to migrate as well as influence their desire to migrate. (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Shirky, 2011)

As migration no longer means that you have to completely cut off your existing relations in your home country and that one can still maintain these relations from a long distance, it might make it easier for people to decide to migrate. Communication has become less expensive, more frequent and media rich thus enduring the separation from family and friends has become less burdensome (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). The financial aid for migration is another aspect which often is provided by the network. The financial aid through migration networks will stimulate people to decide to migrate, especially those who do not have the ability to migrate because of financial limitations. (Dolfin & Genicot, 2010). Migration networks are also crucial in assistance with integration in the new and often unfamiliar society (Dolfin & Genicot, 2010). Migrants with social ties are often at an advantage in order to attain a job or finding accommodation (Faist, 2000). Thus the social network reduces both the costs that come with migration and the risk of settling somewhere new thus lowering the threshold (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Social media are not merely a new way to communicate within migration networks, rather it is changing migration networks and in turn promotes migration (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Komito, 2011).
Chapter 3: The sociocultural setting of this research

3.1 Asylum in the Netherlands

The Netherlands, like many other western countries, is dealing with the changes in migration patterns and the super-diversification of its mainstream society. Forced migration is a recurrent topic in political discussions which are inseparably associated to ‘national security’ and ‘border control’ (Castles, 2003). The increase in number of asylum applications with its peak in the late 1990’s lead to policy makers becoming less tolerant and to the ratification of the ‘Aliens Act 2000’ in 2001 (Berkhout & Sudulich, 2011). In the Netherlands there has been a shift in focus over the past two decades from a more socio-economic integration to a more cultural integration. Gradually ‘mainstream’ political parties took on mono-culturalism point of view making integration compulsory while taking measures to restrain the inflow of asylum seekers and economic migrants (Van Heerden, De Lange, Van der Brug, & Fennema, 2014; Castles, 2003). The Aliens Act 2000 is still the most important law concerning asylum and migration. Other laws relevant regarding asylum, migration and integration are the Integration law (Wet inburgering), which obligates the integration of foreigners in the Netherlands, and the Dutch Kingdom Act on Dutch citizenship (De Rijkswet op het Nederlanderschap, RWN), which regulates the conditions for obtaining or losing Dutch citizenship (Europees Migratie Netwerk [EMN], 2012).

3.2 Migrant categories in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands the following migrant categories can be distinguished; Asylum migrants, labor migrants, family reunionists, family forming migrants and an ‘alternative category’ (Nicolaas & Spranger; CBS, 2001).

Asylum migration is concerned with people who seek protection from the government in a country of which they do not possess citizenship. Asylum migrants form the largest migrant category in the Netherlands, among this category are those who are seeking asylum but who are not yet given an official status, those who have been asylum seekers and have been given a residence status in the Netherlands, unaccompanied minors, and invited refugees.

Labor migrants, as the term suggests, are those who come for the purpose of performing payed labor in the Netherlands. The category family reunionists consists of those who come for
the purpose of family reunification. They reunite with a family member who has migrated to the Netherlands in previous years. Up until recent years this form of migration is the most prevalent in the Netherlands (EMN, 2012). The forth category, the family forming migrants, are migrants who have immigrated to the Netherlands for the purpose of marriage or co-habitation (Nicolaas & Spranger, 2001). The alternative category registers people who immigrated to the Netherlands for purposes other than one of the first four reasons, e.g. students and trainees.

3.3 Migration history in the Netherlands

The early 1960’s marked the first migration flow which consisted of low educated labor migrants from South-Europe, Turkey and Morocco. These migrants came on Dutch invitation to meet the labor shortages caused by the economic growth after the Second World War, with the mutual expectation of earning money and returning to the home country, hence they were also referred to as ‘guest workers’ (Van Meeteren, Van de Pol, Dekker, Engbersen, & Snel, 2013; Castles, 2003; EMN, 2012).

The recruitment of labor migrants was halted in 1973 when the oil crisis and the economic recession brought an end to the labor availability. Although many guest workers returned to their country of origin, a large number of people did not leave and continued to live in the Netherlands. Mainly Moroccans and Turkish continued to live in the Netherlands. After worker recruitment was completely halted, migration from these countries continued for reasons of family reunification and family formation. From 1976 migration for the purpose of family reunification was the most prevalent type of immigration of non-Dutch citizens to the Netherlands (EMN, 2012).

From the 1990s onwards there was a remarkable increase in the number of asylum seekers gradually increasing from about 90 thousand a year to a 120 a year. (Berkhout & Sudulich, 2011). This massive flow of refugees was mainly the result of political instabilities in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism. The war in former Yugoslavia and the Kosovo-crisis caused high numbers of immigration. Also conflicts in countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia led to an increase in number of asylum application (EMN, 2012).

Alongside these major migration flows, the Netherlands also experienced postcolonial migration from Indonesia (then Dutch East Indies) in the 1950’s and from Suriname after their independence in 1975. Migration from the Netherlands Antilles became prevalent towards the
ASYLUM 2.0?

late 1980s and early 1990s. Diversity in the Netherlands continued to grow as migrants from other western countries and the rest of the European Union (Poland, Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU which opened up borders for them) started coming to the Netherlands. (Van Meeteren et al., 2013; Engbersen, Van der Leun, & De Boom, 2007; Bevelander & Veenman, 2006).

3.4 Policing migration
The first law to regulate the coming of foreigners on Dutch territory dates back to 1849 and was mainly aimed at reducing unsafety on the countryside caused by homeless and beggars from outside the Netherlands. With this law it became mandatory for foreigners to check in with the police at arrival and check out when departing the country. This law was revised in 1965 in order to regulate the access and eviction of foreigners by law. With this law different legal statuses, e.g., refugee status and permanent residence status, were to be distinguished improving the overall legal position of foreigners (EMN, 2012).

As it became clear a large part of labor migrants had no intention of returning to the home country, gradually measures were taken to limit migration from these countries. Another reason for West-European countries to introduce restrictive policy on labor migration was the recession in the early 1970s (EMN, 2012).

The increase in the number of asylum seekers in the early 1990’s lead to a second revision of the alien policy in 1994 (EMN, 2012). The goal of the revised aliens act was to reduce the number of procedures concerning access and eviction and also to reduce the processing times. For this reason in 1994 the immigration- and naturalization service (Dutch: Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst [IND]) was established to make sure the asylum and migration policy were brought into practice efficiently (EMN, 2012).

However in 1995, it turned out that the number of procedures were still high and processing times were still too long. In order to regulate the asylum policy more efficiently and to reduce the number of asylum applications, the law was revised again leading to the ratification of the new Aliens Act 2000 in 2001. The main goal of this new aliens act was to end the long-term uncertainty that asylum seekers experienced about whether they could stay or not. With the enforcement of the Aliens Act 2000 a large part of asylum seekers encountered with relatively quick processing times of the asylum application, which may have had a discouraging effect on
ASYLUM 2.0?

potential asylum seekers with low chances of being granted asylum (EMN, 2012). From this point on, a decline was prominent in the number of people seeking for asylum in the Netherlands (Berkhout & Sudulich, 2011; EMN, 2012).

One of the recent changes which have been relevant for the asylum procedure has been the ratification of the ‘improved asylum procedure’ (Verbeterde Asielprocedure) also called PIVA in 2010. Up to 2010 the decision on an asylum request had to be made within 48 processing hours. Applications which could not be decided upon within the given timeframe would be directed to the extended procedure, this usually took much longer than desirable. For this reason PIVA came into force changing the original 48-hour procedure into an eight day general asylum procedure so that asylum requests could be processed quicker and more carefully resulting in more asylum seekers getting more clarity on the outcome of the asylum procedure (EMN, 2012).

The current asylum procedure consists of a general asylum procedure in which the first hearing and the second hearing take place with the asylum seeker. The first hearing is to identify the asylum seeker and determine his or her travel route. The second hearing will follow to discuss motives for the asylum application. The asylum seeker has the right to make corrections and comments about the documented hearings. With the prolonging of the 48-hour procedure up to 8 days there is also more space for legal assistance to asylum seekers. Information concerning the situation in the country of origin is also taken into consideration when assessing whether asylum should be granted or not. At the end of the general asylum procedure a decision will be made on the asylum request. If however the case remains undecided, the asylum seeker will be redirected to the extended asylum procedure. Extended procedures should also proceed quicker than before PIVA as certain steps have already taken place in the general procedure (EMN, 2012).

3.5 Integration policy

The Dutch integration policy has undergone changes over the past years in interaction with changed societal and political perceptions and with an eye for both the worries and needs of citizens. The result is an integration policy in which the importance of a common ground and a ‘recognizable fundament’ is more accentuated. As an extension of this, more obligated elements
for newcomers are introduced, like integration, testing knowledge of both the Dutch language and society with naturalization. (EMN, 2012).

The Law on integration (Wet inburgering) came into force in 2007 obligating civic integration to all people from the ages of 16 to 65 from outside of the EU who want and are permitted to reside in the Netherlands (EMN, 2012). The main goal of the Dutch integration policy is that everyone in the Netherlands feels involved with each other and with the Netherlands, it has to be a society in which both Dutch citizens and migrants feel at home. With the previously discussed migration patterns in the Netherlands it is fair to say that the Dutch society has become a superdiverse society, however the goal of the new integration policy is not only directed towards building a socially stable and resilient society but it is also directed towards the Dutch society remaining recognizable as Dutch (EMN, 2012).

According to the Dutch government, participation in society, for example when it comes to work, education and accommodation, is key to achieving this goal and the integration policy is directed to equip people to take part in the society. To provide everyone in the Netherlands the chance to build an independent life, the Dutch government decided to speed up the participation of migrants by offering Dutch integration courses. Integration means that people learn the Dutch language and learn about the Dutch cultural society, which is examined with the Integration exam (EMN, 2012).

When the law on integration came into force, the issuing of a permanent residence permit became dependent on whether the integration exam was passed or not. The required Dutch language proficiency according to the law of integration is A2, which means possessing a reasonable basic Dutch language repertoire needed to sustain daily life in the Netherlands (EMN, 2012). In a suggested change of the law, which has been accepted by the parliament’s second chamber since April 2012, the person integrating becomes fully responsible for integrating along with the costs that it entails. A second legislative proposal is to introduce a social loan system for migrants to be able to cover the expenses that come with fulfilling the responsibility to integrate themselves. However this proposition has not yet been accepted by the Senate (EMN, 2012).

The current migration system however needs improvement as practice turns out and thus will be changed in the near future. Since a few years there are several developments to be distinguished which show considerable changes in migration policy. De most important changes
in the asylum procedure have already taken place around the year 2010 with the improved asylum procedure (PIVA) coming into force (EMN, 2012).

In the near future the admission procedure for migrants will change (‘het modern migratiebeleid’). The main train of thought in the current admission system is to be as restrictive as possible. With that it is pronounced that migrants in principle will not be allowed into the Netherlands, unless it concerns an essential Dutch importance, international duties or issues of humanitarian grounds. However there are also migrants who are highly desired in the Netherlands but who encounter the same restrictions. For this reason the modern migration policy should not only be restrictive but also selective. The ambition is to develop a migration policy which is future-proof in which migrants, who are needed by the Netherlands, can be permitted access into the Netherlands quick and effectively (EMN, 2012).
**Chapter 4: Methodology**

“Interpretive research, which is where qualitative research is most often located, assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event.” (Merriam, 2009: 8)

**4.1 Research approach**

The purpose of this research is to uncover and interpret what it means to be an asylum seeker in today’s Internet era versus the early 1990’s, just before the rise of the Internet. As we are studying the lived experiences of Afghan refugees in the Netherlands and their personal histories, a qualitative research approach fits the purpose of this study best (Merriam, 2009):

“… qualitative researchers conducting a basic qualitative study would be interested in (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences.” (Merriam, 2009: 23)

Conducting a basic qualitative research and taking from the above quote from Merriam’s guide to qualitative research (2009), the main focus in this thesis is on; (1) understanding how people interpret their experiences as being an asylum seeker in the early 1990’s against being an asylum seeker in present times. Second, to be able to come to that understanding means (2) seeing the world through the eyes of the asylum seeker to know what it is like to be involved in the process that brings someone to become a refugee. Finally, it is aimed to uncover (3) what meaning refugees assign to their experiences and to the use that they make of the web and of ICT, if any, in the preparation and actual practice of their move.

**4.2 Research design**

**4.2.1 Data collection.**

The primary mode of data collection in this study was interviewing. “Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate.” (Merriam, 2009, p. 88). To explore how refugees experienced leaving their country
and how they managed to arrive at their intended destination during a time where communication and information gain by technological means was limited and how this contrasts against present times, this research interviewed Afghan refugees from two different time periods, namely those who have come to seek asylum in the Netherlands in the early 1990’s and those who came to seek for asylum in more recent years starting from 2010.

A nonrandom purposive sampling approach was chosen “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which most can be learned.” (Merriam, 2009: 77) Thus informants for this qualitative study were carefully selected based on their ethnicity (Afghan), on whether they had come to the Netherlands as refugees seeking for asylum, and on the time of diasporic migration to the Netherlands (either early 1990’s or in recent years). It was expected that the process of migration, from decision to destination, is experienced differently by women than by men and that they would have different perspectives. For this reason gender was also taken into consideration in selecting the informants, however the main focus remained on the contrast between the early 1990’s and present times. Demographics such as age and education were not considered in this study.

My own social network primarily provided fertile ground for finding suitable informants. I approached family, friends and acquaintances who are known to me as refugees who came to the Netherlands either in the early 1990’s or more recently. Informants who came in more recent years were less likely to be found in my direct social network, however the current flow of refugees coming into Europe and the Netherlands made it possible to reach them through personal contacts. A total of four people were selected to participate in this study as the main informants, a male and a female who came to the Netherlands in early 1990’s and a male and a female who came to the Netherlands in more recent years. Doing qualitative research, a small sample size is preferred as it allows the researcher to understand experiences more in-depth and to develop a thick and rich description of that experience (Merriam, 2009). Participants were recruited either in person or through phone, asking them if they were willing to participate in the study.

Merriam (2009) in her guide on qualitative research design shortly discusses the issue of the role of the researcher and being part of the studied group. It could be argued that being an ‘insider’, informants will be more comfortable about sharing their story but it just might be that
the opposite holds true. On the other hand, my cultural background as well as familiarity with the informants may affect this study in terms of validity and reliability due to a supposedly lack of objectivity. Although I am technically an “Afghan refugee”, coming to the Netherlands as a baby with my parents seeking for asylum, it should be noted that I have never actually experienced being a refugee myself. Additionally, considering the focus of this study and taking on the role of a researcher, I approached this study from a perspective that is very different from my personal stance. If anything, being part of the Afghan cultural community, only helped me to be more understanding and nonjudgmental towards informants, in collecting data as well as in doing the analysis. Even more, I strongly believe that the common ground regarding language and cultural background only favors my stance as the researcher as it might lead to a better understanding and interpretation of the collected data. However, it cannot be denied that both data collection and analysis to an extent is indeed shaped by the researcher. According to Blommaert and Dong Jie (2010) it is in fact impossible to be objective without being subjective, but it is important that subjective interference is taken into consideration when ‘being objective’. As Merriam says there are ‘pluses and minuses involved in any combination of interviewer and respondent’ (Merriam, 2009: 108). Nonetheless, taking all of these points into consideration will allow me to keep the objective researcher position.

4.2.2 Exploring through narratives.
As a starting point, prior to setting up an interview guide and finding informants to interview, the stories of two refugees were collected in the form of written narratives. These stories were also collected from within my own social network. The informants were asked to write down their story, their memories, and their experiences from the time leading up to the decision to leave their country up to the first moments of arrival in the Netherlands and settling in the new society. The reason I decided to collect these narratives was to be able to get a grip on migrants’ experiences overall and to be able to formulate relevant interview questions for the interview guide.

The first narrative was written by Nasrin Amiri a woman who came to the Netherlands in 1991 together with her four young children and her in-laws. She has been living in the Netherlands ever since. The second narrative was written by Faiz Sediqi, a man who was a former member of the People’s Democratic Party in Afghanistan who also, due to the rough
circumstances in 1992 had to flee the country. Both informants chose to write their story in Dari (which is a variety of Persian and one of the two official languages of Afghanistan) and were translated into English by the researcher. A copy of the original written narratives as well as the translation of these documents will be included in the appendices of this thesis.

Although the second narrative was more detailed and provided relevant background information, a common thread became apparent of the different phases a refugee goes through from the first moments you become a refugee until you become an asylum seeker in a foreign country. See the following table (1) for an overview of the topics that were extracted from the narratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative 1</th>
<th>Narrative 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Short outline of a difficult situation in Afghanistan</td>
<td>• Political overview and circumstances leading up to a rough situation in Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decision to leave</td>
<td>• Decision to leave (intention to leave for good, no hope for a better future?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deciding on where to go</td>
<td>• Deciding on where to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preparing to leave – selling the house, how to go, with whom to go</td>
<td>• Preparing to leave – financially, plan: first wife and children, smuggler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The journey itself – route – smugglers</td>
<td>• The journey itself – route – smuggler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arrival - Seeking asylum</td>
<td>• Arrival - Seeking asylum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 The Interview Guideline.

Highly structured interviewing is generally avoided when doing qualitative research because a set of fixed questions may not allow informants to freely share their story and thus prevent truly accessing the perspective of the informant, which is exactly what is endeavored (Merriam, 2009). Unstructured interviewing on the other hand generally allows informants to openly tell their story, but it demands great skill and flexibility as there is a risk of feeling lost due to information overload. Thus for the purpose of this study a semi-structured interview format was chosen to encourage participants to discuss their experiences comfortably while being guided through the interview with relevant questions.
The interview guide mainly consisted of open-ended questions and was roughly based on the topics extracted from the two narratives (table 1). One of the first questions to get the stories of participants going was “in what situation were you when you decided to leave the country?” From this point on the same categories and topics that we had found in the narratives could be distinguished in the interview guide. Topics or details, which were not discussed by the participant him- or herself were aimed to be uncovered by asking additional questions and probing. In particular details regarding networking and communication strategies, which might not seem relevant to the participant, have great value for the purpose of the study. The general interview guide was used for both the pre-internet interviews and the post-internet interviews, however as the interview proceeded I adapted the interview questions and made use of probes. Depending on the interview itself certain questions were left out.

Interviews were conducted in either Dutch or English, to avoid losing rawness of data later on in translation. However, this could prevent informants from comfortably telling their story. In trying to take the stance of the interviewee and in trying to understand their experiences from their perspective, it was important that they would understand the questions asked, but also that they would be able to speak comfortably. For this reason, it was also possible to conduct the interviews in Dari. It is also noteworthy that it is only natural for Afghans to generally speak in their heritage language when they are among themselves. Blommaert and Dong Jie (2010) mention that an interview should be like a natural conversation, “Using words that make sense to the interviewee, words that reflect the respondent’s world view, will improve the quality of data obtained during the interview.” (Merriam, 2009: 95). Thus the general interview guide was also prepared in Dari (using the Latin alphabet instead of the Persian alphabet). Additionally I made sure to avoid any questions that could make participants uncomfortable or hesitant to answer. This would hopefully make informants more at ease and allow them to speak comfortably. The interview guide, both in English as well as in Dari, can both be found in the appendices.
4.3 The interview data

4.3.1 Informants.

In this section, I shortly introduce the main informants and explain why they in particular were invited to participate in this study. A more detailed profile of each of the informants will be presented alongside their story in the analysis section of this thesis.

The first informant was Rostam Abassi, an Afghan male refugee who came to the Netherlands in the early 1990’s. The reason why he in particular was requested to participate in this study was that, not only did he fit the criteria for the study, but as a young adult he was one of the firsts in his family to be leaving the country by himself. At that point he had little or no contacts in the Netherlands, thus for the purpose of this study it was interesting to know how he dealt with leaving the country and travelling to the Netherlands.

The second informant was Masooma Asadi, an Afghan woman who came to the Netherlands in 1996. Although I had intended to interview a female, who just like Rostam, had come in the early years of 1990, I chose to request Masooma to participate in this study for several reasons. The main reason was because I had heard that she was widowed in the war of Afghanistan and was left behind with two, at the time very young, daughters. The first thought that crossed my mind was how did she manage to get out of Afghanistan and come all the way to Europe with two young children being a woman in a rather male dominated country? Apart from that, the two narratives which were mentioned earlier, were both written by refugees who came in the early 1990’s, including the interview with Rostam there would already be three episodes of refugees who came during the early 1990’s. For this reason, the fact that Masooma came in 1996 and not in the early 1990’s was disregarded. She was included in this study because of the initial thoughts she had triggered.

The third informant was Bahar Yousufzai, a 22 year old Afghan female who came to the Netherlands in 2012. She was selected to participate in this study because not only did she fit the suggested sampling criteria, but I had come to know, through friends of family members, that Bahar is a girl who came to the Netherlands by herself and had only been living here for a few years. In the same way that Masooma had caught my interest, Bahar also seemed to be an excellent fit for the purpose of this study.
The last informant was Haidar Mohsenzada, an 18 year old Afghan male, who came to the Netherlands in 2014. The fact that his coming to the Netherlands was so recent and that he was willing to participate in this study was enough reason to include him in this study.

4.3.2 Interview setting.
All four interviews took place in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, and were conducted by myself in a quiet space, where informants could openly tell their story and share their experiences avoiding interruptions. The interviews were all scheduled to the informant’s convenience, for example the interview with Rostam took place at a family member’s house, since it concerned a family friend and he happened to be there that day anyway. While family and friends were busy sipping tea and discussing the latest Persian BBC world news, children were running around the house and the ladies were busy chatting and preparing dinner in the kitchen. For the interview we decided to sit in the office of the house (just a spare room with a desk and a computer and some miscellaneous items) so that we would not be interrupted. We pulled in an extra chair from another room and were set to start the interview. Bahar on the other hand invited me over to her apartment one afternoon. Since she was living alone, we decided to do the interview in her living room on the sofa that we had already been sitting and chatting on for the first half an hour that I got there. Almost all the visits started in this way, with informal conversations about work, studies, family and life in general over a cup of green tea and something sweet, setting a very casual tone for the interview.

Interviews were conducted in the language that informants felt most comfortable in telling their story. Conducting the interview in a familiar language brought an even more relaxed atmosphere and a less formal feel to the interview. Although it was aimed for the interviews to be semi-structured, the interviews all more or less took on the form of an unstructured interview. Letting participants tell their story comfortably with the researcher asking through on topics, asking for clarifications or further explanations, it felt more like a conversation.

The interviews were recorded using an iPhone 6S microphone to ensure that everything said was preserved for analysis. Participants signed an informed consent explaining the goal of the research, informing them that their privacy is respected by reassuring their anonymity, and that data will be used for the purpose of this research only. A copy of the informed consent form is provided in the appendices of this thesis. The names of all informants who participated in this
study were changed to ensure their anonymity, I chose to use randomly chosen Afghan names to keep the personalities of the informants alive throughout this thesis.

### Table. 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Early 1990’s</th>
<th>Recent years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview 1</td>
<td>Interview 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rostam Abassi</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Masooma Asadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masooma Asadi</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year left</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filename</td>
<td>INT_1 RA</td>
<td>INT_2 MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>24 April 2016</td>
<td>25 April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>20:10u</td>
<td>15:20u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration interview</td>
<td>31:26</td>
<td>09:10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To ensure internal validity, the analysis and interpretation of the data is presented along interview excerpts and interview quotes. Thick and rich description and interpretation of the experiences, presented along with interview excerpts and quotes, will hopefully show the depth of the interviews as well as enhance the trustworthiness of the study. The initials of the informants are used as abbreviations in the interview transcript, interview excerpts and quotes.

### 4.4 Data corpus and analysis strategy

All four interviews were conducted in Dari, for both insufficient Persian writing skills as well as time limitations the recorded interviews were transcribed in “penglish” or “fargelisi”, using the Latin alphabet instead of the Persian alphabet to write Dari and then translated into English. Although the obvious may be that translation preceded the analysis, in reality it was a process of going back and forth between the data and the findings. The transcriptions in Dari gave enough room to do a global analysis taking on an inductive position using open coding and a constant comparative method. Considering the data set was small and the aim was to analyze the interviews in depth, I did not make use of data categorization. Only passages and quotes relevant for the purpose of this research or that seemed interesting were selected and translated to be presented in the analysis section of the study. As the analysis further developed the original data
corpus as well as recordings were repeatedly revisited and new passages that had not seemed relevant at first were translated. Only the third interview, which was the interview with Bahar Yousufzai, was fully translated and can be found in the appendices of this thesis. This interview was chosen because apart from being more detailed, the first two interviews, which were with refugees who came during the 1990’s, resembled the two narratives which were collected initially. For this reason it was chosen to fully transcribe and translate one of the interviews with refugees who came in more recent years to provide a contrasting example.

Translation was mainly done verbatim, however some words or phrases are difficult to translate as they do not have an equivalent in the English language or due to grammatical issues. In the multilingual setting of this study it should also be mentioned that oftentimes it was not only a matter of language but also a matter of culture residing in the language (Filep, 2009). In cases where verbatim translation would prevent proper translation (e.g. change of meaning), we opted for a free translation to avoid meaning getting ‘lost by translation’ (Filep, 2009). Although the process of data analysis started while collecting data as well as preparing data (i.e. transcribing and translating), the actual data analysis was done in English.

The two narratives that had initially served the purpose of setting up the interview guide, were also used in the analysis to support our findings. Not only will the narratives enrich the data corpus and add to the depth of our analysis, but it will also function as a form of triangulation to further ensure internal validity and reliability.

4.4.1 Data analysis strategy.

Before doing a comparative analysis and looking for similar patterns and striking differences between the two time periods, I chose to look at the story of each informant separately. Before going into the analysis of details it was important to have the context and the background of each story. As the stories were carefully analyzed to extract a short but detailed outline of the interview, new findings uncovered.

Once the stories were outlined, it caught my attention that it was sometimes hard to follow the route that the refugees had come through. For clarity the journeys of all four informants were visualized. Each of the journeys were mapped out using the google application ‘my maps’ which allows to mark routes on to a map. The maps were marked based on the
countries and cities, and sometimes even small towns or areas that were explicitly mentioned in the interviews.

After the initial outline of the stories and mapping out the routes, the interviews were compared searching for similar patterns, contradictions or other rare occurrences. In the theoretical framework of this thesis it was suggested that technology, in particular the internet and social media, has changed migration patterns in a great way. That it particularly plays a role in the migration intentions of non-migrants, that it aids in their decision making, in their preparations to migrate, their networking strategies, that it would help them on the actual road. Keeping this information in the back of my mind, I searched for the processes of the intention to migrate, how the refugees interviewed came to decision to leave the country, how they decided on where to go, how they prepared for their journey, how their journey proceeded and how they stayed in touch with people they know and if they did stay in touch or not, and of course also when they arrived in the Netherlands.

The ‘categories’ that have been extracted from the narratives and that were also used to set up a general interview guide were also used as a general guideline for the comparison between refugees experiences then and now. Each of the interviews were analyzed on these categories, but to fulfill the purpose of this study, in the bigger picture I strived to compare the interviews with refugees from the early 1990’s versus the interviews with refugees who came in recent years.
Chapter 5: Analysis and interpretation

The overall purpose of this thesis is to describe and understand what it means to be a refugee in the years of 1990 versus what it means to be a refugee in present day taking the many possibilities through advanced communication into consideration. This chapter will begin by shortly introducing the participants of this study in more detail and giving an outline of their journey so that passages and certain quotes can be put into perspective better by the reader. In section 5.2 the interviews are analyzed and compared in more detail.

5.1 Trajectories

5.1.1 Trajectory Interview 1.

The first interview was conducted with Rostam Abassi. Like most Afghans who left the country in the early 1990’s Rostam also fled a rough civil war where the Mujahideen was slowly gaining power. At the age of 18, in 1991, he decided to leave his country Afghanistan and came to the Netherlands by himself. He is now 43 years old and has been living in the Netherlands for about 25 years.

Excerpt 1. Rostam Abassi, 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RA</th>
<th>The main problem, that the people of Afghanistan, there was war, in Afghanistan it has been approximately more than 35 / 40 years that there is war and -...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probleme ahwal, ke mmm mardome Afghanistan-, jang bod, ke dar Afghanistan taqreeban beshtar az 35 / 40 sal ast ke jang ast o -, ...</td>
<td>...wa oo noqte zaman ke ma az Afghanistan baramadum, mawzoy jang mujahideen ba Russa bod, ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...and at that point in time when I left Afghanistan, it was the matter of the war between the mujahideen and the Russians, ...</td>
<td>...it had been approximately 6 or 7 years that the Russians, at the time that I got out, had left Afghanistan, ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...ke Russa taqreeban, wakhte ke ma baramadum, modadete 6 o 7 sal bod ke az Afghanistan baramada bodan, ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
...and the Afghan government was fighting the mujahideen, and had become very weak, regarding its military defense, making the mujahideen very strong and gaining the power to take over the government. And as it is evident, the mujahideen are very 'tordraw' and ruthless individuals...

note: ‘tordraw’ = treating people in a rough and harsh (literally: spicy) way

...and the mujahideen had come to the point to come into power (take over)...

SA bale aah yes

...and for this reason people wanted to leave Afghanistan and I was also one of those, in that period of time, individuals who fled the mujahideen or; the war.

RA ...wa ba ame ehsas mardom mekhastan ke az afghanistan barayan, wa ma ham yake az ame ehm, da o wakhte zaman, fard bodum ke az geer mujahideen ya az geer jang farar kadum.

SA bale aah yes

The story of Rostam starts in Kabul, Afghanistan; he left Kabul by bus and headed for Mazar-i-Sharif, which is located near the Northern border of Afghanistan, and entered Tajikistan (which was then still part of the former Soviet Union). From Tajikistan he traveled to Moscow, Russia, by train. From there he was planning to come to Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic and Slovakia before they each became independent in 1993), however to be able to travel to Czechoslovakia he needed a visa. In Moscow, Rostam knew some people, also Afghans, who had been living there for a longer period of time. Through them he was able to find someone, a smuggler, who could arrange the visa for Czechoslovakia for him. While his visa was being prepared, Rostam remained in Czechoslovakia for a few days until he could continue his travel. When he obtained the visa, and it is worth mentioning that this visa was a legal visa, he travelled by himself to
Czechoslovakia by train. In Czechoslovakia he was supposed to obtain a visa for his next destination, Germany. However he could not get the visa, so for this reason he arranged a smuggler to take him to Germany. Thus from this point on he was travelling illegally. Eventually from Germany he travelled to the Netherlands where he applied for asylum. Although Rostam did not specify exactly how he came from Germany to the Netherlands, he did elaborate on how easy it was to cross the border in those times. How there were markets that would spread across the border between Germany and the Netherlands and that you could just look around and shop and not even realize you have crossed the border to Holland. From there you could then just take the bus and go to Amsterdam; “So ehh, I just came to Germany and then from Germany to Holland”. In figure 1 the journey of Rostam, from Kabul, Afghanistan to the Netherlands is mapped out.

![Route 1](image)

**Figure 1.** The trajectory of Rostam Abassi mapped out.

### 5.1.2 Trajectory Interview 2.

The second interview was conducted with Masooma Asadi. Masooma came to the Netherlands in 1996 at the age of 34 with her, at the time, two very young daughters (8 and 6.5 years old). She is now 54 and has been living in the Netherlands for twenty years. Before we get into the trajectory of Masooma, read the excerpt (2) below to get an idea of her situation in Afghanistan.

**MA**

Ehh... Zaman ke ma taraf holland amadem sharayet jang bod,
...waze ast ke 30 sal, zyadtar ast,
38 sal ast, ke dar momlakat ma jang ast, ...da o wakht ma
tasmeem ba baramadan gereftem... ehh shawhar ma da yak organ nezame kar mekad,
saheb mansab bod,…

wa waze'st ke wakht mujahid amad wa sharayet dawlat soqot
kad wa sharayat bisyar kharab-,
bar kasay ke makhsosan da dawlat kar mekadan,… ehh barabar shod
...o shawhar ma ham az taraf ame mujahideen koshta shod

Ehh... The time that I came to Holland there was war, ...it is obvious that for 30 years, even more, it is 38 years, that there is war in our country,...in that time we decided to get out...ehh my husband was working in a military organ, he was an officer,…

...and it is evident that when mujahid (the mujahideen) came and the government fell, circumstances became very rough, especially for those who were working with the government

...and my husband too got killed by the mujahideen [voice slightly trembling]

After Masooma’s husband got killed by the Mujahideen and as everyone was fleeing the country during that time, her father in law decided that it was best for his daughter in law and her children to leave the country.


**MA**

Bad azo ke o koshta shod …
tasmeem gereft, khosor ma, ke mara-, chon awladay ma khord bod wa bar ma bisyar mushkil bod da o mohid kharab, famil hamage baramada bodan… wa bisyar sharayet kharab bod da o wakht, zindage kadan bisyar dega mushkil

After that he got killed …

my father in law decided that-, because my children were young and it was very hard for me in those bad circumstances (that bad environment), family-, everybody had left… and the circumstances were very bad in that time, so (living life) life had become very
And so the trajectory of Masooma started in Kabul, Afghanistan when her father in law took them to Peshawar, Pakistan by car. There she stayed with her husband’s relatives for about two months, while her father in law prepared all that was necessary. After those two months, their documents were prepared and travel arrangements had been made. Masooma’s father in law had settled with a smuggler and also covered for the costs to bring his daughter in law and his grandchildren to Europe. By air, she and her two children, accompanied by a smuggler, travelled from Peshawar, Pakistan to Dubai, United Arab Emirates. From Dubai with a short stop in Italy they travelled directly to the Netherlands. In figure 2 the journey of Masooma is mapped out.

Figure 2. The trajectory of Masooma Asadi mapped out.

5.1.3 Trajectory Interview 3.
The third interview was conducted with Bahar Yousufzai, a young girl who is 22 years of age. In 2012, Bahar came to the Netherlands at the age of 18 fleeing rough circumstances and
oppression from her own family. She lived in a family where she was restricted to go to school and was oppressed in a lot of ways. This was the first interview with a ‘modern day’ refugee.

**Excerpt 4.** Bahar Yousufzai, 2012

BY  
Ma da Qandhar hamray bibimshaan bodum, hamray bibim, babem, kakayem bodum  
In Qandhar (Kandahar, Afghanistan) I was with my grandparents, I was with my grandmother, my grandfather, my uncle (paternal)

SA  
kho  
okay

BY  
Mara namemandan maktab berum namemandan beron barayum sar ma bisyar zulm mekadan...  
They would not let me go to school, they would not let me go outside, they would oppress me very much...

SA  
bale  
yes

BY  
...kar bisyar zyad mekardan ma ta ke majbor shudom az khane az wa farar kunom byayum da khane khalem  
...and made me work very much I until I had (no other choice but) to escape the house and come to my aunt’s house

Excerpt (4) above is taken from the interview with Bahar and in it resides the main train of thought that a girl should not be studying or working outside the house and should stay in and do housekeeping. In order to improve her life, she fled her home in Qandahar, Afghanistan and went to her (maternal) aunt who lived in Kabul in the hope that she would have a solution and would help her. The moment she decided to step out of her house and leave the house, her life was not safe anymore. That Bahar escaped her house and her family is matter of honor and pride, “…it was a matter of pride that I had ran away from there. It was (considered) a matter of honor (that) how did a girl (dare to) run away from home…” (Interview transcript Bahar Yousufzai, appendix 5, line 187-190). The fact that Bahar describes her leaving her home in Qandahar in terms of escaping from there indicates that she was feeling imprisoned.
The journey of Bahar started when her aunt and her aunt’s husband decided to send her away, to keep their own family safe as well as Bahar’s life. Thus the actual trajectory of Bahar, facilitated by the smuggler, started in Kabul, Afghanistan. Together with another Afghan family, she was taken to Pakistan by car (20 minute walk to cross the actual border). In Pakistan they overnighted in the city Quetta, the next morning they headed for Kuh-i-Taftan which is the border crossing between Pakistan and Iran. There, they again stayed the night. The next morning, sitting in the back of big trucks, they entered Iran. After travelling a distance in Iran, just like in Pakistan they again stayed the night in a city of Iran. The next morning they travelled towards the border.
between Iran and Turkey. After spending the night there, in the early morning they crossed the border over to Turkey by foot. In Turkey, by bus they proceeded their journey to Istanbul. In Istanbul, they stayed for about 10 or 11 days in an area called Zeytinburnu. Instead of just staying the night there, to sleep and to rest, this time they had to stay longer because they had to wait for other ‘passengers’ to gather before they could proceed their journey. After this pause in their journey, they were set to head towards the border of Turkey (the border between Turkey and Greece). Where in previous times they would always progress their journey early in the morning before sunrise, this time around they left around 9 or 10 o’clock before midnight. They left in “little cars”, grouped five by five including a driver, and were on the road for about two to two and half hours. Around midnight they were dropped off in the middle of farmlands and they had to continue their travel by foot. They walked until four in the morning until they arrived near the river, which they had to cross over to reach to Greece. At this point the smuggler sent them off on the water by inflatable boats while he stayed back in Turkey himself. The crossover itself however was only five minutes by boat and they reached the shores of Greece at around five o’clock in the morning. From the shores of Greece they walked until nine in the morning to reach the main road. That is where the police stopped them and took them to the head office, where their fingerprints were taken and were asked questions as to where they had come from, who they had come with etc. After that they each received a visa to stay in Greece for a maximum period of one month. The smuggler had given them money for the bus (as well as instructions) in advance so that they would be able to travel to Athens by themselves. In Athens, they were picked up by a smuggler and were taken to ‘his house’ near Omonia Square, a central square in Athens. Bahar together with many others remained in the smuggler’s house until they found a way ‘settle her work’. After about four or five months, travel arrangements were made for her to go to the Netherlands by plane. This section of her journey will be discussed in more detail later on in the analysis. Eventually Bahar arrived at Amsterdam Schiphol airport in the Netherlands, from there by car she was taken to Ter Apel, where the reception center for asylum requests in the Netherlands is located. And that is where Bahar applied for asylum. Bahar’s journey is mapped out in figure 3.
5.1.4 Trajectory Interview 4.

The fourth interview was conducted with Haidar Mohsenzada. Haidar left the country of Afghanistan only two years ago, in 2014. Haidar is currently 18 years old, but when he left Afghanistan and came to the Netherlands, he was 16 years old. The reason for Haidar leaving the country started with Haidar’s brother who had fallen in love with the daughter of a family friend of his father and had started a relationship with her. However the girl’s family would not accept Haidar’s brother as their future son in law; the disagreement escalated into a rivalry between two families.

Excerpt 6. Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014

| HM | Baz janjalay family pesh myaya | Then family problems happen – then | Baz padareshan wa byadarai | their father and the girl’s brothers |
| HM | dukhtar tahdeed mekuna ke ma | threaten that we will for sure (a 100 percent) kill your son because how do I |
| HM | bache tana 100 fesat mekushem ba | say this because for example for ehh |
| HM | khater ke, che raqam ma bogoyum, | their ‘thing’ (he meant for their honor |
| HM | ba khater ke masalan ba ehh chez |  |  |  |
This rivalry lead to Haidar’s brother leaving the country, not only to save his own life but to also cease the hostility. Through a smuggler he came to the Netherlands. However the rivalry did not quite end there; excerpt 7.


Bad azo, ma, byadazadem ke khord khana bodem, mara ham tahdeed kada bod, padarem tahdeed kad bod ke; ‘ma bachaytana da ray maktab ya da beron 100 fesad ena ra ekhtetaf mekunom ya kudom haq da kareshan mekunem’

Thus conflicting issues between families, concerning pride and honor, led to not only his life but also that of his younger brother and his nephew (the son of his much older brother, who is around the same age as our informant himself) being threatened simply because they were the youngest of the family and were seen as an easy target by the ‘enemy’.

Excerpt 8. Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014

Baz da ame sharayeta bod ke maw byadazade ma’, padarem guft; ‘ke shuma ham bayad, 100 fesad, bayad barayen ba khater ke janetan dar khatar ast wa emkan dara…’, mesle ke byadarem amad Holland, ‘… kudom kar da haqetan kuna, shuma ba khater ke

So it was in these circumstances that my father told me and my nephew that; ‘you too, for sure (100 percent), have to leave because your lives are in danger and there is a possibility that…’, just like my brother came to the Netherlands, ‘… they would do something to you, because you’re young, you go to school it is
The journey of Haidar started out in Kabul, Afghanistan where he was living at home with his parents, siblings and extended family. As his brother was already living in the Netherlands, Haidar’s father had arranged a smuggler to take them to the Netherlands. Together with his younger brother and his nephew, Haidar was picked up from home and headed towards Herat, Afghanistan, which is located near the border of Iran. Once Iran entered, they were driven to Tehran where they stayed for two days. Afterwards they continued their travel through other cities of Iran and cities closer to the border between Iran and Turkey. Very early in the morning they walked through the mountains of Iran, with a very large group of people, they walked for about six hours. In the mountains of Iran, Haidar lost his younger brother as he fell down. This tragic event will be discussed in further detail later on in the analysis. With great sorrow he and his nephew continued their travel and arrived in Turkey. There they stayed in a house for about two days, until the smuggler had found a way to continue their travel. In big cars they were transported to a forest where another smuggler came; **excerpt 9**.

**Excerpt 9.** Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014

| HM | Farsi bar ma guft ke enje bayad muntazer bashem ta ke qayeq byaya, ame keshthehaye khord, bade, khord ast bade ast, kole mara az ee jeleqe nejat dad |
| SA | Da o wakht chand nafar boden |

In Farsi he told us that here we have to wait until the boat comes, these small boats, inflatable, they are small and inflatable, gave all of us these lifesaving vests

**With how many people were you then?**
We were approximately 38 / 40 people

Yes then he gave us all these lifesaving vests for the river then brought a boat, these little boats, took it the shore, inflated the boat, it was an inflatable boat, then all of us got on it.

Then aah ehm... when he turned on the boat, when we all got on it

Ehh then after that hmm... he tested it two rounds if it was all right, when the boat was good, the smuggler himself got in the water, got out (of the boat), we were left with that many-, there was the boat, and 38 / 40 people. We didn’t even know the way, there was an Arab only-, with us, that Arab knew (the way) a little bit so he took the boat and was taking us towards Greece.

Up to four hours we were in the water from 9 / 10 p.m. until 2 a.m., we were in the water, when we reached the other
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aw bodem ke rasedem o tarafe aw side of the water

SA Hamray amo 40 nafar … With those 40 people...

HM Bale 40 nafar, famil bod, mujarad Yes 40 people, there were families, there
bod, bachay khord bod, bisyar were ‘singles’ there were little kids there
oshtuk bod were a lot of babies

SA aah yes

Just like in the story of Bahar, here also they were sent over the water to Greece in inflatable boats while the smuggler himself stayed back in Turkey. However they were much longer in the water, from around 10 p.m. until 2 a.m., so it took them about four hours to reach Greece. Part of the group, specifically families with babies and children stayed on the shores of Greece, Haidar himself along with his nephew and a few other young men continued and walked from hill to hill and reached a sign that said ‘Mitilini’ around 12 noon. There one of the fellow travelers, who apparently had a phone as well as the phone number of a smuggler, called the smuggler. The smuggler came and took them to the center of Mitilini by car. From there, the smuggler had bought them tickets for the ferry to transport them to Athens. When they arrived in Athens they again had to wait for a period of ten days. After those ten days, in the back of big trucks their journey proceeded, after 16 hours they were dropped off in a forest in Italy where another smuggler picked them up again. Again they had to stay in Italy for about 4 or 5 days. Next they were taken to Cannes in France by car, from there the smuggler simply bought them a train ticket each and they travelled to Paris, France. From Paris to Belgium they had to travel in a rather unusual way, they had to sit inside a pretend petrol tank that was built underneath a car. They sat inside that petrol tank for 16 hours, eventually they arrived in Belgium. In Belgium they were once again handed over to another smuggler, who took them to the Netherlands by car where they eventually applied for asylum. The journey of Haidar is mapped out in figure 4.
5.2 Intersection

Before we start a comparative analysis of the interviews, table 3 provides a useful recap of informants and their journey. Although mentioned earlier, it is noteworthy that the narratives of Nasrin and Faiz are also used in the analysis.

Table 3 Recap of main informants

<table>
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<th>Interviewee:</th>
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<th>Recent years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Interview 1</td>
<td>Interview 2</td>
<td>Interview 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rostam Abassi</td>
<td>Masooma Asadi</td>
<td>Bahar Yousufzai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation:</td>
<td>Abbreviation:</td>
<td>Abbreviation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>MA</td>
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<td>Departure from:</td>
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<td>Departure from:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>Qandahar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.1 Becoming a refugee: 1990’s vs. now.

“The time that we decided to leave the country was very difficult and unsafe, rockets were fired from everywhere. Night and day we were all discomforted, my close relatives my brother and my mom were already outside of the country and they were very worried about us and they would always send us letters to decide quicker because the situation was getting worse day by day. Me and my husband after having thought it over for a while with great difficulty agreed to leave the country.” (Nasrin, 1991; narrative 1)

Rough living circumstances such as described in the quotation of Nasrin above, situations of war and oppression led to many Afghans deciding to leave the country and becoming refugees. The situations that lead up to the decision of leaving the country of course differed in detail for every informant. Although the main reason for becoming a refugee in both the early years of the 1990’s as well as in more recent years was because of life threatening situations or unsafe living circumstances, between the two studied time periods there is a strong contrast in the causes leading to those situations. The two interviews which were conducted with refugees who came during the years of 1990 (Rostam and Masooma) revealed that the main reason for leaving the country was to escape the civil war which was intensified by the Mujahideen gaining power. The same reasoning was given in the narratives written by Faiz and Nasrin. Below is a quotation of Faiz.

“basically it was perfectly clear that after the Mujahideen had gained power not only would peace and stability not return to the country but wars between different groups had started and would lead to a civil war, which it did. And today the world is witnessing that with the presence of military forces from 42 countries it is not possible to establish peace and stability in that country.” (Faiz, 1992; narrative 2)

That there is no peace and stability in Afghanistan up until this day becomes clear from the Interviews with Bahar and Haidar, who both came in recent years (2012 and 2014) and left the country for more social reasons. Although it was not for the reason of war directly, it was certainly due to the results of years and years of war, destruction and lack of education that has caused the society of Afghanistan to regress instead of progress.
In the cases of the refugees that have been interviewed it became clear that it is not always the refugees themselves making the decision to leave the country rather it is decided for them. In the case of Masooma and her two children it was her father in law who decided for them that it was best for them to leave the country. In the case of Bahar, her aunt together with her husband decided to send her away. However, it should be noted that oftentimes it was not so much a matter of deciding, but rather a matter of having no other choice.

**Excerpt 10.** Masooma Asadi, 1996

| MA | Waze ast ke bar har tabe yak keshwar ke-, wakhte da yak jay tawalod mesha, kalan mesha, baresh bisyar mushkil ast, zadgahe khoda tark kuna, ama wakhte ke sharayet sakht myaya, adam majbor ba tark watan khod mesha... az ma ham yak majboryate bod chon ma unja dega jav nadashtem... bar zindage kadan, bisyar waz kharab, mardum-, na tana ee masala sar ma bod, ta ba ame emroz mardum da gorez ast az watan, roz ba roz awza kharab shuda mera, behtar shuda namera |
| Of course it is obvious that for every citizen, a country that-, when one is born in a place, one grows up, it is very difficult for him to leave his home country, but when difficult times (circumstances) come, one is pressured to leave his country... - My case was also a matter of having no choice because we no longer had a place there... to live, a very bad situation, people-, not only I was in this situation, up until this day people are ‘on the run’ fleeing the country, day by day the situation (awza) is getting worse, it is not getting any better |

As in most cases of forced migration the decision was sudden:

“...Wa hatman yak shakhs pesh khod plan medashta basha wale etor plan ke az yak sal pesh dashtum ke bayat keshwara kha... Tark kunom eto nabod plan dafatane shod bakhatere jang ham dafatan amad”

“... And of course a person has a plan with himself but a plan from a year ahead that I would have to ... leave the country, it
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was not like that, it was a sudden plan because the war also
(came sudden) suddenly intensified.” (Rostam, 1991)

Migration flows are often the result of emergency situations evolving rapidly (Mason, 1999) and as everything is left behind at once it oftentimes also leads to the destruction of social relations; “During that time it was very difficult to tell anybody that I am leaving the country. I could not say goodbye to my friends, not even to my closest friend of whom until this day I do not know whether she is even alive or not, or take anything with me.” (Nasrin, 1991; narrative 1). Not being able to say goodbye to anyone, not even to her best friend, or to pack her belongings was not only a matter of time limitations, but it was also for safety reasons. In a situation of war it is difficult to let anybody know that you were going away or where you were going, even if that meant not telling your closest friends and leaving them behind.

In the case of Rostam, when being asked if it was Germany he had intended to go to from the beginning, he made clear that he had an idea of coming towards Europe “but the plan was not a 100% the Netherlands, one of the European countries, it would not matter if it was Belgium or Germany...”. In the trajectory of Rostam it was already mentioned how he had explained how easy it was to cross the border between these three countries. He didn’t know anybody in Germany, as he did happen to know people in the Netherlands, he decided to just come to Holland. For him it was not a big deal considering it was very easy to cross the border between Germany and Holland. In the case of Masooma, as her father in law had decided it was best for her to leave the country he was also the one that had arranged and prepared everything for her. This also included the decision that they would come to the Netherlands. Masooma herself did not even see “the passports nor the tickets”. Below is a short excerpt (11) of the interview.

**Excerpt 11.** Masooma Asadi, 1996

Then the whole matter of travelling, the matter of this that-, the matter of finan-, the matter of the money that brought us here, the help that I received, my father in law did all of it. He took us, by land we went to Pakistan, I stayed there for about two months with my children until he arranged the matter of passports-,
When asked if her father in law was aware of the circumstances in Europe at the time, she explained that along with her, many other family members and people she knew had left Afghanistan. As people had fled in all different directions, everybody had become dispersed throughout the world and that “everybody comes to know where conditions are better”. Besides that, Masooma was also aware of the fact that her (maternal) aunt was already living in the Netherlands. Thus everybody came to know through the one or the other where the conditions for asylum and refugees are better; excerpt 12.

Later on in his interview, Rostam explained that those who seek asylum can generally be divided up in three categories, those who have come to seek asylum for more social reasons, those who are political refugees and those who are religious refugees. “And all three, social, political and religious play a very important role for the Member States of the United Nations and countries that provide asylum…” (Excerpt 13). From this we understand that it is more or less generally known that humanitarian rights are highly valued in these countries and that they have agreements on providing asylum to those in need. This train of thought also very well explains the migration flows into Europe in the first place.


RA  Wa har se eshtemayesh, siasy wa mazabe pesh dawlate-, dawlatay-, pesh Melal Motahed wa dawlatay ke mardoma panahenda megera bisyar role dara, bakhater ke kas siasy mebasha mega ke; ‘ee da kudom ezb boda, hatman era mekoshtan’, wa mazaby; masalan dar Afghanistan Jahooda bodan, Jahooda ra eqadar dawran Taliban ya Mujahideen mezadan, ya meguft; ‘bya moselman sho’, ya-.... ena emkanat qabol shodaneshan zyad bod, wale panahenday eshtemaye panahenday ast ke myayan megan sharayet jang ast, masalan ‘mujahideen amada’ ya ‘ma

And all three, social, political and religious (categories) play a very important role for the member state-, member states-, for the (Member States of the) United Nations and countries (states) that provide asylum, because if someone is political they say that; ‘he was probably in some political party, they would kill him’, and religious; for example in Afghanistan there were Jews, Jews would be beaten up by the Taliban or Mujahideen, or they would say; ‘become a Muslim’ or-.... so they had a lot of chance to get accepted, but social asylum seekers are asylum seekers who come and say well there is war, for example ‘the mujahideen has come’ or ‘I had daughters, they would take my daughters’, ‘they would beat me
When we look at the stories of Haidar and Bahar we see that for them also the decision was made by someone else. Haidar’s father had decided for Haidar, his younger brother and nephew to join Haidar’s older brother who had already reached Holland a while before them. In the case of Bahar, her aunt together with her husband decided to send her away. However Bahar had no idea about where or how she would be going and was also very brief about it when being asked if she had any idea of where she was going and simply stated; “no” (Excerpt 14).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Kho kho o wakht nazar khodet che bod, eto nazar khodet che bod wakht ke guftan ena tura ma rawan mekunem jay dega?</th>
<th>Oh okay at that time what was your thought, like what was your thought when they said we’re going to send you somewhere else.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BY</td>
<td>O wakht ma bisyar tarseda bodum ma mekhastum ke yak jay zindage kunom ke amn basha.</td>
<td>At that time I was very scared I wanted to live somewhere that was safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Aah bale aah, yak gape waze ast aah ehm kho hamyale guften ke... zarf bisyar kam wakht daftatan ona tasmeem gerefta shod</td>
<td>yes, (that is obvious) I can imagine yes ehm okay you just said that... in very little time suddenly they ... the decision was made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BY</td>
<td>Bale aah, da zarf do, do neem, hafta</td>
<td>Yes, within two, two and a half, weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Do, do neem, hafta khob ... ehm wa eto khabar dashten ke kuja</td>
<td>Two, two and a half, weeks okay... ehm and were you aware of where you were</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Towards the end of Bahar’s journey, the smuggler had told her; “here you go we’ve led you to a safe place...” (Interview transcript Bahar Yousufzai, appendix 5, line 691-692). It seems as if the agreement that Bahar’s aunt and uncle had made was to take her to a safe place and not that she would go to Europe or the Netherlands in particular. It is interesting that even on the way she didn’t really know where she was going. It was only in Greece, that the smuggler had decided to try to take Bahar to the Netherlands. Thus she could have ended up anywhere else just as well.

And then sometimes the destination was simply based on your budget. In the narrative of Faiz (1992; appendix 2) you read; “The trafficking prices for every person differed greatly depending on the route, distance, and means of transportation...”, and how the transferring fees ranged from high to medium to low depending on the intended destination. In the case of Faiz we came to the understanding that the reason for why he initially came towards Germany (and from there to Holland) was based on his budget; “Since I, based on my budget, was in the third category and I did not have excessive money to spend, I had to come through the forest and crossed the borders of Germany illegally...” Crossing the border from Czechoslovakia to Germany (and then to the Netherlands) was the cheapest option and for him the only affordable option at that time. Even though Rostam (interview 1; 1991) told us that he had intended to come to one of the European countries he highlights that “in the beginning nothing was clear, nothing was certain” and that “You always had to move forward through money because you left the country in a pressured situation”; excerpt 15.


SA Ama khabar dashten, pesh az pesh, ke Czechoslovakia metanesten khoda berasen...? But were you aware, ahead of time, that you could reach Czechoslovakia?
That you constantly had to move forward through money was also evident in the case of Faiz (1992, narrative 2, appendix 2). As he sent his family first to the Soviet Union, from there to Czechoslovakia and “...by paying excessive money, they were transported to Germany”. So, where you would end up exactly was often depending on how much you could afford to move forward and what your possibilities were.

The financial aspects of becoming a refugee seemed to return in every story. Masooma (interview 1; 1996) mentions how her father in law took care of “...the matter of finan-, the matter of the money that brought us here, the help that I received, my father in law did all of it.” Properties were sold to gather money in order to be able to leave the country; “With my husband’s family we flew from Kabul (Kabul, Afghanistan) to Mazar (Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan) and we covered the costs by selling the house and properties...” (Nasrin, 1991; narrative 1). And then sometimes it remained unexplained how money was arranged, but it was arranged somehow like in the case of Bahar; excerpt 16.

BY  Ma khodem aslan pool nadashtum wa shawhar khalem o khalem ba andeze majboor shodan, ke kakaym baba kalanem hamesha zang mezadan ke agar da khane shuma ma era payda kunem, shuma ra ham zinda namemanem wa era ham, ba khater yak chez namoosi bod ke az unja ma gerekhta bodum. Ba ehsab yak kar ghairatsah aan bod, ke yak dukhtar az khana chetor farar kada, dega wa ham majboor shudan ke bar ma pool taya kunan ke qachaqbara payda kadan.

I myself had no money at all and my aunt’s husband and my aunt were so desperate that they had no other choice, because my uncle and my grandfather (would always call) kept calling that if we find her at your house, we will neither let you live nor her, because it was a matter of pride that I had run away from there. It was (considered) a matter of honor, (that) how did a girl (dare to) run away from home, so they had no other choice but to prepare money for me when they found a smuggler.

SA  Yak chara kadan

They found a way

BY  Yak chara kadan aah

They found a way yes

5.2.2 Moving towards the journey of a refugee: 1990’s vs. now.
The refugees interviewed in this study all came ‘qachaq’, meaning they came with the help of a smuggler or at least sections of their journey involved a smuggler and from the interview excerpts that we have seen so far it becomes evident that money was mainly needed to ‘fix’ a smuggler. The following excerpt (17) is of the interview with Masooma (interview 2), it shows the normalization of the smuggler figure who facilitates the journey as “somebody that helps”. Masooma was hesitant to say the word ‘smuggler’, knowing it is an illegal practice and she was not sure if she could mention it in the interview. The interview unfolded as follows:
Excerpt 17. Masooma Asadi, 1996

In the same way Faiz said “I was in search of individuals to transport me to a country so that I, together with four young children and my wife could live a peaceful life…” (Faiz, 1992; narrative 2). Although there were no figures or prices mentioned in the interviews or narratives, from the fact that properties were sold, we derive that large amounts of money were involved. Which also brings us to the understanding that the smuggling of people is actually a (big) business. Briefly mentioned before, Faiz speaks of the smuggler practices in Czechoslovakia in terms of a ‘Human trafficking market’ with assorted prices for different destinations; “…during that time (1992) the Human trafficking market in Czechoslovakia was doing very well. Most of the traffickers were Vietnamese, Iranian and Afghan students who used various roads and routes according to the individual’s budget, and the trafficking prices for every person differed greatly depending on the route, distance, and means of transportation…” (Faiz, 1992; narrative 2).

Speaking in terms of a business, the smuggler who Faiz was introduced to advertised himself as “a good, fair and inexpensive smuggler… but later it turned out that I was sold, like a product, over to a Vietnamese smuggler”. Thus the smuggling business is not only limited to business between the smuggler and the passenger, but also involves smugglers doing business among themselves selling people over to one another.
5.2.2.1 From a smuggler to the smugglers.

That the smuggling of refugees is a business and that it involves large amounts of money seems to be nothing new. However, the number of smugglers involved in the journeys of our participants from the moment of departure up to the moment of arrival differed greatly between the two studied time periods. Where the journeys of the refugees who came in the 1990’s involved only one or two smugglers at the most, the journeys of the two refugees who came in recent years involved five up to seven smugglers. Both Bahar (2012) and Haidar (2014) mentioned how they were handed over from one smuggler to the next (consider for example excerpt 18 below). Sometimes there were even multiple smugglers present at the same time who guided passengers in bigger groups.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>BY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baz ame qachaqbar, ame ke da ...</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ne ne ne, az Afghanistan ta</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shuma ra... amo yak qachaqbar bod?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pakistan yak nafar bod, baz az</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pakistan ke da dakhel Iran</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>meshodem baz tasleem dega nafar kad, ameqesem az Iran dakhel</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Turkij shodem wa tasleem dega nafar kad.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Again this smuggler, the one that ...</strong></td>
<td><strong>No no no, from Afghanistan to Pakistan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>you... was it that one smuggler?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>it was one person, then from Pakistan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>when we were entering Iran again he</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>handed us over to another person, like</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>that from Iran we entered Turkey and</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>handed us over to another person.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is this alleged chain of smugglers that reveals the existence of some sort of network (or association) of smugglers working together to pass passengers through; “hand in hand they were (working) together”. As opposed to for example the case of Rostam (1991), who arranged a smuggler in Moscow only for him to get the visa for Czechoslovakia. Once he had obtained the
ASYLUM 2.0?

visa, Rostam travelled to Czechoslovakia by himself where he had to find another smuggler to bring him to Germany. Thus two smugglers, working independently from each other, were involved in his journey making the presence of a collaboration or network of smugglers back then seem unlikely. Also referring back to the ‘Human trafficking market’ in Czechoslovakia in 1992 (Faiz, narrative 2), not only was Faiz sold “like a product” over to another smuggler, but he also mentioned that the smugglers were actually students. From which we may interpret that they worked as smugglers on the side to earn extra money. It could be suggested that smuggler practices back then were much more small scaled or individual practices. Whereas the number of smugglers collaborating in present day is a strong implication of smugglers being part of a larger network. The chain of smugglers stretches from Afghanistan all the way to Europe, indicating that the smuggler business not only has become much bigger but that it has become a global business. A global business in which refugees become the product in the extremely networked and complicated network of the smuggler; they become a piece of meat on the meat market.

Apart from the fact that huge amounts of money are involved in the smuggler business, there is also the issue of corruption. Regarding Afghanistan, Rostam tells us that: “Afghanistan is a country where money plays a role, if you bribe you can get your work done, there is corruption”, excerpt 19.


Okay so now how did you-, your coming-, for example did you not need a visa or anything? Like how did you ehh-, did you get on the plane and came or...?

Because-, yes up to a part, Mazar (Mazar-i-Sharif), which is close to the Northern border, up to there of course it was the country of Afghanistan, you could come by bus and then there, in the (country of) province Mazar, by bribing you could get an Afghan passport or visa
pasporte Afghani ya visa begere wa hamchenan, keshware Afghanistan yak keshware ast ke dar unja pool role dara agar reshwat bete metane kar kune corruptie'st wa ba tawod dadan pool pasport hmm-, ... ba, sarhade az marz obor kadem ya ne ‘az grens obor kadem’, amadem ba Tajikistan - wa badesh, o wakht az tajikistan ta ba taqreeban sarhad Czechoslovakia ra, hamesh yak keshwar bod dega, Rusland bod ba name Etehad Jameir Shorawe bod

The issue of corruption did not only concern Afghanistan, but also outside of Afghanistan corrupt practices became prevalent. Rostam was quite explicit about how the smuggler business is often intertwined with officials, when he explained that in Moscow he needed to obtain the visa for Czechoslovakia, consider the following excerpt (20).

**Excerpt 20.** Rostam Abassi, 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Vise che megereften... jali?</th>
<th>What kind of visa... fake?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Kho ne ne vise Czechoslovakia, vise qanoone bod wale qachaqbar ba pool metanest visa ra bekasha ya ne ke da enja, deste qachaqbar ba afrad bod ke dar sefarate Czechoslovakia kar mekadan</td>
<td>Well no no the visa for Czechoslovakia was a legal visa but the smuggler could get the visa through money meaning here, the smuggler worked together with people who worked at the embassy of Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Bale kho</td>
<td>Yes okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Ya ne hamesha wakhte ke eto mawzoawte ma mebenem,</td>
<td>I mean always when we see cases like these, the smuggler, or these people, are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ASYLUM 2.0?**

*qachakbar, ya ee afrad, hamesha* always involved with embassies or
*ba sefarata ya baz afr-, mardomay* certain other people, (because) it was not
*dega dest dara, visa kho asan* easy to get a visa, right
*nabod ke begerem*

Although cases of corruption were absent in both the journey of Haidar (2014) and Bahar (2012), the expansion of the smuggler business could still suggest that smugglers have their connections too, extending the smuggler network even further.

**5.2.2.2 Fragmentation of journeys: 1990’s vs. now.**

When analyzing the actual route of the journeys, leaving the details and stories behind for the moment, and visualizing the journeys by mapping out the routes of the journeys it became apparent that recent journeys are much more fragmented than the journeys of the refugees who came in the years of 1990. In **figure 5** the journeys of all four informants who were interviewed in this study are mapped out and combined in one map. The blue line and the orange line are the routes of Rostam and Masooma, who came in 1991 and in 1996. The red line and the green line are the routes of Bahar and Haidar who came in 2012 and in 2014 respectively. From the point of departure to the point of arrival in the Netherlands the routes of Bahar and Haidar include more halts than the routes of Rostam and Masooma did.
Considering that different sections of the journeys are allocated to different smugglers working together it is not surprising that journeys have become more fragmented. Where the journeys of both Rostam and Masooma involved travelling long distances at once, crossing multiple borders, for example with one direct flight, as was the case for Masooma, Bahar and Haidar were travelling mostly from border to border and from city to city varying from travelling by car to oftentimes travelling by foot. Journeys included halts to rest and sleep but also so that passengers could be handed over from one smuggler to the next. This also meant that passengers sometimes had to wait for other passengers to gather or to be picked up by the next smuggler. Consider the following excerpt (21) of interview four with Haidar.


SA  Ghair az khodet o byadarzadet  Aside from yourself and your nephew
dega kas ham bod ya … was there anyone else or…
From the excerpt (21) above we understand that the groups were not fixed, as “...you come through the smuggler’s road new people come and go”. Thus groups would split up at some points and merge with other groups at another point. This dynamic was also found in the interview with Bahar (2012), at some point in Turkey she had to wait for about ten days for other passengers to gather or rather to be ‘collected’: excerpt 22.


BY  bad azo dakhel Turkiya shodem, az
Turkiya ham da bus, ta Istanbul-a
da bus raftem baz da Istanbul yak
manteqa, ba name zatonbano
(Zeytinburnu), bod unja taqreeban
10 / 11 roz unja bodem

SA 10 / 11 roz?

BY  Ba khatere unja bodem... bale...
Kate ame famil afghan, baz chand
famil dega ra ham,... baz ham

We were there because ... yes... with that
afghan family, then this smuggler in
Turkey, again, had people (working for
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Sometimes as the journey would progress the next route was mapped out by the smuggler and people would have to wait until it was clear what the next step would be. Thus routes were planned as they were travelling depending on the circumstances and the possibilities. Haidar (2014) had to wait in a house with other passengers until the smuggler had figured out how to pass his passengers; **excerpt 23**.

**Excerpt 23. Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HM</th>
<th>Bale aah, da Italya da yak jangal, mara da khane dega bord.</th>
<th>Yes, in Italy in a forest he took us to another house.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Kho</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM</td>
<td>Da o khane dega bord bad azo guft; ‘enja memanen fehlan, maloom nest cheqadar banen, enja asten ta ke maloom shawa ke shuma ra cheqseme bayat dega taraf bobarem.</td>
<td>took us to that other house after that he said: ‘you will stay here for now, it is unknown how long you will stay, you will stay here until we know how to take you (to another way) next.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>aah</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HM** Baz amunja mandem, taqreeban char, payn roz da khane azo bodem, nan saye namedad, dega zyad-, ta yak gap mezade bisyar saret janjal mekad, sar ma qar meshod, ghalmaghah mekad ehh... So then we stayed there, we were in his house for about four, five days, he would not give proper food and very-, if you only said something (if you opened up your mouth) he would make a hassle, he would get mad at us, he would ‘brawl’ ehh... I mean we only had to-, had to wait
In the same way Bahar (2012) waited in Greece for up to two months until the smuggler had settled a way that would take her to Western Europe; excerpt 24.

**Excerpt 24.** Bahar Yousufzai, 2012

BY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ne ne da Yunan da amo</th>
<th>No no in Greece the person came to that bus stop, of course he knew that who, who and who are ‘my people’ (passengers)... so he took us along to his house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘bushaltesh’ nafar amad, o kho meshenakht ke ke, ke, ke nafare ma asta... kho mara gerefta bord khane khod</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA

| kho kho | oh okay |

BY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>baz ta ke ba ma kare mara joor kad dega</th>
<th>so then until he fixed ‘something for us’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

SA

| baz o cheqadar wakht darbar gereft? | then how long did that take? |

BY

| kho ma taqreeban yak mah wakht dashtum | well I had about one month of time |
5.2.2.3 Means of travelling: 1990’s vs. now.

Not only are the journeys of the refugees who came in recent years more fragmented but there was also a huge variety in the means of travel and transportation. The journeys have become much more dynamic and diverse. The journeys for example involved parts that had to be walked, sitting in the backside of trucks, riding the bus, travelling by air or by an inflatable boat. This in itself makes journeys more fragmented. But the journeys also included some more unusual or rather extreme ways, consider the following excerpt (24) from interview four with Haidar.
Excerpt 25. Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014

HM  Da trein baz, shokor khuda, eto mesal controleren namad... ia Paris-a, da Paris ke rasedem baz unja mara bord da yak jai dega, da yak khana taweel dega kas dad...

On the train then, thank god, like we did not get checked... (we went) up until Paris, when we arrived in Paris, there again he took us to another place, in a house he handed us over to someone else...

SA  aah

HM  ...taweel dega kas dad, khode qachaService nega raft, ma hech nadedem ora dega, nafar naw shod. Da Fransa ke baz dedem, baz Fransa-, az ee motarakay bus bod

...handed us over to someone else, the smuggler himself left so we didn’t see him anymore, ‘a new person became the smuggler’. In France when we saw, then France-, there were these small (auto) busses

SA  aah

HM  ...motarakay bus, baz da zeer motare bus eto yak tanke benzine joor kada bod, baz char nafar mara andakht da tanke benzine

...small (auto)busses, then under the auto bus, like they had made a petrol tank, then he put four of us in the petrol tank

SA  da tanke benzine andakht??

HM  Aah tanke benzine, khode tank benzine ne da pal-, ee taraf motar yak-, mesle amo tanke benzine, yak dana dega jor kada bod, faqat char nafar metaneste ehh sareta payan begere, amuto beshene

Yes petrol tank, not the actual petrol tank, next to-, on ‘this’ side of the car a-, just like that petrol tank, (he) had made another one, only with four people you could ehh keep your head down and just sit like that

SA  aah

HM  Aah baz mara da azo andakht, da o motarakay bus, da tanke

yeah then he put us in there, in those small auto busses, in the petrol tank, four
by four (people), myself, my nephew, two other people, we didn’t know them either

Aah, az unja da o tanke benzine mara shand, taqreeban 16 sat da tanke benzine bodem

Yes, from there he sat us in the petrol tank, we were inside the petrol tank for about 16 hours

he only gave us one bottle of water with biscuits

he only gave us one bottle of water with biscuits

but you cannot even sit in that tank to drink your water or was it not that… (or was there space for that)

only on-, how do I say this, our heads were down on the knee, only-, [re-enacting how he sat]

must have also gotten really warm or …

well warm, it wasn’t warm, but the smell of petrol was very present, then another thing on the way it was raining, a lot of
Reading the excerpt (25) above there can be said that there were major contrasts between some of the more extreme ways passengers were crossed over a border versus the sometimes very ‘everyday’ means of travel. From simply getting a train ticket and getting on the train like any other to sitting inside a fake petrol tank underneath an autobus for 16 hours to cross a border. Another example of extreme ways of people smuggling comes from the interview with Bahar (2014). After having stayed in Greece for several months waiting for the smuggler to find a way or to ‘settle her work’, the smuggler had made travel arrangements for her to come to the Netherlands by plane. On the day of her flight she was taken to a salon for a ‘make-over’ to make her look like a ‘European’ girl; excerpt 26.


**BY**

2 september bod ke ee-, amo nafar guft, yak roz ya do roz peshtaresh, guft; ‘ena yak asnad joor kadem, mekhayum ke yak andakht betumet tarafe europa’, guft; ‘mam namefamum, daqeeq namefamum ke da kudom keshwar tu bayad bere’, guft; ‘mebenem ke har keshware ke ba ma asantar

**It was September second that this-, that person said, one day or two days earlier, said; ‘here I have arranged documents, I want to make an attempt to send you towards Europe, he said; ‘I don’t exactly know either to which country you have to go’, he said; ‘we’ll see whichever country is easier for me’...
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... basha’ ...

**SA kho**

**okay**

**BY** ... ‘baret kar mekunem ke bere’

bad azo mara, da amo nezdeke

amo jay ke ma zindage mekadem,

da khode Athene bodem... dega

bash... hmm da... Platia Omonia,

da Platia Omonia bodem, Athene

kho kalan ast baz har jayakaysh-,

da Platia Omonia bodem baz da

amunja araishgah dasht, pesh aze

ke ba ehsab mekhamet rayee kuna

baret kalay munazam mekhared,

araishgah meborded, khob ba

ehsab feshanet mekad

**SA Kho?!**

**Kho?! (as in oh really?!)**

**BY** Aah, moyta joor mekad, kho mesle

yak europaye joret mekad ke da

maidan-,

**SA kho che raqam joret kad khai?**

**well how did they make you up then?**

**BY kho feshan kada bod, moyay mara

oto kada lashem kada bod, dega

yak patlon cowboy khareda, t-shirt

khareda bod kate-, …

**SA ke ba esab hech eto maloom

nasha-.

**so that it basically would not show at all-.

**BY Amuto ke Europaye megardan jor

dada bod**

they had made me just like how

Europeans dress (walk around)

**SA kho**

**okay**
The appearance of Bahar (2014) was modified to make her look like a European girl. Thus by concealing her true identity, which could potentially have led to executive power becoming suspicious of her illegality, she was able to travel by plane to the Netherlands. Instead, when Masooma (1996) was asked what she thought about being a refugee back then, when she came to the Netherlands versus how it is now, she was very clear about how much easier it was for her than what she hears on the news nowadays; excerpt 27.

Excerpt 27. Masooma Asadi, 1996

I think now it has become more difficult, circumstances have changed a lot since then, because in that time ehh people-the conditions for acceptance were very easy everywhere, the possibilities for coming (were) very -, were better... the state that it is currently in, it was not like this ehh... the situation back then was much better, the conditions for acceptance, now people’s difficulties-, day by day the conditions for acceptance are getting worse everywhere.
That journeys indeed have become much more dangerous becomes clear from the experiences of the refugees interviewed who have come to the Netherlands in more recent years. Consider the following excerpt (28) of interview four with Haidar.

**Excerpt 28. Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014**

HM  | Da kohar bala shudem, bisyar nafar    | We climbed on to the mountains (we went up in the mountains), we were with a lot of people, from one mountain to the other (from this mountain to that mountain), we were on our way for about six hours.
     | zyd bodem, az ee koh da o koh,      |
     | taqreeban 6 sat da rah bodem          |

SA  | sash sat pyada…?                     | six hours by foot…?

HM  | bale aah pyada… baz ehh da rah, da   | yes by foot… then ehh on the way, high in the mountains, we lost a brother, he fell (down) from the mountain… then we told the smuggler that I have to go see my brother, what happened, what didn’t, did he die
     | kohay boland, yak byadar khoda ma     |
     | az dest damen, az koh aftar… baz ma   |
     | qachaqbara guftem ke ma bayat          |
     | berum byadar khoda bebenem, che raqam |
     | shod, che raqam nashod, mord…          |

SA  | Yak byadar degetan ham bod …          | Another brother was also there … with you?
     | hamraytan?                             |

HM  | Yak byadar degetan ham bod mesal ma   | One other brother was there too like there was me, my nephew and another brother of mine who was younger than me
     | bodum, byadardamen wa yak byadar      |
     | degem az ma kada khord bod            |

SA  | kho kho ora ham padaret hamray         | oh okay he too… your father together with you
     | shuma …                               |

HM  | rawan kada bod bale aah… baz da       | had sent him yes … then we were in those mountains between Iran and Turkey that my brother fell from the mountain
     | amo kohay bayne Iran o Turkiya         |
     | bodem ke byadarem aftar az koh        |

SA  | ha…                                    | yes…
In excerpt 28 you read how Haidar lost his younger brother in the mountains of Iran, and how the smuggler is aware of the dangers that exist on their paths, “it is the smuggler’s road, so anything can happen.” People are willing to pay large amounts of money, which shows that passengers’ lives are valued and that a better life in another country is wished for them, yet at the same time smugglers take passengers through very risky paths, even though they know it might cost them
their lives. It seems as if the smuggler has gotten used to incidents like this, as if it has become a normal thing that someone dies on the road to a ‘safer’ place, because it was simply a risk which was included in the deal. Just like then, now too money is the only thing that is needed, and even that cannot guarantee that you reach your intended destination safely. Thus when one settles a deal with a smuggler and pays such an amount of money, people are aware of the fact that their arrival in the intended destination is not guaranteed. The fact that people take a risk that could potentially cost them their lives, should say enough about the life they initially were trying to escape and how desperate they were.

When we look at the experiences of those who came during the 1990’s and compare them to the experiences of those who came in more recent years, it can be said that ‘people smuggling’ or illegal migration used to be much easier than it is now. Although the story of Masooma (1996) was heartbreaking as is, her journey from Afghanistan to the Netherlands was fairly easy and was extremely well organized; “Eventually we came, from Peshawar we (flight) departed for Dubai, from Dubai, within one night (and) one day (within 24 hours), from Dubai to Italy, from Italy we came directly to the Netherlands.” (Masooma, 1996; appendix 6, excerpt A). It also becomes clear from the interview with Rostam; “…next I crossed the Northern border of Tajikistan and from Tajikistan up to the border of Czechoslovakia I was able to travel by train very easily you just bought a ticket in line or on the train and came…” (Rostam, 1991; appendix 6, excerpt B)

5.2.2.4 What it means to be a refugee: experiences and reflections.
Regardless of the journey itself, informants expressed that it was not easy for them to leave behind their country. In narrative 2, before anything else, Faiz notes that; “For somebody who loves his country deeply, having to leave your country, - the land of your parents and grandparents who were born there, fed and raised from the water and the air, educated from the funds of the nation and where the nation hopes for the country to be served in return - (leaving the country) for the purpose of migration and continuing life in a strange country, is very unpleasant, undesirable and painful, despite the great feeling of love for the country, people are forced to do so.” (Faiz, 1992; narrative 2). Corresponding to this experience, Rostam also
mentioned how it is a “very painful” thing to decide to leave behind your country and explained the struggles that one goes through; **excerpt 29.**

**Excerpt 29.** Rostam Abassi, 1991

In the first place leaving the country is (a very strong pain) very painful because you want to leave your country ehm...
you leave, your language, your culture-
your culture, you leave everything, you go. When you leave everything, (and) you get out and after that you come to a country where you suddenly have nobody and you have to learn the language-, have to learn the new language, there is a complete new culture, everything is new to you

In the case of Masooma, not only did she have to deal with the hardship of leaving the country and getting used to a new environment but she also had to deal with the sorrow of losing her husband to war; “...Life after that, until you slowly get settled in a place, the country: strange, your language: strange... the initial life circumstances for real, ‘without limits’, was a hard time... because on the one hand my husband was killed, there were a lot of sorrows and on the other hand; family was far away, and then, in a strange country with two young children, it was
very difficult” (Masooma, 1996; appendix 6, excerpt C). And then there is also the matter of not always feeling welcome in the receiving country; excerpt 30.

Excerpt 30. Rostam Abassi, 1991

RA ...wa enja ham etor jay nabod ke dafatan tu byaye qabol shawe, masalan ke bogoye; ‘ena ee khana, ee aw, ee kol ame-’, masalan mardum az tu doozi mekad, tu zubana yaad nadashte... ehh kho ba name khareji megufet, eto mardum az tu doozi mekad, tu ‘welcome’ nameguft ... kho megufet; “tu enja amade, panahenda asti, tu etor asti...” hamesh taseer dara. ...and then here also it was not a place like, that you suddenly come and get accepted, for example that it was like; ‘here you go, a house, water, all these-’, for example people would steal from you, you did not know the language... ehh well they would call you foreigner (as in outsider), like people here (wouldn’t tell you ‘welcome’ or anything) were not very welcoming... they would be like well; “you have come here, you’re an asylum seeker, you’re this and that...” all of it has an impact.

It is one thing to leave your country and travelling a difficult path, but arriving here and feeling that you are unwelcome and knowing that actually ‘they’ do not really want you here is another. When Faiz applied for asylum in the Netherlands and was told to go to another address he told the police “…how can I, I am not familiar here and I also don’t have money.” To which the police officer answered; “it is not hard to find the address, just like you came from Afghanistan you can also find this address easily.” (Faiz, 1992; narrative 2). There can be derived a rather condescending and judgmental demeanor towards Faiz from this response. Although Rostam has been living in the Netherlands for the past 25 years and has managed to settle his life, he spoke in terms of living in a ‘circle’ or within a ‘framework’. Consider the following excerpt (31) of the interview with Rostam.


RA chura mardom Holland ke ast, amenja keshwaresh ast, ba asane kar paida mekanan wale bar yak panahende ke enja myaya bisyar baresh mushkil because (the people of the Netherlands) Dutch people, this is their country, they find a job easily but for an asylum seeker who comes here it is very difficult...
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Bayat khoda tagheer beta wa har che ke kana anoz ham majbor ast ke da amo circal khod basha, az circal khod beron baramada nametana ba khater ke ba asane ‘accept’ namesha, majbor da chawkat khod basha, da amo char chawkat khod basha...

...agar bokhaya beron baraya, az char chawkat, kas dega gabolesh namekuna az o khater da..., wahhtke az keshwar khod myaya beron, ... da yak keshwar dega da yak char chawkat zindage mekuna, ba ojod ke Europa bisyar kalan ast, bisyar emkanat dara, bisyar ‘mogelijkheid’ dara, wale dar char chawkat ast,...

...wale mardom ke agar maw shuma da Afghanistan bashem azad astem, azad astem, kat har yake tamas darem, har kar mekunom, television ke meshnawem, ba zabane khodema ast, har jay ke merem zaroor nest-, ba zaban khod gap mezanem, az o khater unja sahe wase ast, enja saha khord ast.

Ene khodesh yak ‘depressiviteit’ ast ke adama depressief mesaza. Az o khater hech kas, masalan, eto bisyar khush nest ke; ‘wala ma khush astum ke panahenda amadem’, har kas ke panahenda amada, shakle hejbare, majbore boda., ya ne hechkas amuto watan khoda ela nameta namera... dega ename tajrube ast ke da ame 24 sal, 23 sal ke gereftem. Ke masalan kas ke bewatan basha, da yak circal khord mebasha, kase ke watan medashta basha, ‘veel ruimte’, kol he has to change himself and whatever he does he still has to stay within his ‘circle’, he can’t get outside of his circle because he is not accepted easily, he has to stay within his ‘framework’, stay in that framework of his...

...if he wants to get out, of the framework, nobody else will accept him that is why he..., when he gets out of his country, ...in another country, he lives within a framework, even though Europe is very big and has much opportunity, has many possibilities, but it is within a framework (it is limited)...

...but when people-, if we are in Afghanistan, we’re free, we’re free, we’re in touch with everyone, we do anything, when we (hear) watch television, it is in our own language, wherever we go there’s no need-, we talk in our own language, that is why the area there is spacious here the area is small.

This in itself is a ‘depression’ that depresses a person. That is why nobody is like, for example, very happy that; ‘oh I’m happy that that I came to seek for asylum here’, anyone who has come to seek for asylum here, it has been a matter of pressure, of force, I mean nobody just like that leaves his country and goes... So this is the experience that I have gained in these 24 years, 23 years. That, for example, one who is ‘bewatan’ (stateless) lives in a small circle, one who has a country, ‘a lot of space’, the whole country is his.
The small ‘circle’ or ‘framework’ that Rostam is speaking of, refers to the many barriers that a refugee encounters with, the language barrier being one of the biggest. Thus it is a feeling of being limited, whether that is in terms of access to jobs, in terms of socializing or even just watching television. For Rostam Afghanistan will always be his home and the country where he feels he is the most comfortable, as Nasrin says; “There is no place like home but you have no choice but to get used to it.” (Nasrin, 1991; narrative 1).

Nonetheless informants expressed their gratitude for the fact that they are safe and have been able to build a life for themselves. Especially considering the circumstances of refugees nowadays; “In these bad circumstances that in Afghanistan day by day-, it is getting worse… the war is getting worse day by day and people-, … for you it is also obvious what is going on every day (referring to the news)... ehh I’m happy that thankfully I could make a life for myself here and that my children were able to get somewhere.” (Masooma, 1996; appendix 6, excerpt D).

Rostam mentions how the bitterness that he had experienced when first coming here is no longer present and that he has gotten used to living in the Netherlands, using an Afghan proverb; ‘har che deer shod zeer mesha’, meaning the more time passes the more ‘it goes under’ or you forget (Rostam, 1991; appendix 6, excerpt e). Although Haidar is also glad that he is here in the Netherlands and that he is safe here, he still worries for his family and relatives back home in Afghanistan; “yes I’m happy that I’m in the Netherlands, from one regard, from one view that it is ‘peaceful’ here, like you ehh ... how... (you) feel safe, there no danger at all..., from one regard, from one view I’m upset that I’m far away from family, every moment I worry about family.” (Haidar, 2014; appendix, excerpt F). Additionally there is often the sense of loneliness being far away from your loved ones, and it is only then that the use of telephones and the internet are briefly mentioned; excerpt 31.

Excerpt 31. Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014

| HM       | dega maw byadarem enja chon tanha,                        |
|          | astem, dega kase nadarem... ne dega...                     |
|          | bekhe makhsad ame da Holland                               |
|          | so my brother and I since we’re alone here,                |
|          | we don’t have anybody else... no (one else)...             |
|          | I mean in all of Holland and Europe we don’t               |
Apart from the idea that circumstances for refugees have become more difficult, there is the overall train of thought that it has also become more difficult to get accepted in the Netherlands. Reflecting upon their arrival in the Netherlands, both Rostam and Masooma mentioned how in general the conditions for asylum and acceptance have become stricter. This is not surprising since, as we had discussed in the theoretical framework of this thesis, migration policies in the Netherlands over the years gradually have been tightened and have become more restrictive. Rostam told us how it took three to three and a half years before he got accepted in the Netherlands, however during the waiting period he was assigned to a more or less permanent place, an actual house, he was allowed to study, he was allowed to do anything; “Ehm now the system has changed, as long as one’s status is unclear, one does not have the permission to study, as long as one’s status is unclear, one does not get housing, like that-. Back in the day it was not like that, one’s status was unclear, they would give him a card or ‘green card’, that would say that your case is pending with the ministry of justice... one’s outcome was unknown but-, it would remain so for approximately 4 years, 3 years until his status would be become clear (known), however that individual could go to school, could work, could study, everything, the system was different... approximately three and a half years it took until I got my acceptance” (Rostam, 1991; appendix 6, excerpt G). In contrast, when we look at how Bahar got accepted within one month (Excerpt 32), we may question if it really has become more difficult. Also recall that since the early 1990’s the alien policy in the Netherlands was revised multiple times and that asylum procedures were sped up. In this regard we can perhaps conclude that eventually it all still depends on the case in question.

Excerpt 32. Bahar Yousufzai, 2012

BY Baz az mara, rasti ke bisyar sakhti ma kasheda bodum, qabol kadan, tarekh chand... da oktober, 5/6

Then mine (my case), for real I had been through a lot, got accepted, what date... in October, it was 5 / 6 October, Monday
In the interview with Rostam (1991), the reflections on refugee circumstances then and now also led to a conversation about the advanced developments in the world of technology. In this regard, interestingly enough, Rostam thinks that it has made circumstances easier for refugees. Rostam could very well imagine what the journey of coming here would have been like if he had today’s smartphones, or even just a mobile phone in his pocket and how much easier it would have made his journey. He gave an example of how the availability of the internet and the access to news and such might influence refugee’s decision on what country to go to and discussed many other possibilities; “So (of course) it has made the circumstances easy [concluding], technology today, but back in the day, 20 years ago, there were no such things, everything was blind, you would only move to see where you would end up.” (Rostam, 1991; see appendix 6, excerpt H for an extensive excerpt of Rostam’s view on this matter). Contrary to this belief the interviews with Bahar (2012) and Haidar (2014) showed this not to be the case. Haidar briefly mentioned that he used the phone or the internet only to keep in touch with loved ones back home. Bahar on the other hand is no longer in touch with any of her family members, which is understandable considering the situation that she left in.

5.3 Can we speak of Asylum 2.0?

This study aimed to compare the experiences of refugees between two different time periods, namely in the early 1990’s and in present times considering the fast developments of the network society over the past 25 years. Studies have suggested that the internet and modern
communication technologies can influence the decision making of migrants as to where they would go, how they would go and that it would aid in decision making. When conducting the interviews it slowly became apparent that the communication aspect and the presence of the internet in present day did not seem relevant to the refugees themselves at all.

The interviews were thoroughly scanned on things related to motives for leaving the country, decisions on where to go, preparing the journey and what communication strategies were assessed. Information on conditions of acceptance and where one would have the best chances for acceptance would mainly spread through word of mouth. Those who flee the country are often desperate, and as the journeys of our interviewees show, the Netherlands as their final destination was either decided, depending on the situation, by someone else, the possibilities that the smuggler had or was based on your budget. Neither were the participants who were interviewed always aware of where they would be going. In some cases, even though the intentions are often well, from one day to the next they were handed over to a smuggler by a family member which was the case for Bahar. Thus it was not so much a matter of knowing ahead of time where you were going and having a specific intended destination that you could do research about and prepare for.

After the initial decision was made to leave the country, steps were taken to prepare the journey even if it was within a short amount of time. Just as in some cases the decision to leave the country was not made by themselves but by a relative or someone else in the family, in the same way the preparations or the initiatives were also taken or made by someone else. There were certain things that needed to be prepared ahead of time, such as arrangements with a smuggler. A financial aspect being of great importance was prevalent in both initial narratives as well as all four of the interviews and in most cases a large sum of money needed to be prepared. In both the years of 1990 and in present times preparing for the journey was mainly finding a smuggler to transport you to a safe place and preparing a large sum of money to be able to pay the smuggler. The rest of the ‘preparations’ or arrangements were made by the smuggler.

Although studies suggest the use of technologies could aid migrants in their decision making and preparation, the online aspect seemed to be completely absent. While participants were telling their story of what happened, why they came and how they came, asking questions regarding the use of technology oftentimes seemed unnatural and irrelevant, it almost even seemed a bit off topic. The fact that informant did not have anything to say or comment from this
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perspective makes the ‘huge impact’ of the internet questionable when it comes to refugee’s journeys. Note that the focus is on forced migration, as one could very well imagine that any other type of migration in present days would involve both research and preparation by technological means. When it comes down to actual refugees having no other choice, the internet or any other modern communication technologies do not make that much of a difference as to how it went in the early 1990’s.

However the importance of a social network (offline) cannot be denied, it is only that there was no technology involved. The findings so far show that just as it was important then, it is still very important to have a social network to help you get out of the country. Almost in every case through the one or the other participants were able to leave the country and settle elsewhere. The journey of Masooma and her two children was arranged by her father in law. In both recent cases it was a father who sent his sons and grandchild and prepared the trafficker (Haidar) and it was a women who sent her niece (sister’s daughter) away (Bahar). Without them they might have not been able to get out of the country by themselves. Rostam knew people in Moscow and through them he found a smuggler who could arrange a visa for Czechoslovakia; “When I came to Moscow, there were already Afghans there, the number of Afghans there were high and when I came, there according to the people that I knew myself there, I had telephone numbers, I contacted them, they-, every one of them had lived there for 15 years, 10 years, 20 years... so they knew and since they knew smugglers, they would take money and worked, through them I was able to get the visa for Czech and go to Czechoslovakia.” (Rostam, 1991; appendix 6, excerpt I). Thus through his social network he was able to get in touch with smugglers; most likely through word of mouth, ‘customers’ would get in touch with ‘service providers’. In Czech Republic using the same ‘experience’ as he had gained in Moscow, he arranged a smuggler to take him to Germany. “we knew certain people and according to the experience we had (gained) in Moscow, we came into contact with smugglers” (Rostam, 1991; appendix 6, excerpt J), thus we can interpret that through his social network in Czechoslovakia he was once again, just like in Moscow, able to find a smuggler.

In the theoretical framework of this thesis it was discussed how migrants in the destination country might encourage others in their home country through their networks to migrate and thus lowering the threshold for others. How settled migrants become resources for others in their home country. Somewhat in accordance with this idea we did find that the
informants of this study generally follow the path or destination of their friends and relatives. Rostam (1991) told us that he happened to know people in the Netherlands, so that is why he decided in Germany to go to the Netherlands. Although Masooma’s father in law (1996) had decided and arranged everything for her, Masooma knew (and most likely her father in law also was aware of it) that her maternal aunt was living in the Netherlands. Additionally she told us that everybody comes to know through the one or the other where conditions for refugees are better. Looking at it from the transnational aspect, when Haidar’s brother (2014) went away and settled in the Netherlands he became transnationally linked to his family back home in Afghanistan. The fact that he was already in the Netherlands was reason for Haidar’s father to send Haidar to the Netherlands as well. But when Haidar was asked what he would tell others if they wanted to come to the Netherlands, Haidar’s immediate answer was that he does not advice anyone to come, not through the smuggler’s road that is; **excerpt 33**. Even though he worries for his family in Afghanistan, he does not recommend anyone to come, as he had a very rough experience coming here through a smuggler.

**Excerpt 33.** Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014

| SA | Enale agar kase az famil shuma ya az dostay shuma da Afghanistan bashan, bakhyan ee taraf byayan, ona ra khodet che mege, mege byayan da ee rahe ke khodet teer kade? |
| HM | Wala ahwalesh ke megum, nabyayan, ne |
| SA | Nabyayan |
| HM | Ma faqat koshesh mekunom ke har raqam shawa mesal aga betanan vise tayara hawaye byayan |
| SA | Ba esab qanooni byayan |
| HM | Qanooni byayan bale aah ... Dega |

*Now If someone from your family or from your friends are in Afghanistan would want to come this way, what do you tell them, do you tell them to come through this road that you have come?*

*Well the first thing I say is that they don’t come, no*

*That they don’t come…*

*I will only try to, whatever it takes-, for example if they can (get) a visa… plane, that they come by air*

*So basically that they come legally*

*Yes that they come legally yes… not like this, the smuggler’s road*
5.4 Adjusting our approach and continuing the analysis: the journey of a refugee offline

The initial thought when conducting the interviews was that the stories from then compared to now were more or less the same but different in detail of course. Taking a closer look at the interviews, listening to them carefully and transcribing unusual parts of the interviews, this study did reveal differences between the two studied time spans but from a different perspective.

5.4.1 The autonomy of migration.

The most prevalent differences when comparing the journeys of refugees then and of refugees now that we found was that journeys of refugees in present day seem to be much more difficult, dangerous and fragmented than was the case in the years of 1990. The findings in this thesis lend itself well to the frequently discussed idea of the ‘autonomy of migration’ which suggests that migrants are more or less shaping and reshaping the politics of migration. The train of thought...
that there can be found a certain autonomy within the movements of unauthorized migrants, that migratory flows are capable of undermining sovereign power (Walters, 2008).

Mezzadra, in his dialogue with Neilson (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2003) explain the autonomy of migration as a two folded movement; there is the initial movement of migrants that leave borders (of Europe in their example) porous. As a reaction to this, sovereign power takes measures to control these migratory flows by increasing securitization on the borders. Essentially what happens is that sovereign power in reverse reacts to the path which is paved by the migrants themselves. Thus in a certain light it can be said that migrants dominate sovereign control, because it is the pressure of migration that brings about changes as well as new developments in border control (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2003; Rygiel, 2011).

The fact that nowadays more smugglers are involved in the journey of a refugee, that journeys have become more difficult and dangerous and that it has led to journeys becoming more fragmented essentially all comes down to increased border control. As over the years the securitization of borders has increased, smugglers are constantly challenged to find new ways and routes assessing different and sometimes extreme strategies to pass through their passengers resulting in ‘the smuggler’s road’ becoming increasingly more dangerous. Haidar lost a brother in the mountains of Iran, indicating that the path they were passed through was dangerous and that the risk of people losing their lives exists, anything can happen and anything is possible. When Haidar lost his brother in the mountains of Iran, he and his nephew wanted to go down to find their brother and they begged the smuggler; “let me at least see that brother of mine” – but the smuggler did not let them go; excerpt 34.

**Excerpt 34.** Haidar Mahsenzada, 2014

- **HM** dega unja qachaqbar mara namand, bisyar motaser shodom, narahat shudom, geryan kadum... guft ke; ‘ee raye ast, ke rahe qachaq ast...’
  - **so there the smuggler did not let us, I got very emotional, I got upset, I cried … he said that; “this road, which is the smuggler’s road...”**

- **SA** Aah
  - **Yes**

- **HM** fameda namesha ke memana, ke...you can’t tell who stays, who goes so
From this excerpt we understand that the smuggler is aware of the dangers that exist on their paths and that the smuggler’s road is risk full. Smugglers also seem to exactly know where it is safe for them to be and where they might run the risk of getting caught. In both the story of Bahar and Haidar, the smuggler stayed behind in Turkey when they were sent off over the water to Greece, Bahar explains; “…well when the smuggler passed us over the water then the smuggler of course does not come with us because if he gets caught by the police they will of course take him” (Interview transcript Bahar Yousufzai, appendix 5, line 445-448). Thus smugglers are aware of the border control on the shores of Greece. That the passengers were picked up at another point in Greece once again indicates the existence of a collaboration of smugglers. The increase in the number of smugglers involved in each journey could then also be explained by increased border securitization as smugglers have to work together.

Even when comparing the journey of Bahar in 2012 and the journey of Haidar in 2014 and paying attention to more detailed matters the gradual increased securitization of borders can be derived from mentioned details. In excerpt 9 in the trajectory of Haidar (page. 44) you read how Haidar and his nephew in a group of approximately 40 people, including babies and children, were sent over the water in a boat. It took them four hours until they reached the shores of Greece. Whereas Bahar crossed the water between Turkey and Greece by boat and reached the shore in only five minutes; “…the distance of the river was not much it was like only five minutes by ‘thing’ (by boat), five minutes, six minutes, he sat us in the boat, we crossed to the other side…” (Interview transcript Bahar Yousufzai, appendix 5, line 413-415). It can be suggested that as more refugees tried to reach Greece by boat, it led to the ‘gateway’ to Europe becoming more securitized. This in turn might have led smugglers choosing other points for pushing off their boats with their passengers, explaining why in the story of Haidar in 2014 it took much longer to reach the coast. Let’s continue the journey of Haidar and pick up where we left off in excerpt 9 (page. 44) when he reached the shores of Greece after having been in the water for four hours; excerpt 35.
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Excerpt 35. Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014

HM  
*Baz bad az 4 sat rasedem o taraf aw baz ehh keshte khoda ma zadem kad kard, paresh kadem, zeer aw andakhtem*
Then after four hours we reached the other side of the water then ehh we cut our boat with a knife and threw it under water

SA  
*Chura paresh kaden?*
Why did you cut it?

HM  
*Ba khater ke ma shuneda bodum ke agar qayeqa para nakune,...*
Because I had heard that if you do not cut the boat,...

SA  
*aah*
yes

HM  
*...agar police geret kuna, da amo qayeq pas rawanet mekuna taraf Turkiya*
...if the police catches you, they will send you back to Turkey in that same boat

SA  
*Aah*
Yes

What we see here is, as explained by Haidar himself, is that cutting the boat will prevent them from being sent back by the Greek border patrols in the same boat. “They used different routes to arrive in Turkey and then eventually crossed the EU border to Greece on a boat. They were intercepted by Frontex patrols, the European border security agency, and had to destroy their boat so that they will be transported as shipwrecked asylum seekers to a camp Greece.” (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013:18) Thus the act of cutting the boat is a strategy to undermine state control. Note that Haidar also tells us that he had just heard that you have to that because otherwise they will send you back. From this we understand that this ‘practical professional knowledge’ is picked up from experiences of others, most likely from 1) boats with refugees that have returned to the coast of Turkey and 2) actual ‘shipwrecked’ asylum seekers who have been brought to a Greek assembly center and that this information was spreading through word of mouth. Through practical professional knowledge such as cutting the boat and being taken up by Greece as a shipwrecked asylum seeker, the securitization of borders is more or less undermined. And it is exactly the interplay of migration on the one hand and securitization on the other that resides in the autonomy of migration. They say migrants in fact are in control because 1) they are the reason for increased securitization of borders in the first place and 2) they undermine the securitization through the strategies of the smuggler.
In the findings section of this thesis we also discussed the more extreme strategies that were assessed by smugglers and migrants. How Bahar (2012) for example was taken to a salon in order to make her look like a European girl. Thus her appearance was modified as such so that she became one with the surroundings. Shifting her identity as a camouflage into the crowd. It is these strategies of migrants and smugglers to cross borders thus rendering borders permeable. It is the little techniques and strategies of something so simple as changing one’s clothing, changing one’s hair and the use of cosmetics to look ‘European’. Whereas in interview four Haidar (2014) told us how he, together with his nephew and two other people were smuggled from France into Belgium by sitting inside a fake petrol tank for 16 hours to cross a border.

"Becoming is essential to mobility. The trope of becoming animal is only one of the options migrants employ in order to claim their freedom of movement. Becoming woman, becoming child, becoming elder, becoming soil, becoming fluid, becoming animal is the migrant’s answer to the control of their desire... - ..., they realise their desire by changing their bodies, voices, accents, patois, hair, colour, height, gender, age, biographies." (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, & Tsianos, 2008: 216)

Thus Haidar had to “become petrol”, become nothing, and become exanimate. Instead of becoming someone else or taking on a different identity he took on a different form of being, he had to become invisible, imperceptible. It is these techniques that both smugglers and migrants assess that render borders permeable, these becomings through which migrants move forward, it is these strategies that are capable of undermining the power of border controls. Papadopoulos, Stephenson, & Tsianos (2008) refer to the act of becoming imperceptible as an effective tool and rendering states’ systems and borders porous as a tactic that migrants use to protest the power of the state. The dynamics of border control are solely based on identification of migrants and the governance of their movement, thus administration is an important aspect of these dynamics (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, & Tsianos, 2008; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2003). However it is the failure of these restrictive measures that make the idea of the ‘autonomy of migration’ plausible (Walters, 2008). The act of changing your identity or becoming imperceptible defies sovereign control because identification and thus control is no longer possible. As they slip into different
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becomings they slip through borders in various ways and strategies rendering borders porous. "Of course migration’s weapon of imperceptibility does not always succeed, it is a route without guarantees, it involves pain, suffering, hunger, desperation, torture, even the death of thousands of people in the sunken ships into the oceans of earth." (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, & Tsianos, 2008: 220).

5.4.2 Europe’s expanding border control.

As we have already seen from the data thrown at us, in all of the journeys there was the involvement of a smuggler and the journeys of the refugees who came in recent years involved more smugglers, a network thus, than the journeys of those who came during the years of 1990. However, it was interesting to see that the journeys of Rostam and Masooma in the 1990’s did not start out with a smuggler until they were outside of Afghanistan. Rostam left when the Soviet Union still existed, for the most part he was able to travel by himself and to find a smuggler on his way when he needed one. Considering the former U.S.S.R. stretched up to the border of Czechoslovakia, Rostam needed a visa for Czechoslovakia which he obtained in Moscow. In the interview Rostam made clear that in Czechoslovakia he could not get a visa for Germany; “...because the German embassy was not like the Czechoslovakian embassy that he (the smuggler) could ‘extract’ a visa, the visa for Germany,...” (Rostam, 1991; appendix 6, excerpt J). From this discourse line we can reconstruct that Rostam implied that the Czechoslovakian embassy was corrupt and the German embassy was not and so it was difficult or rather impossible to obtain a visa. Thus as Rostam came closer to Western Europe, it became more difficult to travel legally. In order to move forward and to reach his intended destination, he had to arrange a smuggler and travel illegally. This development was also prevalent in both the story of Nasrin (narrative 1) and Faiz (narrative 2). When Masooma left Afghanistan in 1996, the Soviet Union had already fallen. As she could not freely travel through the former U.S.S.R. anymore and also given the fact of her being a female with two young children, she was accompanied by a smuggler from almost the beginning of her journey (in Pakistan). Instead both Haidar and Bahar were accompanied by a smuggler from the start of their journey, when the smuggler picked them up in Kabul, Afghanistan. Considering journeys have become much more dangerous and difficult, it seems that in present times it is nearly impossible to get out of
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Afghanistan and actually reach further than the outside borders of Afghanistan without a smuggler.

Thus where in the 1990’s you would need a smuggler in central Europe to get to Western Europe, in present times a smuggler is needed from the very beginning of the journey. In the early 1990’s the main route to get to Western Europe was through the former U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia. In present times we see that the main passage for entering Europe is through the border between Turkey and Greece, which is where travelling already gets trickier. From this finding we understand that Europe’s border securitization is gradually expanding, from the heart of Europe outwards and it is becoming harder and harder to cut through the gatekeeping measures set up in order to limit border permeation. This finding is in line with research on border studies and migration as the expansion of Europe’s border control or rather the deterritorialization of the external EU borders is increasingly discussed. “The term deterritorialization connotes the fact that Europe’s external borders do not match a fixed geographical demarcation but rather that they can be traced both within and beyond EU space.” (Andrijasevic, 2010: 7). ‘Remote control’ measures, such as visa procedures and carrier sanctions, control migration far outside the physical border as well as within the borders of the EU, creating buffer zones to filter unwanted migrants and preventing them “from accessing the system of legal protection and the asylum process, thereby avoiding the domestic and international legal norms that stand in the way of restricting migration flows.” (Guiraudon, 2002: 6; Guiraudon, 2006). There can be spoken of hyper proceduralism as the procedure that allows for security to take place has indeed expanded so much that the border is already felt in the home country of the migrant, which explains the immediate use of a smuggler. As European technologies of border control are expanding and developing (Albrecht, 2002), it becomes harder for illegal migrants to travel by themselves becoming increasingly dependent on the professionalism of ‘the smuggler network’. Which could then once again explain the increase in the number of smugglers and the expansion of smuggler practices; unauthorized migration raises the demand for smugglers. Thus the rise of a smuggler network is only in reaction to increased border controls (Engbersen, Van der Leun & De Boom, 2007; Kleemans, 2007).
Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions

The initial goal of this research was to investigate if and how the internet, social media as well as more generally named information and communication technologies have facilitates the movement of people entering the process of doing asylum. Studies highlight the many possibilities of technologies and social media and suggest that migration has become easier, however the opposite seems to be true as conditions have changed it is less easy to get into western countries. Increased border control has led to journeys of unauthorized migrants becoming more challenging and difficult for both the migrant as well as the smuggler.

6.1 The border as a membrane

Sovereign power exports ‘technologies of border control’ to determine and regulate who crosses a border and who is restricted from crossing the border. Cell membranes are often metaphorically used to depict a political border. A cell membrane through its permeability regulates what goes into the cell and what goes out of the cell, as they selectively permit the transfer of molecules between two domains. “Similarly, international borders permit selective transfer of different types of people (citizens, visa-holders, illegal migrants) between two countries.” (Malczynski, Cockerill, Forster and Passell, 2005: 13). Malczynski, Cockerill, Forster and Passell (2005) however argue that it is not just permeability that regulates and controls borders. A cell membrane has permeability as well as gradient qualities that in conjunction regulate what goes into the cell and what goes out of the cell. Concentration inequality causes gradients to flow through the membrane, thus undermining the regulation of the selective permeable membrane. Malczynski, Cockerill, Forster and Passell (2005) applied the idea of an imbalance in gradient concentration to the concept of illegal Mexican labor workers in the USA, how labor demand in the USA increases the illegal crossings of the border even though borders have become increasingly securitized. They found that even though controls at the border are tightened and securitization has increased which has made the crossing of borders more difficult, illegal migrants continue attempting to cross the border. Projecting their conclusion to our findings, it becomes apparent that even though securitization has increased and is has led to journeys becoming more difficult, migrants take the risk and continue the illegal crossing of borders. The gradient imbalance in the case of refugees might be a matter of safety, a better life,
better prospects etc. Safety on one side of the border and a rough life, or in some cases, death on the other side of the border. In the same way it can be said that illegal migratory flows dismiss the state’s ‘technologies of border control’ and thus migrants undermine the power of sovereign control, which essentially again comes down to the autonomy of migration.

There is a complex interplay between border control and the movement of people. It is not only the changes that migration brings about in border control, but is also the fact that even though securitization and border control is increased, movement of unauthorized migrants continue but it manifest itself in different ways. This leads them to the conclusion that illegal migration cannot be reduced or solved at the border, which is usually the first thing that is targeted by institutional power, because migrants (and smugglers) assess strategies to cross the border anyway even if it means it might cost them their lives. The more securitization, the more extreme strategies are assessed.

6.2 The figure of the smuggler
Increased border control and securitization also manifests itself through the number of smugglers needed for a refugee to reach the intended destination. The findings in this thesis point to the existence of some sort of network of smugglers, rather than a smuggler working alone. Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2008: 212) refer to the trafficking practices on the coasts of Turkey, or as it is called there ‘sheep trade’, as “a whole regime of mobility, a whole informal network in which hundreds of different actors participate, each one with different stakes, to make borders permeable.” It is a network of smugglers who work in complex but well-adjusted systems in order to pass passengers as smoothly as possible rendering borders permeable. It was interesting to see that the refugees who were interviewed as well as the informants who wrote the narratives were continuously speaking of ‘the smuggler’ as one of the central figures of the whole process, yet again without giving it a face or a national background or a name. This figure is as useful in the illegal migration process as it is. Even though in almost all stories several smugglers were involved, throughout the interviews informants continuously referred to them as a singular person, ‘the smuggler’. The fact that they are talking about the figure of the smuggler rather than the actual person could perhaps be explained in terms of moral distance (Gill, 2016). Refugees are well aware of the illegality of smuggler practices and their involvement in it, however for them it is a matter of life and death. To avoid having to morally scrutinize one’s wrong and right
doings, distanciation by replacing the actual smuggler by an abstract category of ‘the smuggler’ relieves the need to do so. Nonetheless, the transition from only one or two smugglers to a well-organized association of smugglers has created an image of “the smuggler” that has become detached from a “human-being with a name, appearance and personality”. Although the actor continuously changes, the role of the smuggler persists. The idea of “the smuggler” becoming detached of the body and becoming intangible, also in a way undermines state control as there is always spoken of “a smuggler” (being involved) rather than a person or a network which can be identified.

A similar line of thought can be derived from an often mentioned synonym for the journey facilitated by a smuggler, it is referred to as ‘raye qachaq’ which means ‘the smuggler’s route’. Each of the journeys of the four participants interviewed in this study differed greatly, nevertheless it is always referred to as the smuggler’s route. Just like many actors all over the world simultaneously take on the role of ‘the smuggler’, the smuggler’s route is also not one specific route. Each smuggler has their own routes, paths and strategies making every journey different and unique. Journeys converge at some points, like for example on the shores of Greece, but they all diverge into various paths and directions. And this study only uncovers the story of four people, of the many thousands of refugees that opt for the smuggler’s road every year. The fact that the smuggler’s road is not a specific route that can be controlled and that it is a dynamic and unpredictable route, with routes mapped out as they are travelling, makes it difficult for the state to control the flows and once again undermines sovereign power.

The discussion about the autonomy of migration makes it important to note that although “migration challenges and reconstitutes the sovereign population control” (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, & Tsianos, 2008: 211) the autonomy of migration does not suggest that mobility of migrants is independent of institutional force. “Very often it is subjected to it and succumbs to violent state or private interventions that attempt to tame it; probably the politics of detention and deportation is the best example of such violence that show how migrant mobility can be halted and brutally controlled” (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013: 10). Albrecht (2002) in his article ‘Fortress Europe?’ discussed the many ways that are used for containing illegal migrants. Through modernization of technologies of border control a “fortress” is built around Europe taking firm measures against unwanted migrants. Although these border technologies are aimed at blocking and restricting unwanted migrants, in reality it turns out that once again it comes
down to a big business. Under the disguise of streamlining the pass through of migrants, the mobility of migrants are at the interest of privately run detention and reception centers (Anderson, 2014). The autonomy of migration solely underlines that it is a two-way interaction between migratory flows and sovereign power, indicating that sovereign power follows the movement of migrants rather than preceding them (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2013; Rygiel, 2011).

As the analysis chapter of this thesis uncovered, not only did we find an answer to the main question proposed in this thesis, but we also found the scope of this thesis to have completely shifted as the data revealed a different perspective than the one that had initially triggered the study strengthening the internal validity of this study. “In my view the kind of research that is in certain respects more valuable are those inquiries which... register a more modest and, perhaps, minor understanding of autonomous migration. Here I have in mind a range of sociological, ethnographic and anthropological studies. While their authors do not always explicitly identify their work with the idea of autonomous migration, their findings are very much consistent with its main emphases. For they patiently document many of the ways in which unauthorized migrants and stateless persons actively negotiate the world of borders, work, social relationships, bureaucratic entanglements, refugee hearings and much else.” (Walter, 2008: 190).

6.3 Suggestions for future research
Considering that in present day smugglers have to collaborate in order to pass their passengers through, it could be suggested that if anything, they would be the ones benefitting from modern communication technologies as they are the ones who have to cooperate closely together to pass passengers to each other.

As the focus in this study was on Afghan refugees, it is important to take into consideration that Afghanistan is a country where there is a lot of poverty and is far behind on well developed countries. The many headlines in the news of refugees coming to Western Europe seeking for asylum while having the latest smartphones in their pocket was one of the things that triggered this study. However those things applied more to refugees of Syria and other countries in the Middle East which were generally fairly well developed. Perhaps the results of this study would turn out differently and technology really would influence refugee’s journeys
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and decision a great deal. Thus research among other ethnic minorities should be done to give more insight on this matter.

Additionally this research only takes into consideration the first stages of becoming a refugee and the actual journey of a refugee. In the theoretical framework integration and settling into a host society were also discussed in regards of modern technologies. Future research should also be done on the use of modern communication technologies and the meaning that it has for Afghan refugees who are settling in the Netherlands.
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Appendix 1: Narrative 1 by Nasrin Amiri (original)
Narrative 1 by Nasrin Amiri (translation)

The time that we decided to leave the country was very difficult and unsafe, rockets were fired from everywhere. Night and day we were all discomforted, my close relatives my brother and my mom were already outside of the country and they were very worried about us and they would always send us letters to decide quicker because the situation was getting worse day by day. Me and my husband after having thought it over for a while with great difficulty agreed to leave the country. Because my husband was working with the government, he could not easily leave the country.

Basically he decided to ‘send’ me with four children at that time, my eldest son of seven, my daughter of five and a half, my second son of three and my little girl who was 40 days old. With my husband’s family we flew from Kabul (Kabul, Afghanistan) to Mazar (Mazare-i-Sharif, Afghanistan) and we covered the costs by selling the house and properties and after that through the border between Afghanistan and former Soviet Union we arrived in Tajikistan.

And with the help of friends we stayed in the city of Dushanbe (Tajikistan) for a while. With their help we came to Moscow (Russia). The time we spent in Moscow the weather was very cold and in a very small apartment we had to wait for a while until our identity documents were being prepared by a smuggler. After that we arrived in Prague (Prague, Czech Republic) by train and waited again for a week until we left for Germany.

Because my brother in law was already staying in Holland my husband wanted to come here. Through ‘social’ contacts he had already settled everything. During that time it was very difficult to tell anybody that I am leaving the country. I could not say goodbye to my friends, not even to my closest friend of whom until this day I do not know whether she is even alive or not, or take anything with me.

After we reported ourselves to the police, after the asylum procedures and interviews we stayed at the asylum camp for a period of six months and after that we were provided with accommodation in one of the cities of Holland and slowly we learned the language and until now we have been living here. There is no place like home but you have no choice but to get used to it.
Appendix 2: Narrative 2 by Faiz Sediqi (original)

یک روز در سال ۱۹۷۸، هنگامی که بنیاد طالبان در افغانستان قوی شده بودند، او در حالی بود که در مسجدی در شهر کابل تربیت می‌شد. او به دنبال یافتن مشاغلی بود که توانسته به رفاهی جامعه کمک کند. برای این که به این هدف برسد، او در حالی بود که در حال درمان بود که به دنبال یافتن یک مشاغل بود.

بنابراین، او تصمیم گرفت تا به این هدف برسد. او در حالی بود که در حال درمان بود که به دنبال یافتن یک مشاغل بود.

در برخورد با این مشکل، او تصمیم گرفت تا به این هدف برسد. او در حالی بود که در حال درمان بود که به دنبال یافتن یک مشاغل بود.

اراده و درک هدف مخصوص او در تلاش برای پیشرفت در راه رسیدن به خیال مربوط به آینده نو به عنوان یک خانواده完全 به مدیریت خودش کمک کرد.

واحد معمولی در سال ۱۹۷۸

آناج او در حالی بود که در حال درمان بود که به دنبال یافتن یک مشاغل بود.

در فوریت، او تصمیم گرفت تا به این هدف برسد. او در حالی بود که در حال درمان بود که به دنبال یافتن یک مشاغل بود.

در برخورد با این مشکل، او تصمیم گرفت تا به این هدف برسد. او در حالی بود که در حال درمان بود که به دنبال یافتن یک مشاغل بود.

در برخورد با این مشکل، او تصمیم گرفت تا به این هدف برسد. او در حالی بود که در حال درمان بود که به دنبال یافتن یک مشاغل بود.
نقطه نویسی: در این دوره نجیب، مسلم بودن و نبودن یک مبلغ هنگفت در میان هوای باوجود داشتن پاسپورت تجارتی قانونی اما از دوره نجیب به سرفه نمی‌رفت. 

بعد از این آبادن، طرح ورود به گنگ خودبا یا به سوی معیار این نموده‌ها بعد معلوم شد که مرا منحیبی که دیگری به همراه با یکی دیگری، شبکه‌های مخالف به هنالین برسانده تفاوت زمانی است. 

جور می‌نمی‌آید که سربازان قاچاقی اصلی که در پسر ویتنامی بود، وب‌سایت بردارند. 

فرو رفته، بیان‌نامه‌ی فردی در نظر گرفته شد که خود با پاسپورت تجارتی قانونی وقفه را نموده بود. 

موتی پاک‌سازی: در این دوره نجیب، مسلم بودن و نبودن یک مبلغ هنگفت در میان هوای باوجود داشتن پاسپورت تجارتی قانونی اما از دوره نجیب به سرفه نمی‌رفت. 

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Narrative 2 by Faiz Sediqi (translation)

Dear interviewer before I answer your question about my reasons for seeking asylum in Holland, I think it is necessary to say a few things as an introduction.

For somebody who loves his country deeply, having to leave your country, - the land of your parents and grandparents who were born there, fed and raised from the water and the air, educated from the funds of the nation and where the nation hopes for the country to be served in return - (leaving the country) for the purpose of migration and continuing life in a strange country, is very unpleasant, undesirable and painful, despite the great feeling of love for the country people are forced to do so.

Of course the causes and factors of (performing) these necessities / urgencies (having to leave your country) can be due to unusual conditions in society and can be of a political, ‘safety’, social or economic nature.

Basically I was also one of those individuals who considering the political fragile and sensitive situation, for the safety of myself and my family, I had no other choice but leaving behind the country.

I was in search of individuals to transport me to a country so that I, together with four young children and my wife could live a peaceful life, because I was a democrat and a member of the people’s democratic party of Afghanistan.

In the years of 1990 the intensity of the Cold War was gradually reduced and agreements between America and the Soviet Union (Gorbachev) had already taken place. According to my understanding, the political and social situation in our country Afghanistan was getting worse because since the beginning of the shift on 7 sawr (April 26) 1978, when the People’s Democratic Party came to power in Afghanistan, neighboring countries started to interfere and with the support of the west and America, religious extremists, - illiterate and uncultured thug called the mujahideen, organized and armed up to the teeth, - were sent into Afghanistan’s civil war.
And this situation continued until the fall of dr. Najibullah’s government because every kind of support by the former Soviet Union to Najibullah’s government was cut off but support from the west was continuously ‘overflowing’ the ‘uncultured thug’.

basically it was perfectly clear that after the Mujahideen had gained power not only would peace and stability not return to the country but wars between different groups had started and would lead to a civil war, which it did. And today the world is witnessing that with the presence of military forces from 42 countries it is not possible to establish peace and stability in that country.

Dr. Najibullah was still in power when I decided to first send my wife and four children, who did not have any legal obstacles in leaving the country, to a safe country.

Basically first we started to prepare money and the only capital I had was an apartment which I had bought in installments in earlier years from the government – basically by selling the apartment and other property I obtained my wife and children a travel passport.

And I sent them to my brother in law who lived in the former Soviet Union, from there with the help of friends they were ‘sent’ to Czechoslovakia and from there, by paying excessive money, they were transported to Germany.

Because I, after dr. Najibullah came into power, was dismissed from my job with the government (based on ideological differences between ‘Karmalists’ - supporters of dr. Karmal - and supporters of dr. Najibullah) and also (from the other point of view) I had already previously served two terms in the military basically the easiest way to get out was having a trade passport which I did obtain.

and why and how I came to the Netherlands and / or I chose Holland for continuing my life, it must be said that: during that time (1992) the Human trafficking market in Czechoslovakia was doing very well. Most of the traffickers were Vietnamese, Iranian and Afghan students who used various roads and routes according to the individual’s budget, and the trafficking prices for every person differed greatly depending on the route, distance, and means of transportation, which they had divided into the following categories according to price;
1. The first category were those people who desired to go to America or Canada, by paying excessive money, arrangements were made to travel by air and fake identity documents, mostly Latin American passports.

2. The second type, which had a ‘medium’ (average / reasonable) price, transport by car and fake visa and the crossing of official borders, however there was a different price for every European country.

3. The cheapest transfer fee for crossing one of the borders of Czechoslovakia was that of Germany which had risks of life and property especially during the winter where in certain parts people had to pass through the water which sometimes was up to 150 cm deep

If you ask about me personally it must be said that I left the country during a time where the mujahideen were dominant and by paying a hefty sum at the airport I was able to travel to Czechoslovakia, despite already having a legitimate trade passport but from when Najibullah was still in power.

There luckily I had friends who introduced me to a good, fair and inexpensive smuggler in his own words but later it turned out that I was sold, like a product, over to a Vietnamese smuggler. (Clarification: the initial (Afghan) smuggler sold him over to a Vietnamese smuggler)

Since I, based on my budget, was in the third category and I did not have excessive money to spend, I had to come through the forest and crossed the borders of Germany illegally, but I wanted to come to Holland because at that time intense demonstrations of the German people were against foreigners and they were burning down refugee camps.

Basically I came to an agreement with the Afghan and Vietnamese smugglers that they would guide me directly to the Netherlands – the actual smugglers, which were two Vietnamese boys, told me: tomorrow at 7 pm be ready at ‘this’ address because I am sending you in the first group.

Wear comfortable shoes or trainers, avoid bringing anything heavy with you – (tomorrow) ‘the next day’ we gathered at the precise address, among us were two Pakistanis who themselves said to be Afghan and two other Afghans, from that address we got in a car after three and a half hours we got off in front of a farmhouse.
There we waited for another two hours until it was really dark out after that together with the two Vietnamese (people) we left for the German border through the forest which we reached after six hours of walking like ‘tarabla’ (sitting and standing).

Interestingly enough / The funny thing was that on the way the guides (the traffickers) would continuously tell us to sit or walk but in the last stage he told us to sit and hide behind the trees and this time we sat for almost two hours eventually we found out that both Vietnamese had already gone back to Czechoslovakia two hours ago and acted against their promise that they would lead me to Holland.

We had to make our way to the center of the city which we later came to know was Dresden, Germany – there the two Pakistanis parted their way and us three Afghans got arrested by the German police and were taken to a temporary assembly center

I, who did not want to seek asylum in Germany, contacted my friends in the Netherlands who told one of his friends who had a taxi to bring me to the Netherlands since the taxi driver was Afghan and lived in Köln (Cologne) he told me to get myself to Köln at ‘this’ address.

Me and the two other Afghans, who were also going to Köln, fled the assembly center and by paying 1200 mark, by taxi we managed to get to the intended address and from there we parted our ways.

In the evening of that same day my friend’s friend said we will leave for Holland, as I was not aware of the distance and circumstances, I only listened – It was that evening that we departed, after two and a half hours I arrived at my friend’s house.

The next day my friend said let’s go to the police so that you can register yourself – ‘so simple?’ I asked (‘I said’) – He said; ‘yes, delay is not good’ – In short, I went to the city police by myself, I said I am afghan and I am your guest (sarcastic) and on the way I came to know that I was in the city Eindhoven.

After a few questions and answers and contact with the related authorities, ‘through the computer’ the police gave me an introduction letter and said to go to ‘this’ address for now – I told him how can I, I am not familiar here and also don’t have money.
The police officer gave me a train and bus ticket and told me to go to Zwolle, “it is not hard to find the address, just like you came from Afghanistan you can also find this address easily”. By showing the introduction letter to the refugee camp it became clear that I was temporarily accepted as a refugee waiting for the next procedure.
Appendix 3: The interview guide (English)

The goal of this research is to compare the circumstances of asylum seeking, the circumstances of being a refugee in the years of 1990 to the present circumstances and of more recent years, especially considering the possibilities for communicating.

Good well, the general question in this interview (that will be leading this interview) is that what experience do you have from being a refugee and from coming to the Netherlands, from that moment that you decided to get out of (the country of) Afghanistan up until you arrived in the Netherlands and applied for asylum.

If you do not have any objections, for analysis purposes, I would like to record this interview. Both the recording as well as the analysis is completely confidential and anonymous and it will remain so.

Date – Time – City – Interviewer
1. What is your age?
2. From what part of Afghanistan are you?
3. How long has it been since you have left Afghanistan?
   **Probe:** In what year did you apply for asylum in the Netherlands?
4. In what situation were you when you decided to leave Afghanistan / the country? / How did you come to the decision? / How did you come to the decision to leave Afghanistan / to get out of Afghanistan?
   **Probe:** Who made the decision?
   **Probe:** What did you think about the future of Afghanistan?
   **Probe:** Was it a permanent decision ... did you have the intention to come back?
   **Probe:** Did you know anyone outside of the country?
   **Probe:** How long did it take before a decision was made?
5. Did you initially want to come to the Netherlands? Did you want to come to the Netherlands from the start?
6. Why did you choose (to come to) the Netherlands / Europe
7. When you were leaving Afghanistan, what was your expectation of life in another country at the time you left (Afghanistan)?
8. How did you prepare (yourself) to get out of the country? (Consider financial aspect, documents, preparing the journey / travel)
   Probe: How did you come into contact with the smuggler?
   Probe: What information did you have before you left about coming / about the journey / travel?
   Probe: where did you retrieve information?
   Probe: How did you plan out your route?
   Probe: how did you know where to go?
   Probe: How did you know from which country to go and from which one not to go?

9. Could you tell me about the day you left Afghanistan?
   Probe: How did you get out of Afghanistan?
   Probe: Who were you with, who else was there ... did you get out of the country by yourself?

10. How did you feel when you left Afghanistan?

11. How was the journey, how did you experience the journey
   Probe: What barriers did you encounter on the way?

12. How was it when you arrived in Holland? What did you do / where did you go?
   Probe: How did you know what to do or where to go?

13. Were you in contact with anyone at that time?
   Probe: with who?

14. When you went to the police, what did you say?
   Probe: In what language did you speak?

15. How did you experience seeking for asylum?

16. Are you familiar with the internet and modern communication technologies of today’s world?
   Probe: What do you use and for what purposes do you use them?
   Probe: Could you give me an example?
   Probe: Are you in contact with anyone in Afghanistan?

17. When you were coming to the Netherlands, did you also use the internet and other technologies?
   Probe: What did you use and for what purpose?
   Probe: Could you give me an example?
   Probe: Were you in contact with anyone during the journey?
   Probe: With who? How? For what purpose (Why)?

18. What does the internet and modern technologies mean to you?
ASYLUM 2.0?

The interview guide (Dari)

Hadaf taqeeq man een ast ke sharayet panahendage, shahrayete majer bodana, dar salhaye 1990 moqaisa kunom ba shahrayet ale wa salay akher, khososan az negaye emkanat ertebate.

Khob sawal homda da ee interview een ast ke shuma che tajruba daren az majer bodan wa az amadan shuma ba holland, az amo wakhte ke shuma tasmeem gereften ke az keshwar afghanistan barayen ta wakhte ke shuma dar holland raseden wa panahendagy daden.

Agar khodet kudom ehteraz nadashta bashe, ba adaf tahlel o tajzia khasham ke een mosaiba ra sapt kunom. Ham saptesh ham tahlelesh kamelan mahramana wa nashenas ast wa mebasha ham.

Tarekh – Sat – Shahr - Porsenda

1. Sawal ahwal mara bebakhshen, sen sal khodet chand ast?
2. Shuma az kujay Afghanistan asten?
3. Cheqadar wakht mesha ke az Afghanistan baramaden?
   Probe: Dar kudom sal shuma panahendagy daden dar holland?
4. Shuma da che sharayat boden wakhte ke tasmeem gereften ke az Afghanistan kharej meshen, ya ne chetor ba tasmeemetan raseden? / Chetor ba tasmeem raseden ke az Afghanistan barayen?
   Probe: Ke tasmeem gereft?
   Probe: Nazar shuma dar bare ayende Afghanistan che bod?
   Probe: Tasmeem dayeme bod?
   Probe: Kase ra kharej az keshwar meshnakhten?
   Probe: Cheqadgar wakht teer shod ta ke ba yak tasmeem raseden?
5. Az ahwal khashen ke taraf Holland byayen?
6. Chura shuma keshwar Holland / Europa ra intekhab karden?
7. Wakhte ke az Afghanistan mebramaden che intezar dashten az zindage dar yak molk begana / keshwar dega?
8. Che (raqam) tayare gereften ke az keshwar barayen? (az negay pool, asnad, tartibat rah)
   Probe: Hamray qachaqbar che raqam dar tamas shode’?
   Probe: Pesh az pesh che maloomat dashte dar bare amadan / dar bare rah?
   Probe: az kuja maloomat gereften?
ASYLUM 2.0?

9. مشارکه باری در زمان بارگیری روز به‌طور خاص در افغانستان بارگیری شده‌اند.
   
   \textbf{Probe:} شمار تعدادی نمایندگان از کشور افغانستان بارگیری شده‌اند؟
   
   \textbf{Probe:} شمار تعدادی نمایندگان از راه اجلاس خارج از کشور شده‌اند یا با راه‌های دیگر اجلاس کرده‌اند?

10. با چه احساس شما در افغانستان بارگیری شده‌اید؟

11. راه چتور گزیش / سفر-ا چتور تجربه کردی؟
   
   \textbf{Probe:} چگونه مسکنیت دیده‌اید?

12. وقتی نیاز دارید هلند را رسته چتور بودید؟ چه کرده‌اید / کجا گرفته‌اید؟
   
   \textbf{Probe:} چتور نمایندگانی که می‌گردد یا کجا می‌خواهد؟

13. وقتی شما همراه کسی دیگر بودید، چه احساس پیدا کردید؟
   
   \textbf{Probe:} چگونه تمحور حرف می‌بزنید؟

14. پزشک پلیس که گرفته‌اید، چه می‌گفت؟
   
   \textbf{Probe:} چگونه می‌گوید؟

15. پاناهمتوی طبیعی نمایندگی چتور تجربه کردی؟

16. خودتان با اینترنت و چه‌گونه تاریخچه‌ای دارید که در آن زمان می‌شناختید؟
   
   \textbf{Probe:} از چه استفاده می‌کنید که چه‌گونه استفاده می‌کنید؟
   
   \textbf{Probe:} مثال یک مثال می‌یابید؟
   
   \textbf{Probe:} چگونه کسی با آن استفاده‌ای که شما دارید؟

17. وقتی شما در زمان هلند می‌بودید، چه‌گونه استفاده می‌کردید از اینترنت یا به چه‌گونه استفاده می‌کردید؟
   
   \textbf{Probe:} آیا چه‌گونه کار می‌کردید؟ \textbf{Probe:} کسی با چه‌گونه استفاده می‌کردید؟ \textbf{Probe:} چرا می‌خواهید؟ چه‌گونه بوده – چه‌گونه بوده؟

18. اینترنت و تاریخچه‌ی ویژه امروزی‌های مدرن می‌پرسید خواهید شود؟ چه‌گونه برای شما واقعیت است؟ چرا ندارید؟
Appendix 4

Informed Consent Form

Part I: Information Sheet

Researcher: Shabana Anwari
Institution: Tilburg University
Master thesis (Communication- & Information Sciences)

This research project aims to understand what it means to be a refugee and to compare refugee experience between two specific time periods, namely the early 1990’s and present times. The reason for this is that since the early 1990’s big changes have taken place in regards to the rapid developments of communication technologies powered by the Internet.

Among the afghan community in the Netherlands are those who came as refugees in early 1990’s as well as those who came in more recent years. You have been invited to take part in this study because I feel that your experience as a refugee in the 1990’s / recent years can contribute much to our understanding and knowledge of what it means to be a refugee.

This research will involve your participation in an interview with an estimated duration of 30 to 45 min.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you will remain anonymous throughout the entire study. For analysis purposes this interview will be recorded. Data obtained through this interview is confidential and will be used for educational purposes only. As a participant you have the right to refuse and withdraw from this study at any moment, in which case data will be discarded.

If you have any questions regarding the procedure or the goal of this study feel free to ask them either before or after the interview.
Part II: Consent Certification

**Participant**

I hereby declare to have voluntarily given consent for my participation in this study.

Name of participant: ______________________

Date (day/month/year): ___________________          Signature: ______________________

**Researcher**

I hereby declare to have informed the participant about the purpose of both the study and the interview and to have answered any questions asked by the participant to the best of my ability.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

Name of researcher: ______________________

Date (day/month/year): ___________________          Signature: ______________________
Appendix 5: Transcript of interview 3 with Bahar Yousufzai

1. SA Khob ehm... ehm tarekh emroz... chand ast?, tarekh emroz 22 June ast 2016, sat ena ehh panj da,
   Good ehm ehm what is it today... the date today is 22nd of June 2016, time: [looking at watch] here you go five minutes...

2. BY Panj daqa ba... 12 neem manda
   Five minutes left for 12:30 (12:25)

3. SA Aah panj daqa ba 12 neem manda
   Yes five minutes left for twelve thirty

4. SHahr Eindhoven, Eindhoven astem wa persenda ham Shabana Anwari
   City: Eindhoven, we are in Eindhoven and the interviewer is Shabana Anwari

5. SA Khob hadaf taqeeq een ast taqeeq ee ast ke ame sharayet panahendage ra, sharayet mohajer bodana dar salhayee 1990 moqaisa konum ba sharayet ale wa ame salhayee akher, khososan az negaye emkanat ertebate. Khob, sawale homda da ee interview een as ke shuma che tajruba daren az mohajer bodan wa az amadan shuma ba holland, az amo wakhte ke shuma, ya amo har kase ke tasmeem gereft ne, ke az keshwar Afghanistan barayen ta wakhte ke shuma dar holland raseden wa panahendage daden. Wa agar khodet kudom eteraz nadashta bashe ba hadaf tahlel o tajzia khastum ke een mosaiba ra sapt kunom...
   Well, the goal of this research is to compare the circumstances of asylum seeking, the circumstances of being a refugee in the years of 1990 to the present circumstances and of more recent years, especially considering the possibilities for communicating. Good well, the general question in this interview is that what experience do you have from being a refugee and from coming to the Netherlands, from that moment that you, or whoever, decided right, to get out of (the country of) Afghanistan up until you arrived in the Netherlands and applied for asylum. And if you do not have any objections, for analysis purposes, I would like to record this interview...

6. BY Bale
   Yes (no problem)

7. SA ...wa ham saptesh ham tafeleh kaman mahramana wa nashesas ast wa mebasha ham.
   ...both the recording as well as the analysis is completely confidential and anonymous and it will remain so.

8. SA Enale, sawale ahwala mara bebakhshen sen sal khodet chand ast?
   So now, excuse my first question, what is your age?
By 22

Sa Wa shuma az kujay Afghanistan asten? And where are you from in Afghanistan?

By Az Qandhar (Kandahar or Qandahar) From Qandahar

Sa Az Qandhar…Wa cheqha wakht mesha az Afghanistan baramaden? From Qandahar… And how long has it been that you have left Afghanistan?

By Az Afghanistan … Taqreeban char sal From Afghanistan … About four years

Sa Taqreeban 4 sal kho khai dar kudom sal shuma dar holland panahendage daden? About four years okay then in what year did you apply for asylum in the Netherlands?

By 2012 2012

Sa Kho kho sayest ehm khob mesha barem bogoyen ke shuma da che sharayet boden Okay okay that’s good ehm good could you tell me about the situation you were in when you decided to leave Afghanistan, I mean how did you come to the decision?

By Khob ma tasmeem nagereftum az ma familem tasmeem gereft ke bayat barayum Well I did not decide my family decided that I had to leave

Sa Kho enale che raqame, da che sharayet boden shuma? Okay then how, what situation were you in?

By Oh ma sharayetem khob nabod, khane khalem bodum Oh my situation was not good, I was at my (maternal) aunt’s house

Sa kho okay

By Agar ma pesh azo mebod bar azo problem bod, az o khater tasmeem gereftan ke bayat ehh ma taraf europa byayum If I stayed with her it would be a problem for her, that’s why they decided that I have to ehh come to Europe.
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<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>BY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Kho mesha yak zara beshtar tashre beten</td>
<td>okay could you explain that a little bit further?</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>Kho</td>
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<td>well</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>Cheto... megen...</td>
<td>How ... you’re saying...</td>
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<td>Ma... da...</td>
<td>I ... in...</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>...Da khane khalet?</td>
<td>At your aunt’s house?</td>
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<td>83</td>
<td>Ma da Qandhar hamray bibimshaan bodum, hamray bibim, babem, kakayem bodum</td>
<td>In Qandhar (Kandahar, Afghanistan) I was with my grandparents, I was with my grandmother, my grandfather, my uncle (paternal)</td>
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<td>kho</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>Mara namemandan maktab berum namemandan beron barayum sar ma bisyar zulm mekadan...</td>
<td>They would not let me go to school, they would not let me go outside, they would oppress me very much...</td>
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<td>91</td>
<td>bale</td>
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<td>yes</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>...kar bisyar zyad mekardan ma ta ke majbor shudom az khane az wa farar kunom byayum da khane khalem</td>
<td>...and made me work very much I until I had (no other choice but) to flee the house and come to my aunt’s house</td>
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<td>98</td>
<td>Madar (o) padar khodet ... ehh kuja bodan?</td>
<td>Your parents... ehh where were they?</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>Madarem baramada bod, nabod da Afghanistan</td>
<td>My mother had left (Afghanistan), she was not in Afghanistan</td>
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<td>101</td>
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<td>note: she answered so quickly it seemed as if she did not want to go into it and quickly went on with her story</td>
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<td>105</td>
<td>Da Afghanistan nabodan kho</td>
<td>They were not in Afghanistan okay</td>
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<td>107</td>
<td>Dega mam az khane bibimshaan farar kadum amadum khane khalem...</td>
<td>So I fled my grandparent’s house and came to my aunt’s house...</td>
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ASYLUM 2.0?

BY: 
...که دا کابل زندگی مکادان

SA: بله

BY: دا چار راهی قمبار احتمالا دیگر نهاد ما نمی‌دانست

SA: دا کابل زندگی...

BY: دا چار راهی قمبار (منطقه‌ای در کابل) احتمالاً... بنابراین من در آنجا بودم، امیداخوانده من در خانواده‌م (کاخ‌ام یا خانواده‌م) نمی‌دانست که من اینجا هستم. وقتی آنها با خانم‌م (خالص‌خانم یا خانواده‌م) تماس می‌گیردند، می‌گفتند: 'او در کجا نیست'. پس سپس، برای حدود دو هفته، یا دو و نیم هفته، من در خانم‌م (خالص‌خانم) شهرت کرده بودم تا یک یا دو هفته، یا دو و نیم هفته، خانم‌م (خالص‌خانم) تصمیم می‌گرفت که شما نمی‌توانید اینجا بمانید. "اگر شما در اینجا می‌مانید این مشکل برای من خواهد شد"، زیرا خانم‌م (خالص‌خانم) دارای سه پسر بود، دختران دخترانی که برای او (خالص‌خانم) داشت، دوران جوانی‌ها و نوه‌ها بودند، و غیر از اینکه باید من را به اینجا باشند.

SA: خو چکو او وکت نزار خودت به بود، اتو نزار خودت به بود وکت که دعفت انت تما مارا قانون مکونم یا یا دجا دها؟

BY: در این زمان من عاشق بودم که به خانم‌م (خالص‌خانم) و همسرش، به طور کلی، تصمیم‌گیری کردند که من را به دست دوستی داشتند.

SA: اه بله، این گپ واز احتمالاً خوب

BY: در این زمان من عاشق بودم که به خانم‌م (خالص‌خانم) و همسرش، به طور کلی، تصمیم‌گیری کردند که من را به دست دوستی داشتند.

SA: اه بله، این گپ واز احتمالاً خوب

BY: در این زمان من عاشق بودم که به خانم‌م (خالص‌خانم) و همسرش، به طور کلی، تصمیم‌گیری کردند که من را به دست دوستی داشتند.
BY: بن به عاطف

SA: سید علی

BY: بن به عاطف

SA: سید علی

BY: بن به عاطف

SA: سید علی

BY: بن به عاطف

SA: سید علی

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SA: سید علی

BY: بن به عاطف

SA: سید علی
kakaym baba kalanem hamesha zang mezadan ke agar da khane shuma ma era paida kunem, shuma ra ham zinda namemanem wa era ham, ba khater yak chez namoosi bod ke az unja ma gerekhta bodum. Ba ehsab yak kar ghairatsyaan bod, ke yak dukhtar az khana chetor farar kada, dega wa ham majboor shudan ke bar ma pool taya kunan ke qachaqbara paida kadan.

other choice, because my uncle and my grandfather (would always call) kept calling that if we find her at your house, we will neither let you live neither her, because it was a matter of pride that I had run away from there. It was (considered) a matter of honor, (that) how did a girl dare to run away from home, so they had no other choice but to prepare money for me when they found a smuggler.

SA Yak chara kadan

They found a way

BY Yak chara kadan aah

They found a way yes

SA Bale aah ehm... khai khodet ham az safar, az hech chez, khabar nadashten... Khai mesha barem amo roz qesa kune, ke, amo roz ke harakat kaden az Afghanistan baramaden?

Yes ehm ... then you were also not aware of the journey, of anything...Then could you tell me of that day, that, that day you left and got out of Afghanistan?

BY Rozesh, daqeq kho yadem nest ke chand shanbe bod, ama amo nafar ke mara myaword, qachaqbar ke mara myaword, yak famil afghan degam hamraysh bod ke yak zan shawhar ba do ta teflesh bod, o bod da motor hamrayshan wa guft ke; ‘bad az…’, zang zad ke; ‘bad az, bad az namaze sob bayat amada bashe, ma masalan…’

The day, I don’t exactly remember what day it was of course, but that person who was bringing me, the smuggler who was bringing me, had another Afghan family with him, (a wife and husband) a married couple with their two children, they were in the car with him and said that; ‘after…’, he called that; ‘after, after the morning prayer you have to be ready, I…’

SA Hamray ehh khalet o shawhar khalet…?

With ehh your aunt (Maternal) and your aunt’s husband…?

BY Aah bale aah, hamray ona tamas gereftan ke, masalan sat char ya panj sob tayar bash ‘ke myayum mebaremet’. Badan amo roz ke harakat mekadem, bad az namaz bod, zang zad ke; ‘ena ma masalan yak 15 daqa bad ma poshte khana myayem…’

Yes, he contacted them to, like at four or five in the morning, be ready because ‘I will come and (take you away) pick you up’. After that, the day that we were leaving it was after the morning prayer, he called that; ‘like in 15 min we’ll be there at the house
ASYLUM 2.0?

SA bale
yes

BY ‘...bayat az khana baraye’
‘...you have to step outside (out of the house)’

SA kho
okay

BY Baramadem, amad, raftem.
I step outside, he came and we left.

SA da motar?
by car?

BY Da motar bod wa yak famil afghan, ke char
nafar bodan ke dota awladesh bod khodesh bod
hamray shawaresh.
He was by car and with one afghan family, a women
with her husband and their two children. (He was by
car and an afghan family, who were with four which
were their two children, herself together with her
husband)

SA Awdalaysh khord bod?
Were their children young?

BY Khord bod bale aah
They were young yes

SA khord bodan aah
they were young

BY char, payn sala
four, five years old

SA Khai shuma ra ham ba esab yak awlade ona
eto rawan kada ya eto che nabod...?
Then did they send you as one of their children
or was it nothing like that…?

BY Ne ne ...makhsad az khater ke ma tanha bodum,
hamray yak famil mara yak jai kada.
No no … basically because I was alone, he added
me to a family

SA Kho bale aah ... kho baz kuja raften da
Kabul, az Kabul harakat kaden?
Okay yes ... okay then where did you go, in
Kabul, did you depart from Kabul?

BY Az Kabul harakat kardem, az Char rahi
Qambar, khane khalem bod, raftem tarafe marz
Pakistan, tarafe Torkham, harakat kadem,
Jalalabad bad az Jalalabad tarafe torkham
From Kabul we departed, from Char rahi Qambar
(literally: Qambar road intersection, but it is also an
area), where my aunt’s house was, we headed
towards the border of Pakistan, towards Torkham
(Torkham international border, one of the main border crossings between Afghanistan and Pakistan), Jalalabad after Jalalabad towards Tokham.

Nearby Torkham we got off the car and walked, it was approximately a 15 / 20 min walk that we crossed the border towards Pakistan. Then from there we got in the car and headed towards Quetta, Pakistan (Pakistan’s Quetta), we stayed the night there then like that...

The night there in Pakistan, in Quetta...

we stayed in Quetta

Where did you stay? In ...

it was in a house

there was a house just like that…?

well (they) he had a house

okay so that smuggler had a house

yes he had a house, he had people (working for him) that for example would take “their people” (the passengers they were smuggling) and keep them for the night, we stayed there.

and then in the morning (you would) again

then in the morning after … yes … after the prayer… he would always move his passengers when it was a little bit dark out. After the morning prayer (again around 4 or 5 a.m.) we headed
towards the border of Iran.

which was known as Kuh-i-Taftan (Mountain of Taftan), on that border again the night came, there was a house there too, we stayed there with the family, then again after the morning prayer it was a little dark out, he took us to the border in those little cars, then on the border he sat us on the back of big trucks (lorries), we were in the back of that (lorry) for about 45 min to an hour, the car (lorry) departed, after that he said; ‘here (we go), we entered Iran’.

The car from-, when you arrived in Iran, you were in that lorry still?

The car went towards other cities of Iran, so we were in Iran for one or two nights.

Okay you went by bus yes...

by bus we went to another city of Iran where we stayed the night, we stayed the night there, after that in the morning again by bus we went to the border, to the border of Turkey

then we stayed there one night
ASYLUM 2.0?

SA baz amuto da o ...?

again just like that in...?

BY baz amoto, sobaki wakht

again just like that, early in the morning

SA aah bale

yes

BY baz yak qesmata pyada raftem

then we walked a part of the way

SA Baz ame qachaqbar, ame ke da ... shuma

again this smuggler, the one that ... you... was it

ra... amo yak qachaqbar bod?

that one smuggler?

BY Ne ne ne, az Afghanistan ta Pakistan yak nafar

No no no, from Afghanistan to Pakistan it was one

bod, baz az Pakistan ke da dakhel Iran

person, then from Pakistan when we were entering

meshodem baz tasleem dega nafar kad,

Iran again he handed us over to another person, like

ameqesem az Iran dakhel Turkiy shodem wa

that from Iran we entered Turkey and handed us

tasleem dega nafar kad.

over to another person.

SA kho ameto ba yake dege khod

Okay just like that one to another

BY Dest ba dest ba yake dega bodan

‘hand in hand’ they were (working) together

SA kho kho baz bad azo...?

Oh okay then after that…?

BY bad azo dakhel Turkiya shodem, az Turkiya

after that we entered Turkey, from Turkey by bus, to

ham da bus, ta Istanbul-a da bus raftem baz da

Istanbul we went by bus then in Istanbul there was a

Istanbul yak manteqa, ba name zatonbano

neighborhood, called Zeytinburnu, there we stayed

(Zeytinburnu), bod unja taqreeban 10 / 11 roz

for about ten / eleven days

unja bodem

SA 10 / 11 roz?

10/11 days? [a little bit astonished]

BY Ba khatere unja bodem... bale... kate ame famil

We were there because … yes… with that afghan

afghan, baz chand famil dega ra ham,... baz

family, then this smuggler in Turkey, again, had

ham nafar dasht, ame qachaqbar ke da Turkiya

people (working for him) who also ‘collected’ a few

bod,... jaam kad, baz satay noye day shaw bod

other families, then it was about nine / ten pm that

ke motaray khord amad, eto taxi ware ke payn

little cars came, like taxi’s that in groups of five,
payn nafar, hamray motarwan payn payn nafar, including the driver groups of five, took us to the
mara tarafe marz yunan bord, marz Turkiya o border of Greece, the border of Turkey and Iran (she
Iran (Yunan) meant Greece)

SA bale aah yes

BY Da … taqreeban do sat, do neem sat da ame in … about two hours, two and a half hours we
motaray khord raftem baz mara payen kad, drove in these small cars and then he dropped us off,
zameenay zorati bod, bad azo pyada raftem. there were farmlands, after that we walked. From
Taqreeban az no / da baja az Istanbul harakat about nine/ten o’clock we departed from Istanbul,
kedem, satay 12 baja... around 12 o’clock...

SA 12 baja sob? 12 o’clock morning? (meant noon, she got it)

BY shaw night

SA shaw kho night okay

BY Satay 12 shaw mara payen kada az motar, ke around 12 o’clock at night he dropped us off ‘from
degesha bayad pyada meraftem dega ayn satay the car’ so we had to walk the up until around 4 in
char sob ma pyada raftem the morning we walked

SA Qachaqbar, kas hamray tan bod? Was the smuggler or anyone with you (all)?

BY Nafar bod, nafar bod, yak do se nafar kate ma there was a person, there was a person, there were
bod about two or three people with us

SA kho okay

BY Bad azo ta char sob ma pyada raftem after that we walked until four in the morning

SA hmmm

BY ke nezdek darya rasedem when we arrived nearby the river

SA bale yes
They inflated (blew up) the boats, the men after that they inflated (blew up) the boats, the men
They inflated (blew) it themselves?

They inflated it themselves, they had like a pump, they had brought it along with themselves, yes then near the river they inflated those boats ba-, ... when everything was (done) ready, the distance of the river was not much it was like only five minutes by ‘thing’ (by boat), five minutes, six minutes, he sat us in the boat, we crossed to the other side then from there also... At 5 o’clock in the morning we reached Greece, from five a.m. to about 9 or 10 o’clock (a.m.) we walked until we reached the road when the Greek police got us, took our fingerprints, until nearly late afternoon we were there, until it was our turn, until they took our fingerprints and asked a little bit (a few question) our names and stuff…

Then what did you say? They took your fingerprints in Greece, didn’t they ask where did you come from?

No that they ask you, that when they get you, for example on the side of the road, a lot of refugees come there, right

Yes

In-, the police put you in the car and take you themselves to that place where, basically they have a place where they keep you, take your fingerprint, ask you; what is your name, like who did you come with, these matters...

Then what did you say? Your name like… did you say your actual (name)? Or did the smuggler
ASYLUM 2.0?

128

BY Ne ne ne, ne kho mara ke az aw qachaqbar teer khatere ke agar police begera kho ora megera No no no, no well when the smuggler passed us over the water then the smuggler of course does not come with us because if he gets caught by the police they will of course take him

SA kho kho bad azo shuma khodetan amaden okoy so after that you came (by) yourselves

BY Bad azo ma khodema tana merem, bad azo hamray az amo famil tana, afghan, khodema tana amadem. After that we go by ourselves, after that only with that, afghan, family we came by ourselves.

SA Baz cheto fameden ke kuja beren oh…? Then how did you know where to go and…?

BY kho enale etor ast, amunja ke shasteta gereft, khatere like when you go (there) the bus will com

SA bus myaya... the bus will come…

BY karet khalas shod, da bus beshe ta athene-a boro. Ma... shast mara gereft, kol karay ma khalas shod baz bar ma yak waraq dad, ba ehsab vise yak mah bar ma dad when you’re done (when your work is done), get on the bus and go to Athens. I... they took my fingerprint, got all my ‘work’ done then they gave me a sheet / piece of paper, basically they gave me a one month visa.

SA ba ehsab da amo yunan ya ne... basically in Greece you mean...

BY Da amo yunan, ke yak mah ehjaza dare da yunan bashe ama bad az yak mah tu bayat yunana tark kune. In Greece, that you are allowed to stay in Greece for one month but after one month you have to leave Greece.

Baz amo shast mara gereft baz bar ma barga dad baz da amunja, ke karay kulage khalas mesha, busa khodesh myaya baz ehh... So they took my fingerprint then they gave me a document then at that place, when everyone is done, the buses come then ehh... I don’t know how much a ticket was, 40 euro or 50 euro per person the tickets
ya 50 euro fee nafar ticketesh bod were

SA kho okay

BY baz amunja ticket mekade (?) dakhel bus meshode so you would buy a ticket there and get on the bus

SA Paisa bod pesh tan ya... ehm qachaqbar did you (all) have money with you or... ehm had pesh az pesh baretan che kada bod... the smuggler in advance...

BY Ne qachaqbar bar ma dad... No the smuggler gave it to us...

SA dad baretan gave it to you

BY ...ke masalan, ene paise ticketan basha ke ta ...like, here (you go) this money is for your tickets to Athen-a beren go to Athens

SA bale aah yes

BY baz qachaqbar bar ma 60 euro dad ke 50 then the smuggler gave us 60 euro (each) of which euroyesh ya 45 euroyesh, daqeeq yadem nest with 50 euro or 45 euro, I don’t remember exactly I faramosh kadem, ke ticket gereftem wa yak 10 / have forgotten, we bought tickets and another 10 /

15 euro degam manda bod ke da rah, masalan, 15 euro was left for when we, for example, got gushna meshodem yak chey bayat megerfetem hungry on the way we had to get something.

SA bale aah yes

BY Dega da bus, satay 5 ya 6 degar bod ke da bus so on the bus, it was around 5 or 6 o’clock in the sheshtem afternoon that we got on the bus

SA bale aah yes

BY basta shaw da rah bodem, tarafay 6 sob ma da the complete night we were on the road, around 6 in Athene rasedem the morning we arrived in Athens

SA kho okay
Then in Athens in that bus station, another person came and got us, took us to his house.

Okay so you didn’t stay there for very long in Greece? Note: I think my thoughts had wandered off a little bit…

No no in Greece the person came to that bus stop, of course he knew that who who and who are ‘my people’ (passengers)... so he took us along to his house.

Oh okay

So then until he fixed ‘something for us’

Then how long did that take?

Well I had about one month of time

Okay

But my “work” was not fixed in one month

So how long did you stay?

I remained in Greece (for) about four / five months

So basically one month ehh permit... legally...

One month legally the rest illegally

Illegally... okay so after that? so you remained in the smuggler's house
ASYLUM 2.0?

554
555  BY   aah khane qachaqbar bodem
556  yes we stayed in the smuggler’s house

557  SA   Baz unja chetor bod baretan? Eto hamray,
558    guften, dega familhaye Afghan ham bodan
559  Then how was it there for you? Like with other
560    Afghan families who, you mentioned, were also
561    there

562  BY   Yak famil Afghan dega bod wa ne da khane
563  There was one other Afghan family and no (yes) in
564    qachaqbar dega Afghana ham bodan ke bayat
565    the smuggler’s house were also other Afghans
566    karay az wa joor meshod, meraftan. Famil dara
567    whose ‘work’ had to be fixed, and they would go.
568    bodan, awlad dara bodan, dega yak zindage
569    There were families, (there were those) with
570    bisyar khastakon bod
571    children, it was a very tiring life so.

572  SA   Che mekaden masalan da roz, ghair az
573    muntazer dega chez?
574  What would you do for example during the day,
575    except for waiting anything else?

576  BY   Muntazer dega hech, che wakht kar joor mesha
577  Waiting for the rest nothing, when will ‘something’
578    berem? Beron ham rafta nametanestem
579    be fixed so that I can go? I couldn’t go outside
580    bakhater wakhe vise ma khalas shoda bod agar
581    either because my visa had expired if the police
582    police megereft, bandi mekad
583    would caught you, they would arrest you

584  SA   bale aah... [tse] eto dark kada metanum ke
585    bisyar muskil boda basha baretan
586  Yes... [tse] like I can imagine that it must have
587    been difficult for you

588  BY   bisyar ... aah
589  very... yes

590  SA   Baz da o wakht, eto hamray kase dar tamas
591    boden, eto hamray familhaytan, ona khabar
592    dashtan az...
593  Then at that time, were you in touch with
594    anyone, like with your relatives, were they aware
595    of...

596  BY   kho khabar dashtan ke masalan, ma da Yunan
597    well they knew for example, that I have reached
598    rasedem, da Turkiya rasedem, ba khatere amo
599    Greece, I have reached Turkey, because that initial
600    qachaqbar awal ke khalemshan gap zada bodan,
601    smuggler who my aunt (and her husband) had
602    hamray azo tamas dashtan
603    (spoken to) come to an agreement with, with him
604    they were in touch

605  SA   kho kho
606  Oh okay
ASYLUM 2.0?

591 BY az o tareeq awal megereftan
Through (that way) them they would ask (how I am doing)

595 SA khai una dega chanden mah muntazer astan
so they are waiting for several months until you
ta ke tu bakhair da yak jai berase.
safely reach somewhere

598 BY bale aah
yes

600 SA wa manzor-, az amo shro plan ee bod ke
And meaning-, was it the plan from the start that
Europa, tarafe Europa
Europe, to (come to) Europe

603 BY yak jay ke ba ehsab amn zindage
Basically a place where (I could) live peacefully

605 SA kase ra meshnakhten da kharej?
did you know anyone abroad?

607 BY Ne ne
No no

609 SA Hech namesnakhten kho… kho baz enale
you did not know okay… okay now then when
che wakht bod ke az Yunan pas …
was it that from Greece...

612 BY 2 september bod ke ee… amo nafar guft, yak
It was September second that … that person said,
roz ya do roz peshtaresh, guft; ‘ena yak asnad
one day or two days earlier, said; ‘here I have
joor kadem, mekhayum ke yak andakht betumet
arranged documents, I want to make an attempt to
tarafe europa’, guft; ‘mam namefamum, daqeeq
send you towards Europe, he said; ‘I don’t know
namefamum ke da kudom keshwar tu bayad
exactly either to which country you have to go’, he
bere’, guft; ‘mebenem ke har keshware ke ba
said; ‘we’ll see whichever country is easier for
ma asantar basha’...
me’ …

619 SA kho
okay

622 BY ... ‘baret kar mekunem ke bere’ bad azo mara,
...‘we will do something so that you can go’ after
da amo nezdeke amo jay ke ma zindage
that I, nearby that place where we were living, we
mekadem, da khode Athene bodem… dega
stayed in Athens… so wait… hmm in… Platia
bash… hmm da… Plata Omonia, da Plata
Omonias (Omonoia Square, a central square in
Omonia bodem, Athene kho kalan ast baz har
Athens), we stayed in Platia Omonias , Athens is a
jayakaysh-, da Plata Omonia bodem baz da
big place, right so then every little area-, we stayed
in Platia Omonias then there he had a salon, basically before he wanted to send you away, he would buy you ‘decent’ clothes, would take you to the salon, he would basically make you up well

Kho?! (as in oh really?)

Yes, they would do your hair, well they would make you look like a European so that at the airport-

well how did they make you up then?

well they had made me up, had my hair straightened, ‘and’ he had bought a jeans, he had bought a t-shirt with-

so that it basically would not show at all-

they had made me just like how Europeans dress (walk around)

okay

with one handbag and in that handbag, he had said; ‘you should not have a big bag so that basically-,... your luggage should not (go in the luggage room of the plane) get checked in’, like that with one handbag you have to get out okay...

Then with me, was an Iranian woman who was guiding me, of course I did not know where to go at the airport, how to take my boarding...

the Iranian woman was leading me
SA: baret kol chez ra da destet dad…
she handed you everything

BY: bale aah... bad azo raftem az control teer shodem
yes... after that we went and passed through security

SA: amo zan hamrayt da tayara ham bala shod
that woman also got on the plane with you?

BY: da tayara ham bod
she was also on the plane

SA: kho..
okay

BY: Baz ke amadem guft; ‘ena da Holland astem’,
When we arrived she said; ‘here we’re in the
faqat payen shodem yak se sat-
Netherlands’, we only got off about 3 hours-

SA: da kujay Holland raseden?
where in the Netherlands did you arrive?

BY: da Schiphol..
at Schiphol

SA: da Schiphol kho..
at Schiphol okay

BY: O wakht ma namefamedum, ale mefamum ke
at that time I did not know, now I know that it is
Schiphol asta [laughs]
Schiphol [laughs]

SA: [laughs] aah kho
[laughs] yes okay

BY: Dega da Schiphol rasedem baz o zan mekhast
So we arrived at Schiphol then the woman wanted
ke mara ela kuna bera, guft; ena dega yak jai
to leave me and go, she said; ‘here you go we’ve led
ann rasandemet...
you to a safe place...

SA: bale aah
yes

BY: ...bayat dega khodet bere’, baz ma bisyar ozresh
...you have to go by yourself now’, but then I
kadum ke ma balad nestum, bayat mara komak
begged her a lot that I am not familiar here, you
kune, yak jai basha ke adaqal amn basha, ma -,
have to help me, it should be a place where it is at
... Baz bisyar jigaresh khon shod guft; ‘barabar
least safe, I -,... Then she got very sad and said; ‘I
tu yak dukhtar’ guft; ‘ma darum’ baz o ‘az
have a daughter your age’ then she ‘because you too
khater ke tam mesle dukhtare ma asti, komaket
are like my daughter, I will help you’ then there a
mekunom’ baz amunja yak motar-, yak
car-, she knew a driver, she called him, after about
motarwana meshnakht, bar azo zang zad, yak
half an hour he came to the airport, after that we
neem sat bad da amo pesh maidan hawaye
were in the car for about two and a half, three hours
amad bad azo ham yak do neem, se sat da
and came to Ter Apel
motar bodem ta Ter Apel amadem

SA Ter Apel

They dropped me off a few min farther away when
BY Mara ... yak chand daqa doortar payen kad ke
she said, she like showed me the entrance, she said;
guft, eneto darwazesha neshan dad, guft; ‘da
‘when you go there you can apply for asylum and
una unja ke bere metane panahendage bete wa
after that you fall under their care’ so when I arrived
bad aze marbot amunja meshe' baz ta ke unja
there I fell under the care of Ter Apel
amadum dega marbot Ter Apel shudem

SA kho kho kho baz da unja ham ke rasede,
okay then when you arrived there, with you-, like
hamrayt-, eto che gufte? Da -
what did you say? In -

BY kho wa da zaban Englisi gap mezadan, ma
well they spoke in English, I did not know I only
namefamedum faqat guftum ma Afgh… amo
said I (am) Afgh… that woman said, she said; if you
zan guft, guft; ‘faqat ke zabaneshaa nafamede
do not understand their language, when you only
bogoye Afghan Afghan mefama ke panahenda
say Afghan Afghan they know that you’re an
asti’
asylum seeker'

SA ...panahenda asti kho
...you’re an asylum seeker okay

BY bad azo baz yak tarjuman Afghan amad
then after that an Afghan interpreter came

SA kho
okay

BY ke faqat ism o walad yayma gereft
who only took my name and family name and so

SA kho
okay

BY baz mara rahnumaye kad ke bayad kudom taraf
then he guided me which way to go, went with me
berum, katem raft baz da yak-, otaqay kalan
then in a -, there were big rooms that, for example in
bod ke, masalan da yak otaq takhtay do
one room there were bunkbeds, there was room for
manzela bod ke 15 / 20 nafar da yak otaq bod
15 / 20 people in one room
ASYLUM 2.0?

SA zan o mard …  

BY zan o mard kulesh yak jai bod  

SA kho  

BY Yak ehh... baz ma yak chance khob awordum ke amo shaw ke raftum, amo sob wakht name mara sada kadan, da zarf se , char roz ame kole che khalas shod  

SA b-,  

BY masalan awal am ke bere yak kamake porsan mekuna... Chura amade? Cheto amade? Az kudom-,  

SA aah  

BY ya ne yak interview bisyar khord mekuna  

SA baz o interview chetor-, che guzasht, che-, qesetana kaden dega  

BY bisyar kamak o kholas, zyad eto porsan nakad, bad azo da amo zarf do roz , se roz ba ehsab... shastemam gereft  

SA ba esab yak tarjuman bod ke…?  

BY tarjeman bod  

SA da Dari gap zaden?  

BY aah da Dari da Farsi. Tarjuman bod, tarjumani kad, shaste ma gereft, graph qafas sena ma  

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ASYLUM 2.0?

ger eft

d of my chest (checked her chest and lungs)

kho

okay

ba khater ma problem, eto shosh, chez

because I did not have any, like lung, problems or

nadastum, mara pas da amo khod Ter Apel

anything they transferred me back to Ter Apel

transfer kad

SA kho

kho pesh azo ehjaza nadare az unja beron

So before that you’re not allowed to get out from

ham baraye dega...?

there either...?

BY ne beron ehjaza dare bere masalan ta centruma

No you can go outside for example to the

bere ee jaya ama eto ehjaza nest ke shaw jay

center(shopping mall) and places like that but like
dega bere

you’re not allowed to go stay the night somewhere

SA kho pesh azo ehjaza nadare az unja beron

Then how...how did your case progress?

ham baraye dega...?

pesh raft?

BY baz da amo zarf se roz ma transfer shodom da

then within those three days I got transferred in Ter

khod Ter Apel baz da amunja bodum

Apel (itself) then I was there for about one week, I

taqreeb dan akha bodum tarekh interview

received an interview date, first I received an

amad awal tarekh wakil amad, bayat wakila

appointment with the lawyer, I had to see the lawyer

mededum

SA wakil ham Afghan bod ya...?

The lawyer was also Afghan or...?

BY ne wakil Hollandi bod, da Groningen bod

No the lawyer was Dutch, he lived in Groningen

811

da Groningen bod kho

lived in Groningen okay
ASYLUM 2.0?

813
814 BY baz pesh azo, bad azo wakht interviewem amad, awal interview rah amad bad az o interview asli amad
then before that, after that I received my interview date, first was the ‘route-interview’ after that was the actual interview
815
816
817
818 SA interview rah ya ne megan az kuja amade...? the ‘route-interview’ you mean they ask where did you come from (etc.)...?
819
820
821 BY ame ast ke cheqsem amade, az kudom rah amade it is just, how you came, through what route you came
822
823
824 SA kho baz bad azo? okay then after that?
825
826 BY Baz bad azo interview amad, ename qesa ke bar shuma mekunom, ename mushkil khoda bayat meguftum Then after that the interview took place, this story that I am telling you right now, ‘this problem of mine’ I had to tell
827
828
829
830 SA kho ke chura majbor shoden barayen, ba khatere che amaden... okay that why you had no other choice but leaving, for what reason you came...
831
832
833 BY aah bale aah yes
834
835 BY ene… baz bad azo interview dadem. Awal interview rah bod yak roz baz sobesh pas ora kate yak baz merafte kat amo mostantaq bod kate yak tarjuman ke pas baret mekhand ke tu ame cheza ra gufte ? this... then after that I gave the interview. First, the ‘route-interview’ took place one day and then the next day... you would go again with someone, it was that interrogator with a translator who would read it to you again ‘that have you said this?’
836
837
838
839
840
841 SA aah kho yes okay
842
843 BY ba ehsab islaye case mekadan basically they would correct (edit) the case
844
845 SA kho okay
846
847 BY baz roz sewomesh interview asli ra megereft baz roz charumesh baz islay case mekad then the third day they would do the actual interview then the fourth day again they would correct (edit) the case
848
849
SA: okay so just (to be) precise

BY: yes so that everything would be correct, so after that they would decide what... will they accept or not

SA: yes

BY: Then mine (my case), for real I had been through a lot, got accepted, what date... in October, it was 5 / 6 October, Monday that I had to go receive my ‘answer’, luckily they accepted, they said that; ‘you have been accepted’

SA: then considering... you got accepted very quickly

BY: yes, within one month

SA: within one month yes

BY: After that it (the date) was the 5th, 6th, I don’t remember exactly what date it was, then that day I got my acceptance, then in Ter Apel there is a big hall that serves dinner at 5 in the afternoon

SA: okay

BY: then when you go there, you receive your transfer documents, (that say) to which camp you have been transferred

SA: okay so basically you got accepted after that they send you to camp or...?

BY: ‘permanent’ camp, then you stay in the permanent
ke che baret byaya, kudom gementa qabolet
mekuna ke baret khana beta
camp until that... comes, which town accepts to give
you a house

SA kho kho baz cheqadar wakht da kamp
dayeme boden
oh okay then how long did you stay in the
permanent camp?

BY yak o neem mah
one and a half month

SA yak o neem mah
one and a half month

BY bad khana barem baramad
then I got a house

SA az shuma baz zod shod
yours was quick again

BY zod zod shod aah
it got done very quick yes

SA Khodetan-, hamyale bobakhshen gapetana
gereftum, gufte ehh sat panj degar baretan
unja nan tayar meshod, che mekhausten
bogoyen?
You-, just now (earlier) sorry I interrupted you,
you were saying ehh at five o’clock in the
afternoon dinner would be made (served) there
for you, what did you want to say?

BY Waraqay transfarem unja myamad ke merafte,
baz ma yak kart dashtem, wakht ke nan
mekhordem da ename posht kart ma... ba esab
azery bod ke nan megereft baz unja emza-,
tarekh mezadan
I would receive my transfer documents there, when
you would go, so we had a card, when we would eat
dinner, on the back of this card we, it was basically
to show attendance, that you would take dinner and
then there you would sign-, they would stamp (the
date) it

SA kho kho
Oh okay

BY ya ne har roz ke raftem azer bodem baz amunja
nameta ke mekhand nameta da kard meded baz
agar waraq ya khat chez medashte baz baret
medad
so every day that I went, I was present, then there
when they would read your name and check the card
and if you had any documents or letters or
something then they would give it to you

SA kho kho...baz amo khat amad ke ena qabol
shoden
Oh okay... then that letter came that you have
been accepted
ASYLUM 2.0?

924  BY  Ne ne qaboli kho wakht gerefta bodum sobesh gerefta bodum ...da kudom jay transfer shuda bodum

925  SA  kho baz da kuja transfer shoden shuma

926  BY  da Leeuwarden
du Leeuwarden

927  SA  da Leeuwarden kho baz unja raften cheto, che raqame bordan?

928  BY  Baz hamray ma yak famil degam bod, Arab bod, wa amunja hamray ma amo roz jawab gerefta bodan da amo kamp transfer shuda bodan

929  SA  kho

930  BY  Baz bar ma ‘dagkard’ (dagkaart) medadan az bus wa treina, ke meräftem baz da amo waraq ma bod ke-, da dakhel kamp ke shudem, da amo reception ke dadem baz bar ma kele otaq ee cheza ra wakht dad

931  SA  kho

932  BY  Wa khabar dashtan ke masalan ene nafara myayan, bareshan otaq basha

933  SA  aah tayar basha... Baz da unja da o kamp cheqadar wakht manden?

934  BY  Da amo kamp, yak o neem mah zyad namandem do mah

935  SA  kho daunt otaq dashte tanha boden

936  BY  No no the acceptance I had already received, that morning I had received it ...where I was transferred

937  BY  da Leeuwarden
to Leeuwarden

938  SA  da Leeuwarden kho baz unja raften cheto, how did they take you?

939  BY  Then there with me was another family, (they) were Arab, they together with me got accepted there that day, and were transferred to that same camp

940  SA  okay

941  BY  Then they would give us a day ticket for the bus and the train, when we were going then it was on that piece of paper of ours that-, when we got in the camp, when we gave it to the reception then they already gave us the key of the room and everything

942  SA  okay

943  BY  they were aware that for example these people are coming, there have to be rooms for them

944  BY  Baz bar ma ‘dagkard’ (dagkaart) medadan az bus wa treina, ke meräftem baz da amo waraq ma bod ke-, da dakhel kamp ke shudem, da amo reception ke dadem baz bar ma kele otaq ee cheza ra wakht dad

945  SA  aah tayar basha... Baz da unja da o kamp cheqadar wakht manden?

946  BY  In that camp, my stay was not longer than 1 and a half month, two months.

947  SA  khodet otaq dashte tanha boden

948  BY  Did you have a room of yourself, were you alone?
ASYLUM 2.0?

BY Ne, amuto ke karwanay Ter Apel bod, amuto karawana unja bod... amo famil, yak dukhtar o madare arab bod ke hamray ma transfer shoda bod, hamray az amo... ba ma amo yak karwan-a dada bod

SA kho wa o famil ke awal hamrayshan harakat kada boden, ona da amo yunan ke juda shoda bodan?

BY bale aah hamrayshaan tamas nadarum ba khatere ke pesh az ma wa baramada bodan

SA Pesh az shuma baramada bodan kho… Baz bad az yak o neem mah dega baret khana dadan ya...

BY Khana dadan… ena khana

SA kho bisyar khob, ena ale chand sal mesha ena da holland asten o

BY aah taqreeban, ena da ee September, char sal

SA Raze asten?

BY Bale!

SA hamray familhayetan eto da Afghanistan anoz dar tamas... daren ya? Kase

BY Ne, tamas nadarum ba khater ke amo yak khalem bod ke numresh peshem nabod dega... Wa o ta Yunan ham kat qachaqbar o ertebat

Okay and that family who you initially had departed with, it was in Greece that you parted ways?

Yes I’m not in touch with them because they got out before I did

They got out before you did okay ... so after a month and a half they gave you a house or...

They gave me a house... here is the house [proudly looking around and holding up her hands showing it to me]

Okay very nice, so now it has been a few years that you are in Holland ...

Yes approximately, this September, four years

Are you pleased?

Yes!

With family in Afghanistan are you still in touch with them or ...

No, I’m not in touch because it was only that one aunt of mine of whom I did not have the number anymore...and up until Greece she had contact with
dashtem baz enja ke amadem-, ertebat nadarem the smuggler then when I came here-, we do not
khabar nadarem have contact, I do not know (I have no idea)

SA hmm
hmm

BY Bakhater da Yunan ham az tareeq amo nafar
Because also in Greece through that person (the
khalem awal mara megereft ke masalan da kuja
initial smuggler) my aunt would check on me to
rasedem khob astem ya ne
know for example where we were, if we were fine
or not.

SA aah bale aah
yes

BY dega...
so...

SA Kho bisyar zyad tashakor az ee qese... bisyar
Well thank you very much for this story... it was
dilchasp bod very interesting

BY Qabelesh nesta
No thanks (there is no need for saying thank you)

SA haha baz ham tashakor
haha again thank you

BY Qabelesh nest
No thanks
Appendix 6 Excerpts and quotes

Excerpts and quotes transcribed in Dari (using the Latin alphabet) that were excluded in the analysis using only the English translation

Excerpt A. Masooma Asadi, 1996

“Belakhera amadem, az Peshawer parwaz shod taraf Dubai, az Dubai, da zarf yak shaw yak roz, az Dubai taraf Ita lya, az Italya rastan amadem Holland”

“Eventually we came, from Peshawar we (flight) departed for Dubai, from Dubai, within one night (and) one day (within 24 hours), from Dubai to Italy, from Italy we came directly to the Netherlands.”

Excerpt B. Rostam Abassi, 1991

“...badesh az sarhade shamale obor kadum az Tajikistan wa az Tajikistan ta ba sarhade Czechoslovakia ra ba tren tanestum ke byayum bisyar ade faqat ticket megerefte ba qatar ya ba tren amadem...”

“...next I crossed the Northern border of Tajikistan and from Tajikistan up to the border of Czechoslovakia I was able to travel by train very easily you just bought a ticket in line or on the train and came... ”
Excerpt C. Masooma Asadi, 1996

MA  ... Sharayet zindage bad azo, ta ke ahesta ahesta ke dega adam da yak jay, jay ba jay mesha, momlakat nashenas, zabanet begana... Sharayet awal zindage rasti, be andaza, wakhtay sakht bod... Chon az yak so shawharema koshta shoda bod, jigarkhune ha zyad bod wa az dega taraf; famil door, az taraf dega, da yak momlakat begana kate dota tefl khord, bisyar mushkil boda

Excerpt D. Masooma Asadi, 1996

MA  Da ee sharayat bad ke roz ba roz da Afghanistan-, roh ba batare ast..., waz jang roz ba roz shedat paida kada mera wa mardum-, ba khodet ham maloom ast ke har roz che hal asta... ehh khush astum ke shokor yak zindage da enja jor kada tanestum wa avladayma tanestan ke ba yak jai berasan

In these bad circumstances that in Afghanistan day by day-, it is getting worse..., the war is getting worse day by day and people-, ... for you it is also obvious what is going on everyday... ehh I’m happy that thankfully I could make a life for myself here and that my children were able to get somewhere.

...Life after that, until you slowly get settled in a place, the country: strange, your language: strange... the initial life circumstances for real, ‘without limits’, was a hard time... Because on the one hand my husband was killed, there were a lot of sorrows and on the other hand; family was far away, and then, in a strange country with two young children, it was very difficult.
Excerpt E. Rostam Abassi, 1991

RA Wa ehm albate ee talkh bodan zyad namemana chura ke ale modat 23, 24 sal ast ke ma enja astum, ma yak kalime darem ba name; ‘faramosh’ megan ke;-, zarb-e misal, ‘har che deer shod zeer mesha’ ... ameqa wakhte ke ma enja astem, kho baz gapa ra az Afghanistan faramosh kadem, ale pas adat kadem enja.

And ehm of course this bitterness does not stay for long because it has been a period of 23, 24 years that I have been here, we have a saying called; ‘forgotten’ they say;-, (a) proverb, ‘har che deer shod zeer mesha’ (an Afghan proverb meaning the more time passes the more “it goes under” or you forget) ... the time that I have been here, well certain things from Afghanistan I have forgotten, now I have gotten used to (here) the Netherlands.

O talkhe ke oo wakht bod ale nest wale o wakhte ke naw baramadem, waqyan yakzarbe bisyar kalan bod, ya ne bisyar mushkil bod, etor mesle yak ‘plezier’ nabod ke ma enja byayem

That bitterness that was present then is not here now but the time when I just got out, for real was a very big (strike) ‘setback’, I mean it was very difficult, like it wasn’t particularly a ‘joy’ to come here
Excerpt F. Haidar Mohsenzada, 2014

SA  kho ale khush asti ke Holland asti ya... mege agar ahrami basha unja-, dega ne...

HM  aah khush astum ke Holland astum, az yak lehaz, az yak nazar ke enja bisyar ahrami ast, eto khoda ehh... che raqam... ‘veilig’ ehsas mekune, hech khatare nest... az yak lehaz, az yak nazar narahat astum ke az famil door astum, har lahz ta tashweesh famila darum

SA  aah

okay so are you happy now that you're in the Netherlands or... would you say that if it would be peaceful there-, then no...

yes I’m happy that I’m in the Netherlands, from one regard, from one view that it is ‘peaceful’ here, like you ehh ... how... (you) feel safe, there no danger at all.... from one regard, from one view I’m upset that I’m far away from family, every moment I worry about family.

yes

Excerpt G. Rostam Abassi, 1991

RA  Ehm ale shakle system taghel kada ta ke sarnaweshtesh maloom nasha, ehjaze dars nadara, ta ke sarnaweshtesh maloom nasha, khana namera ento-. Sabeq etor nabod, sarnaweshtesh maloom nabod, baresh yakh kart medad ba name green card ya ‘groene kaart’, meguft ke karet da ozorate justitie da ‘behandeling’ ast...
sarnaweshtesh maloom nabod wale-, taqreeban 4 sal, 3 sal memand ta ke sarnaweshtesh maloom shawa, wale o shahs metanest ba maktab bera, metanest kar kuna, tahseel kuna, hama chez, systemesh farq

Ehm now the system has changed, as long as one’s status is unclear, one does not have the permission to study, as long as one’s status is unclear, one does not get housing, like that-. Back in the day it was not like that, one’s status was unclear, they would give him a card or ‘green card’, that would say that your case is pending with the ministry of justice... one’s outcome was unknown but-, it would remain so for approximately 4 years, 3 years until his status would be become clear (known), however that individual could go to school, could work, could study, everything, the system was different...
approximately three and a half years it...
ASYLUM 2.0?

took until I got my acceptance

Excerpt H. Rostam Abassi, 1991

RA Shayad tagheel kada basha chura ke az lehaz ke, ma agar saresh fiqr kunom, sabeq yan panahenda agar myamad, da qismat ke metanest ba-.-. agar bogoye; “ma mekhayum kuja berum, kudom keshwar berum?”... ale, az tareeq internet wa ya telephone bisyar ade, agar dashta bashan, yak 5 dollar ya 5 euro ra, ke internet, ba ehsabe ‘beltegoed’ begera,... da internet tamam maloomata ra metana begera, ke “ma...” masalan “keshwar Holland berum chetor?” ya” keshwar Alman berum” ya “sharayet panahendagesh cheqsem ast?” ...

Maybe it has changed because regarding that, if I think about it, back in the day if an asylum seeker would come, up to where (in the part that) he could-...if you say; “where do I want to go, which country should I go?” ... now, through the internet and/or phone very easily, if they have it, if he would get internet, just 5 dollar or 5 euro, like ‘call credit’... on the internet he can get all the information, like “how about if I go to the Netherlands?” or “should I go to Germany?” or “how (what) are the conditions for asylum?”...

...Ata ab-o-hawa ra metana bebena, ke az tareeq jangal bera, da telephone metane bebene, eqeseme Almana bezane, bebene kudom qismat-, “az ene rah merum, baran ast, aftaw ast, hamray khod moza begerum, hamray khod balaposh begerum, nagerum...”

He can even (see) look up the weather, should he go through the forest, you can look on the phone, like this if you type in Germany, to see which part-, “I’m going through this route, is there rain, is it sunny, should I bring boots, should I bring a coat, should I not...”

Sabeq mardom ee gapa ra namefamed, masalan kad oshtokay khod myamad, da rah yak baran Back in the day people did not know these things, for example he would come with his children, and on the way it
ASYLUM 2.0?

meshod, memandan amunja... ya mawzoy barf, ke rah barf por ast, zemestan mebod, ehh... would rain, they would be stuck there...
or the matter of snow, that the road would be blocked (filled) with snow, when it was winter, ehh...

...ya ne az tareeq internet tamam maloomata ale matanan ke pesh khod, bar khod begeran... Wa sharayet, kas ke bokhaya az sarhad byaya, teer shawa, ya ba yak keshware byaya-, ke bufama ba kudom keshwar byaya, az tareeq internet, telephone ya-,....

...I mean through the internet they can keep all the information with them-, for themselves... And conditions, if someone wants to come through the border, cross (the border), or come to a country-, to know what country to come to, through the internet, phone or-....

Ma fikr kunom asantar shoda baresh, sabeq hama chez 'blind' bod, namefamede... wale ale ke-, az al faqat yak telephone medashta basha, ba 5 euro da internet dakhel sho, ba google hama cheza ra metane bebene. I think it has become easier for him, back in the day everything was blind, you didn’t know... but now that-, now he only has a phone, for 5 euro get on the internet, with google you can (see) look up everything.

SA Ama tamas gereftan ba famil ham ast ba dosta

But then there is also contacting family, with friends

RA Tamas gereftan ba famil ast, tamas gereftan ba-, ba-, ba afrad ke era betana az yak noqta ba noqte dega bobara ya masalan sabeq, ee ra ma az tajrube khod megum, ke ma wakhke ke da-, da Prague bodem, ya da qismat jangal bodem, mekhaste teer shawe, qachaqbar baresh megufi ke; 'ma tura ta ene shahr mebarum, eneqa mesha, agar kase ra dare...', enale agar telephone peshesh bod, zang There is getting into contact with family, getting into contact with-, with-, with individuals who can take him from one point to another point, or for example back in the day, I say this from my own experience, that when I was in-, was in Prague, or was in (a part of) the forest, you wanted to go through, the smuggler would tell him; ‘I’m taking you (up) to this city, it will be this much, if you have anyone...’, now if he had a phone with him, he would call and say; ‘can you-,
mezad meguft; ‘emkanatesh ast-, unja-, kho ma-, ’ meguft; ‘ma paisa darum wale ma namefamum, ora ma bayat yak jai paida kunom, enja kho telephone nest, cheto kunem

kho sharayeta asan sakhta dega, technology emroz, wale sabeq, 20 sal pesh, ee cheza nabod, hamesh ‘blind’ bod faqat ‘move’ mekade ke kuja merasede.

So (of course) it has made the circumstances easy [concluding], technology today, but back in the day, 20 years ago, there were no such things, everything was blind, you would only move to see where you would end up.

Ale kho hamage, panehenda ke myayan, ba khod telephon daran, ata agar familesh da Afghanistan basha ya da har jay basha, baresh zang mezad ke ma ena da ene noqta astum ke, sms mekuna, hech zang ham namezana, sms mekuna ke ma da Prague rasedum, sms mekuna ke ma enja rasedum, sms mekane ke ma da enja rasedum,....

Now everyone, refugees who come, has a phone with themselves, even if ‘his’ family is in Afghanistan or wherever, he would call them that I’m (currently) at this point that-, he texts, he doesn’t even call, he texts that I have arrived in Prague, he texts that I have arrived here, he texts that I have arrived here,....

Wa bar sharayet panahendage, ‘zeker’, kas ke bar panahenda-, mebasha, da rah baresh bisyar ba solhat ast ke metana ba hama ba tamas shawa, begera telephone gap bezana, famil khoda ahwalesha begera ya dega malomata ra begera.

And for the circumstances of asylum seekers, for sure, one who (seeks) is an asylum-, on the way it is very convenient for him that he can contact everyone, take the phone and talk, ask how his family is doing or to get other information.

Da qismat panahendage, da qismat aze… masalan da Denmark guft ke; ‘har panahende ke myaya, When it comes to asylum seeking, when it comes to that… for example in Denmark they said that; ‘every asylum seeker that
ASYLUM 2.0?

comes, has to hand over all his things, this... his 'valuable possessions', for example money, (a) watch... did you see- and it's cabinet even accepted it (the cabinet of Denmark also accepted that motion).

He is only allowed to have 20 or 30 'dollar'... for example, has to give his watch, give his gold, give everything, he should not have anything. For example there are a lot of asylum seekers who have a very nice watch, their wives have jewelry, have gold, and they have no idea...

So if one would read the internet and 'the phone' he knows that this is the matter in Denmark, he thinks; 'no, this is my 'wedding gold', it is a (precious) memory for me', if you go there, they take this from you... he thinks; 'I will rather go to Sweden instead of Denmark', he thinks; 'either way I have become a refugee, I don’t care for Denmark'... so now these (things) are at his advantage, he reads on the internet, for example he follows the news, and it has become so easy too, for example take the Danish news, paste it in google, you can translate it, it will write everything for you in Farsi, you can translate English. So now a refugee can read the Danish news, the Dutch news...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th><em>Baz qachqbara az-, hamraysh che raqame tamas gereften?</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td><em>Wakhte ke da Moscow amadem, unja qablan Afghana bodan, tehdad Afghana bisyar zyad bod wa wakhte ke amadam, unja nazar ba afrad ke da unja khodem meshnakhtum, numre telefon dashtum, hamrayshan ba tamas shudom, ona-, har kudomesh 15 sal, 10 sal, 20 sal unja zindage mekadan... baz una meshnakhtan wa chon afrad qachakbar meshnakhtan, paisa megereftan, kar mekadan, tawasod una ma tanestem ke vise Czech-a begerem ba Czechoslovakia berem</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Then the smuggler from-, how did you contact him?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>When I came to Moscow, there were already Afghans there, the number of Afghans there were high and when I came, there according to the people that I knew myself there, I had telephone numbers, I contacted them, they-, every one of them had lived there for 15 years, 10 years, 20 years... so they knew and since they knew smugglers, they would take money and worked, through them I was able to get the visa for Czech and go to Czechoslovakia.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After that we came to Czechoslovakia, in Czechoslovakia just like I told you, certain people that we knew-, there in Czechoslovakia, ... we knew certain people and according to the experience we had (gained) in Moscow, we came into contact with smugglers... came into contact with them, they had to bring me towards Western Europe, I came into contact with them there-, we stayed there a good amount of time (approximately several periods of time), after that people who knew, people-, there were probably smugglers there, we couldn't get a visa there because the German embassy was not like the Czechoslovakian embassy to be able to get the visa, the German visa. After that, there were smugglers there who passed people through the forest heading towards the border, they would take money so I came to Germany.