FROM FAMILY DAMAGE TO FAMILY CHALLENGE

Stories of rebuilding lives after war and refugee trauma: Australia after the Balkans conflicts

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of war-related psychological trauma on refugees from the former Yugoslavia who came to Australia in the last 20 years, and to examine how their process of recovery from trauma was assisted by the power of healing relationships, family strength and resilience. The aim was to explore the entire family unit in the context of whole-family interaction. The sample consisted of 22 parents and 25 children. The 47 participants (n = 47) belonged to either of three ethnic groups: Bosnian Muslim, Croatian, and Serbian, and five out of eleven families interviewed were ethnically mixed. The researcher, who shared similar experiences to those of the participants, developed a semi-structured interview and research was conducted using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis − IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2003) as well as elements of Patton's (2002) techniques and the family interaction coding system developed by Fiese, et al (2001). The participants suffered three different kinds of trauma: war trauma, refugee trauma and historical trauma. Historical trauma, not encompassed by Herman's (1997) proposal of complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), had an enormous impact on the participants' interpersonal relationships. It is suggested that an understanding of their history and inherited trauma is vital to assisting recovery of refugees from the Balkans, regardless of ethnic origin. The trauma of being a refugee made a greater impact on the participants' dignity, self-esteem and belief system than the experience of war and torture. Humiliation, often inflicted by their own people, occurred on a grand scale, leading to a range of further traumas. Thus, an unexpected super-ordinate theme emerged – dignity, which reflected not only different experiences of trauma but also four stages of trauma recovery. The level of individual and family resilience was not determined by the degree of trauma but by family membership, defined by family belief system, organization and communication patterns. The values and belief system of the participants reflected their form of consciousness and represented the core of their resources for the new life in Australia. There is an urgent need for a new approach to refugees' traumatic experiences beyond the clinical model of PTSD; one that includes the historical, social, political and moral context in which the experience of refugees is situated. Thus, relational communities need to be developed, fostering partnerships, political awareness and personal responsibility amongst those who work within both ethnic communities and mainstream agencies. It is imperative to learn from the refugees' own experiences and to include the survivors' tales as resources in the body of academic knowledge, which provides the compass for an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural approach to psychological trauma and recovery.

DECLARATION

I, Anita Milicevic, declare that the PhD thesis entitled ***FROM FAMILY DAMAGE TO FAMILY CHALLENGE − Stories of rebuilding lives after war and refugee trauma: Australia after the Balkans conflicts,*** is no more than 100 000 words in length, including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole, or in part, for the award for any other degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signature _____   Date _____

DEDICATION

This thesis is a labour of love and is dedicated to my sons Luka and Marko and to all others whose childhood has been marked by war, refugee experience and exile. It acknowledges their strength, energy and nurture, and hopes to indicate to their families a path that may lead to peace, forgiveness and reconciliation.

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

This is a tale of many cities: each one consumed by the momentum of history. Each one recalled at the table … in a seaside suburb that sprawls upon the very ends of the earth, within a city that contains the traces of many cities

(Zable, 2001, p.7)

This introductory chapter is an invitation to accompany the researcher on a journey to listen to the tales of refugees, who form a significant part of humanity today, and to hear their stories, their realities, told in their own words. Many of these refugees have reached the shores of Australia, taking shelter in an ancient land, and have added their stories to an incredible mix of tales that have their roots in ancient traditions. Storytellers all over the world continue to contribute to the ancient and not-so-ancient myths and legends that tell of irregular lives, hundreds of years of oppression, pain and suffering. The narrative circle continues throughout the world to encompass stories of peoples and families falling apart, brothers as enemies, as well as enemies as brothers. This human activity of storytelling has been recognised and analysed from several historical, social and cultural perspectives by various authors (Herman, 1997; Langer, 1991; Mollica, 2006; Walsh, 2003; Weine, 2004, etc.). These authors have been primarily concerned with trauma and its impact on families, trauma and recovery and family resilience, and the premise of this research is that only by travelling down these various avenues and exploring what we find along the way can we hope to bring about change, open new horizons, a new mode of understanding trauma – and perhaps ultimately help form a new structure of being in the world. So let us embark on this journey.

1.2 Towards knowledge and recovery

The major aim of this study is to explore the interconnection of the psychological, social and political dimensions of trauma and to provide an account of the power of healing relationships, family strength, resilience and the recovery process of refugees from the former Yugoslavia. It is a qualitative discovery-orientated project in a field which is

under-theorized as regards the family perspective of refugee trauma, and which is in need of reproducible models of intervention.

On this complex journey, the researcher has been guided by this question: How do family members rebuild their lives in the aftermath of systematic political violence, displacement and the refugee experience? In order to attempt an answer to this question the following areas were also examined: How do traumatic experiences affect trust and stability in a family over time? How does a family make changes in its communication, intimacy, roles and obligations? How do family members cope with traumatic reminders such as anniversaries, viewing the television coverage of a disaster or of unpunished war criminals? And how do families rebuild their social networks and community connections?

1.2.1 Refugees as families not just individuals

The study was undertaken primarily to contribute to academic research on the effects of war-related psychological trauma, in particular on the refugees from the former Yugoslavia who resettled in Australia in the last 20 years. In an attempt to gain knowledge about the extent of the refugees' recovery, it has attempted to recognize their individual strengths and the supportive relationships naturally available to them in their own families and communities. Though there is a considerable literature concerned with individual recovery, there are enormous gaps in knowledge about how families assess and manage changes after the experience of war and refugee trauma (Weine et al, 2004). In addition, much of the past research on trauma and family has focused on gaining an empirical understanding of a survivor's participation in family life and his/her impact on significant others. But such studies have tended not to capture the full range of relationships between family members, where more than one person has a trauma history (Catherall, 2004). Moreover, little attention has been paid to the effects of war-related trauma outside of clinical populations and diagnostic categories, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Therefore, this study explores both work on the complexity of traumatic experiences as well as studies of the family in order to illustrate how each field complements the other and hopes to demonstrate that insights from existing research and wisdom combined with new insights as a result of this journey will contribute to the field of qualitative research, and enable further development of research design for studies in the field of war and refugee trauma, and provide valuable insights in the area of refugee health and wellbeing.

Importantly, this research explores war and refugee trauma from a family perspective rather than from an individual viewpoint. There are no family-oriented theories concerning refugees (Weine, et al, 2004). Hence, it is hoped that the findings presented here will be useful in assisting agencies and communities to develop more effective responses to refugee settlement challenges and help improvement of public policies on refugees in Australia. A further aim of this research is to provide data that may assist in the development of a useful framework for more effective and widely adaptable methods of therapeutic interventions regarding refugees. Furthermore, it is hoped that the findings will contribute to various cross-cultural projects that are being developed and implemented internationally. By naming injustice, the researcher sincerely hopes that this study will help to reduce the circle of oppression produced by wars and mass violence.

1.3   Background to the study

… in a moment look to see
The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;
Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
And their most reverend heads dash'd to the walls,
Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused,
Do break the clouds …

(Shakespeare, Henry V, act 3, scene iii)

These lines, written by William Shakespeare four hundred years ago, are quoted here not as an invitation to reflect on drama, literature or history. Rather they are

reproduced as part of an appeal for urgent human concern about events that have happened and are happening in present times and about current realities. This passage from Shakespeare illustrates the horror of wars (religious, racial, ethnic, small-scale, personal, drug or widespread wars) and their impact on hundreds of thousands of civilians and their families. Today, these families could be from Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, South America, or any other part of the globe. Yet though the conflicts of today are no less horrific than those that took place in Shakespeare's times, the constant repetition in the media of these modern horrors and the roll-call of number of those affected can often dull our sense of being in any way responsible for or connected with the victims. These events are mentioned briefly in the newspapers, or analysed with academic detachment in comfortable living rooms, but seldom do we become genuinely concerned with these conflicts and their consequences.

The psychological impact of such atrocities often lies hidden among the members of the countless columns of refugees that snake across war-ravaged landscapes. But it is present in their whispers and tears and is deeply embedded in their (told and untold) stories. Though submerged now, this suffering may later resurface and be relived in dreams and memories, 'down under', in Melbourne, Australia, or wherever else these refugees have finally landed.

1.3.1 Motivation for choosing the topic

The impetus for this inquiry comes from personal experience and observation of human suffering that has travelled across mountains, valleys and oceans from one continent to another. The researcher herself has travelled precariously and not without suffering through this vast landscape and has witnessed and been part of experiences that have inevitably helped to further her understanding and to impress on her the value of friendship amongst all peoples. Thus, her motivations and values cannot but be revealed in this work; she cannot help but be visible and vulnerable in this research project.

1.3.2. Statement of personal experience as background to the research

The need to undertake this research springs, to a large extent, from my own experience, coming as I do from the Balkans, the crossroads of the Orient and Europe, the area that has produced the phenomena under study. For centuries, the stench of blood and gunpowder has emanated from that region, reflecting a long and ongoing history of power struggles. But the Balkans also embodies for me the notions of home, love and belonging. This powerful conjugation between a sense of belonging to one's background and a particular place is in fact what often produces history, and is a major factor that has given rise to this research. It therefore seems pertinent to explain here some personal details about my origins and background.

I was born in Croatia of a Serbian mother and a Croatian father in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. I grew up on the Croatian coast listening to the murmur of the Adriatic Sea, nourished by the rhythms of folklore embodied in epic storytelling. My curiosity and thirst for knowledge developed from my experience of living in three different but parallel worlds. The first was the very religious and secret world of my grandparents –who came from two religions, and whose world was besieged by the smiling silence of my grandfather who had survived a WWII Nazi camp and who passed on to me his love of nature. The second world was that of socialist ideology, education and hard work, embodied in my father, who treasured integrity as the only thing that made life worth living. Then there was the world of courage, passion and love of life embodied in my mother, who showed me the power of a vulnerable heart and unveiled for me the secrets of unconditional loving. All the values of these worlds came together in my marriage to a Serbian husband and were passed on to our sons. They were also shattered during the last war in the Balkans and our exile and experience as refugees. My desperate bid to gather up again the pieces of my own value system and to maintain sanity in a chaotic world, which no longer seemed to have any social structure, but only echoed with lost values and anguished memories, was the most difficult turning point in my life. And

yet, these values, battered by the war and existence as a refugee, were my only strength and became the compass by which I found my way to Australia's shores.

But when my family and I eventually arrived in Australia, we still had the feeling that the war was not over; here we faced a new form of ideological, ethnic and class conflict in the suburbs of Melbourne, where English came as a sideways tool of communication and where demons of the past composed echoes for the future. Indeed, English is a second language in many Western suburbs of Melbourne, such as St Albans, where I first settled, and where Vietnamese or the languages of the Balkans were used as primary languages to communicate on the streets, in the supermarkets, in neighbourhood facilities and even in the playgrounds. Those same playgrounds were quite often battlefields for children and adolescents who distinguished themselves according to language or even accent, in that way defining their ethnic or even religious background. And instead of basketball or football, many of these children played 'war games' that began with verbal and physical abuse, and ended with parents arguing and abusing 'the other side'; thus the circle of oppression expanded.

We found ourselves living in a ghetto that was controlled by the behaviour of the more well-established ethnic communities and thus experienced feelings of oppression in our new 'safe haven'. This experience provoked me to attempt to make sense of my life experience, determined as I was to replace uncertainty with understanding of human behaviour during and after the war, to throw some light into the darkest places of human sufferings and weaknesses, and to recognize them as resources for learning and understanding and, ultimately, for healing. I wanted to understand our war and the sufferings of its refugees, to give voice to those mothers whose tears nurtured their hungry children, to empty-handed fathers whose lives became a long and silent series of farewells, and to the children who have to make peace with life. I wanted to honour and further examine our families and their resilience by undertaking academic training in order to produce this research.

Perhaps we can all learn something from refugee families and their mode of survival. However, we cannot simply approach traumatic experiences in an ahistorical, universalist way. To travel on the road to understanding, it is essential to understand the historical, social, political and moral context in which the experiences of these refugee families are situated. If we are to avoid adding insult to injury, we simply cannot assume, we cannot generalise, we cannot operate on the principle that 'you've seen one refugee, you've seen them all.' I would like to stress, however, that though my personal experience was a motivating factor for this topic, I have no religious or ethnic agenda, and this research does not include arbitrarily any political viewpoint or argument for one side in the war in the Balkans. Rather, my greatest motivation is to open myself to human pain and suffering in order to build bridges of understanding over the abysses of prejudice and hatred, in an attempt to enhance humanity.

1.3.3. General and societal motivating factors

There is a vast literature across the disciplines regarding the intergenerational aspects of conflict in the Balkans, with many authors suggesting that the war in the Balkans in the last decade of the twentieth century represented a microcosm of the disequilibrium that the world at large had been experiencing (Akhavan & Howse, 1995; Neuffer, 2002; Poulingy, Chesterman & Schnabel, 2007; Silber & Little, 1995, etc). This literature encapsulates the paradox of Eastern and Western civilizations or, more specifically, Christianity and Islam, integrating and disintegrating at the same time. This paradox, identified by many other authors, can be explained as being due to the continued existence of gross injustice, centuries-old realities accompanied at the same time by a conscious human tendency towards interdependence and oneness. Thus this paradox continues to be observed in the suburbs of Australia, reinforced by each new wave of refugees, for whom the boundaries between victims, persecutors and bystanders are unclear and, in some instances, continually changing (e.g. the ethnic communities from the

Balkans, Sudan, etc). The survival of this paradox has also been nurtured by prejudice, assumptions and ignorance on the part of mainstream Australian society, which have exercised an enormous impact on the psyches of those arriving and adjusting as well as on those already settled on this soil.

However, this paradox and the trauma it has generated need not be seen as merely destructive, but also as transformative. It has created new meaning, new relationships and new ways of being in the world. This process is not confined to the individual but affects the whole structure of refugee families and their experience of resettlement in new communities. Thus, such phenomena can be viewed as a springboard of motivation for a deeper understanding of family dynamics and the recovery processes of Australians from ethnic groups who have experienced war and refugee trauma, not only in the Balkans but in other parts of the world. Indeed, this tendency towards interdependence and oneness is relevant to many different ethnic groups in Australia and worldwide, who seek reconciliation, a future without feeling 'otherness', without fragmentation. As shown by Colic-Peisker (2003) and Markovic and Manderson, (2002) fragmentation is an everyday experience in Australia's ethnic communities, reflecting the concept of divisions among oppressed people outlined by Moan (2003), realities that emerge from differences within oppressed peoples as well as from pressure placed on them from others. Indeed, reliance on ideological lies and retrospective untruths has been a main force of life and identity formation in ethnic communities from the Balkans in Australia.

Thus, the motivation for this exploration springs from a desire to develop new awareness, so that we can move beyond ideological lies and outdated notions. This research project seeks to improve individual and collective understanding of our own social and psychological boundaries, and to open dialogue about the inappropriateness or inadequacy of many current approaches to welcoming, supporting and treating refugees in cross-cultural settings in Australia today.

For example, though it is true that Australian immigration authorities, recognizing the tensions between Bosnian Muslims, Croatians and Serbians, have sought to devise policies that take into account these political sensitivities (Colic-Peisker, 2003), nevertheless, such policies and strategies designed to enhance multiculturalism are, in practice, merely symbolic, as they tend to minimize socio-economic disadvantages (Markovic & Manderson, 2002). Moreover, also in the name of multiculturalism, the Australian Government broadly supports the role of ethnic clubs, churches and associations, providing financial assistance for them to carry out the role of assisting refugees in their adjustment to the new country. But, as Markovic and Manderson's findings reveal, in order for new arrivals to obtain support from these well-endowed community agencies and associations, they need to comply with certain ideas about ethnic identity. Thus, the need for new arrivals Australia to continue to maintain a native ethnic identity is imposed, not chosen voluntarily. Thus, corralled within this framework of ethnocentrism, all agencies (Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian) define social problems through a prism of personal deficiency, dysfunctional families and inferior culture (Markovic & Manderson, 2002).

By examining this reality as it applies to the communities of refugees from the Balkans we hope to be able to provide information and understanding that will assist other ethnic communities in Australia who have fled from war-torn areas, such as the fast-growing community from the Sudan. Thus, it is hoped that the topic of this research is not only of personal or specific-community interest but is able to provide a new perspective for those who encounter in their work the consequences of war and of refugeehood. Such encounters may not necessarily be with those who have suffered torture or other more obvious consequences of war, but also with those who have been displaced and uprooted for various reasons.

From personal experience, reading the relevant literature, and working in the field, the researcher has been made aware of the questions and issues summarised above and has

thus attempted to find solutions in practical and theoretical terms. This research project is motivated by a perceived need to rethink and reinterpret accumulated knowledge in psychology and various aspects of psychology embedded in other relevant disciplines, in order to explore the best methods of allowing refugee families and communities to inform and thus assist professionals who wish to help them. It constitutes a plea for all sectors of the Australian community to learn from loss, to bring back home those suffering from the strong memories of shattered lives, and bullet-ridden homes and families. It asks that we position families and communities as the central resource for trauma recovery, in the belief that the individual, family and community experience of the sufferers themselves can be the basis for their own healing.

1.3.4 Setting the compass for the journey: looking beyond the scope

To understand this research, the reader needs to take on the role of the traveller, remembering that, as such, real insight is more likely to come from participation in the journey than from arrival at any particular destination. As a returning traveller does not usually elaborate on the destination but rather relates the insights gained along the way, the story we tell of our journey through the complexities of real life as experienced by the survivors of war and exile should seek not to dwell on the everyday realities of the refugees who have participated in this study but should focus on how they may reflect the forms and logic of social ties and cultural strategies when dealing with loss and suffering. Such interpretation can have no beginning or end; this is a tale in perpetual motion, like a thought, or the arrow at the centre of the compass. To set the compass for this journey we first need to refer to insights gained from various disciplines and personal histories. But along the road, in the course of this inquiry, though any reductionist approach is rejected, no alternative clinical model will be proposed. This journey of inquiry is a genuine quest to find the greatest wealth of knowledge than can be revealed by a clinical assessment about the impact of trauma on the individual psyche, on the families and collectives of many kinds. At the end of the journey, it is hoped, the fellow traveller will understand the

researcher's need to argue passionately for the importance of rethinking the dominant paradigms of trauma and recovery. Thus, the compass should point towards a situation where the family and community are the central resources for trauma recovery. It is hoped that along the way, the traveller will gain important insights from the stories told by those who have travelled along rocky and uncertain roads, and that this journey will indeed lead to further understanding of the nature of trauma and its legacy in the social, political and historical realities recounted by the local inhabitants of the trauma landscape themselves.

1.4 Essential notes for the journey

This chapter opened with an invitation to join the researcher on a journey to listen to the realities of refugees who have sought shelter in Australia and included an appeal for recognition of the urgent need to re-examine the impact of the horror of wars on hundreds of thousands of civilians and their families. The researcher's concern regarding the psychological impact of atrocities on individuals and families was shown to be a major motivation for choosing the topic of study, reflected in her own experience as a refugee from the Balkans and underlining the need to understand family dynamics and the recovery processes of ethnic Australians who have experienced war and refugee trauma. In addition, the incentive for this research project was shown to have sprung from a great need on the part of the researcher to provide a new perspective for those who encounter in their work the consequences of war, refugee experience and displacement for various reasons. A number of themes were introduced, all of them highlighting the need to learn from the refugees' own experiences and to include the survivors' tales as resources in the body of academic knowledge, which provides the compass for an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural approach to psychological trauma and recovery.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Most travellers find that in order to understand what they see or hear along the way, a guidebook can be an invaluable aid. So, as we prepare for this journey, let us stop and review some relevant literature, in order to learn from the insights from various books, journals, political creeds and poetic truths that seem relevant to an understanding of the area and the events that have engulfed the neurotic flashpoint of the Balkans regions for centuries. Many useful insights can be extracted from the cauldron of history and by reflecting on the clues provided by the literature about the seat of power as well as the exercise of power, which has often been both sporadic and headstrong.

2.2. The elements of the Balkans puzzle

The Balkans is the crossroads of the Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic faiths, a complex and diverse region with a mixture of about one hundred interdependent ethnic groups inhabiting common areas (Pupovac, 1995).

A group and its ethnicity refer to distinctiveness within a nation; diversity in language, religious convictions, skin colour, descent, and/or culture (Nagel, 2002). In the context of the former Yugoslavia, ethnicity has been determined primarily by religious conviction, while those belonging to all three religious convictions share a common heritage that includes language, descent, culture or other determinants such as skin colour. National identity, on the other hand, refers to people's feelings of belonging, attachment to and civic responsibility towards the institutional rule and political predicaments of the nation (Armstrong, 1996).The concepts of ethnicity and nationality have been crucial elements of the Balkan puzzle as these notions have created the psychological mosaic of peoples from the Balkans. As Kitromilides (1996 p. 170) highlighted:

Ethnicity is a factor of distinctiveness and therefore cannot make for commonalities: nationality is a factor of division and therefore undermines the sense of shared meanings: finally nationalism is ipso facto a machine of conflict and violence which annuls first and foremost those deep affinities and unspoken assumptions which form the psychic substratum of a shared 'mentality'. The quest for

a 'Balkan mentality' therefore must get away from ethnic and national constructs before any substance can be ascribed to it.

It is important to highlight that the majority of people of the Former Yugoslavia are ethnic Slavs with common ancestry, who speak very similar languages and share very similar cultures (Hodson, Sekulic & Massey, 1994; Kitromilides, 1996). The name of the country, Yugoslavia (in the Slavic language Jugoslavia), consists of two words –Jugo, meaning South and Slavia meaning Slavs – so the name of the country in fact translates as South Slavs. According to Kitromilides and many other experts in the field, the Slavs' invasion of the Balkans began in the sixth century and finished when the Turks arrived in the fourteenth century. It is very important to emphasize the common history and background of these peoples from the Balkans as the literature produced in the West often refers to these people as if they came originally from different ethnic groups. Additionally, for many centuries, non-Slavic people (e.g. Gypsies and Jews) ethnic groups such as Albanians (Muslim and Catholic Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia), Hungarian Slovaks and several thousand Turks, Italians, Poles, Russians and people from other European backgrounds have also resided in the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Hodson, Sekulic & Massey, 1994). Thus it is important to explore the world of attitudes, behaviours and 'expressions of unconsciousness' that have developed over centuries of history in the Balkans (Kitromilides, 1996, p.170), attitudes, and behaviours, both conscious and unconscious, which are still reflected in unspoken assumptions and deeper preconceptions that create the mental world shared by members of these societies.

Throughout history, the nations in the territory of the former Yugoslavia have considered their common interest to be unity against foreign assimilation; however the forces of unity and consolidation were always weaker than those of division and disintegration. More than fourteen centuries ago, the South Slavic tribes of the Balkans and later its nations had to defend themselves against oppression, occupation and assimilation by Turks, Hungarians, Romanians and Germans. Thus, the uniting of the various Yugoslav nations on the Balkans' peninsula was a matter of survival and self-preservation rather

than due to a desire to live in a community as one people (Necak, 1995). An awareness of the strong need of these people for liberation from foreign occupation is crucial, according to Necak, in understanding the complex identity of the people of the former Yugoslavia. This need developed as a struggle for national self-preservation for each national group (Slovenes, Croats and Serbs) and therefore it did not entail the replacement or loss of national consciousness. Thus, the nineteenth-century dream of unity in the Balkans became possible when the ruins of the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian empires were visible to the South Slavic nations.

The South Slavic nations were ruled by the Ottoman Empire for five centuries until they became subject to the rule of the Habsburg Empire in the nineteenth century. In 1878 Serbia regained independence from the Ottoman Empire, and this historical circumstance allowed the formation of the two independent states of Serbia and Montenegro (Necak, 1995). Subsequently, in 1913, these two countries divided the neighbouring areas of Kosovo, Metohija and Sandzak between them. At the same time, the territory on the border separating Serbia, Kosovo and Metohija, the so-called Vardar Macedonia, was annexed by Serbia and called South Serbia. Bosnia-Herzegovina continued to be ruled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which had also ruled Croatia and Slovenia until 1867.

This was the historical inheritance of the South Slavic nations on the eve of World War I: one part of the area was influenced by the Eastern cultural sphere and the other was under the influence of Western civilization. Further division within and between these two spheres was influenced by religious diversity, as religion has played an important role in the evolution of Yugoslav issues. The overall historical inheritance of the South Slavic nations was characterized by polarities and contrasts. The northwest regions were influenced by Western European civilization, while the south-eastern region of the Balkans peninsula was heavily influenced by both the Muslim religion and Byzantine tradition and culture. And right in the middle of the Balkans peninsula was Bosnia and Herzegovina,

with its mixture of three religions and nations (Christian Catholic [Croatian], Christian Orthodox [Serbians] and Islam [Bosnian Muslims].

In 1918, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was established, ruled by the Serbian Karadjordjevic dynasty, and later renamed Yugoslavia. This first Yugoslavia was formed as an unequal unity of already existing individual nations, and the monarchy quickly became a dictatorship (Silber & Little, 1995). Years later, the Macedonians, the Bosnian Muslims and the growing number of Albanians in Kosovo joined the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. From 1918 to 1941 the Serbian family dynasty was the supreme authority of Yugoslavia with the other constituent nations playing subordinate roles. No other ethnic minority was recognized as having a group identity. When the kingdom of Yugoslavia collapsed in 1941 and its king fled the country, the Nazis moved in and both Croatia and Serbia were created as puppet states, with quisling regimes. In Croatia, the minority extremist group (Ustashe) was active, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the Balie consisted of pro Nazi-Muslims, while in Serbia the monarchists (Chetniks) sided with the Nazis. All these extremist groups carried out atrocities against the people of other nations. Such atrocities created new traumatic memories about crimes perpetrated by neighbours of another ethnic group. The transmission of this trauma caused by particular national groups became part of the history of another national group, even becoming part of its identity, leading to trans-generational memories of betrayal, torture, humiliation and blame (Puhovski, 1995). As Puhovski has highlighted, new versions of memory were created as every nation or ethnic group carried the baggage of being a victim of and/or persecutor to the other nation.

In early 1941 Josip Broz, known as Tito, a communist locksmith of Slovenian and Croatian background, was leader of army partisan guerrillas, and considered to be the greatest enemy to the Axis powers in the territory of Yugoslavia. His troops fought against Germans and Italians as well as against Croatian Ustashe, Serbian Chetniks and pro-Nazi Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Eventually, the second Yugoslavia was formed in central Bosnia in 1943 as a Communist state under Tito's leadership, and the guerrillas who had fought with him – from all national groups in the territory of Yugoslavia – became the soldiers of the Yugoslav People's Army. In 1945, the Soviet Army liberated most of Eastern Europe from German occupation and the Soviets then installed communist governments in the capitals of eastern Europe; however, the people of Yugoslavia, led by Tito, had liberated themselves. As he was the only post-war communist leader in Europe, Tito was initially loyal to Moscow. However, he soon rejected further Soviet influence and after he had successfully fought against Soviet occupation, Yugoslavia was expelled from the Eastern bloc in 1948.

After his split with Moscow, Tito positioned Yugoslav politics between East and West and he was feted in Cold War Western Europe as an anti-Soviet Communist leader. Such a unique position enabled him to secure financial support from the West, and Yugoslavia grew in prosperity (Silber & Little. 1995). Despite his international success, Tito struggled to keep all the nations that made up Yugoslavia on an equal footing, and he ruthlessly suppressed any expression of national identity or religious beliefs. This suppression was a gradual process. Initially, the Yugoslav Communists implemented a policy of national identification analogous to Stalin's concept of early socialization, where the class struggle involves encouraging national feeling, which would then become a foundation for later membership of international communism (Hodson, Sekulic & Massey, 1994). In other words, first one needed to be aware of one's own national background and be recognised as belonging to such; once this was achieved one's entire heritage could be fused into the international communist movement. Thus, at the beginning of its development, the Yugoslav state accorded full recognition to the Macedonian people as a nation. Indeed, in the name of international communism, Macedonia was recognized as a nation (only in Communist Yugoslavia, however) and, according to Hodson, Sekulic and

Massey (1994), the nationhood of Muslim Bosnia was also recognized for the very first time.

Therefore, the doctrine of Brotherhood and Unity was implemented and enforced as an ideology rather than as a result of a process of reconciliation between all the different ethnic groups and religions, and though ethnic tensions appeared to have been successfully repressed and managed, as Necak (1995) analysed, under the restraints of ideology, social and national differences were actually intensified. The nationalists were forced into exile, where they nurtured their resentment in expatriate communities that proved a fertile breeding ground for extreme nationalism. (One of these places of exile was certainly Australia).

The eastern part of Yugoslavia consisted of Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Albanians and Bosnian-Muslims. While the Serbs, Montenegrins and Macedonians were Orthodox Christian, the Bosnian Muslims and Albanians followed Islam. In the West of Yugoslavia were the Slovenes and Croatians, who belonged to the Roman Catholic Christian religion. As the respective religious institutions were officially recognized, accepted but also marginalized (religious institutions could not have any political influence or exercise power) in the Communist system, they played a very discreet and important role in the progress and development of modern Yugoslavia. However, they also greatly contributed to the complications, divisions and prejudice. Indeed, strong attachment and allegiance to the different religions resulting in complex historical developments as well as social integration has always been a core concept of the development of a collectivist national identity and membership in national groups. Paradoxically, these national groups were at the same time united – profoundly connected linguistically and ethnically in these regions – and divided. Thus, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, partially, Croatia were fundamentally ethnically mixed areas of the Balkans (Necak, 1995).

For example, one of the unspoken assumptions that has been rooted for centuries in the very mentality of the people in the territory of the former Yugoslavia is defined, for

the purpose of this study, as: 'betrayal or sense of betrayal complex'. The betrayal complex developed out of struggles for survival throughout history where these Slavic communities and their families had to accept oppression as well as the religions and customs of the oppressors. For example, if there were more than one son in a family, one son would maintain the religion of his family's origins, while the other would accept the Muslim, Catholic or Orthodox religion (depending on the area and the occupiers). Thus, during the time of the last conflict in the former Yugoslavia, journalists and politicians were often confused as they sought to understand how it could be that members of families often identified themselves as belonging to different nationalities and religions, despite having the same surname, and would often fight cruelly against each other. The very fact that one's allegiances could seldom be distinguished by one's surname was quite often the source of fights and acts of revenge. An understanding of the initial motivation for converting to a different religion, which was merely to survive, was ignored, suppressed and then transformed into the silent but poisonous betrayal complex. This issue of betrayal was quite often addressed openly in the community, in sarcastic remarks in male-neighbourhood discussions or jokes. However it was powerfully reinforced in Serbian or Croatian epic poems: where families with Muslim backgrounds were accused of betrayal and disgrace. Such accusations were deeply rooted in one's family heritage and customs – and were the seeds of hatred. This became a complex of inferiority, a means of dishonouring and betraying the ancestors.

These unspoken assumptions, and deeply rooted beliefs and complexes were not eradicated in Tito's Yugoslavia. Tito and his followers believed that industrialization and modernization would erode old national tensions and divisions and enhance the vision of Yugoslavia as a multinational nation (Hodson, Sekulic & Massey, 1994). The new notion of 'no-identifiable nationality' was developed and enhanced by the communist and later the socialist regime (Necak, 1995) and this phenomenon or sense of belonging was named

'Yugoslav' and was a synonym for communist internationalism. It was, however, primarily an expression of commitment to the Yugoslav state.

Under Tito, Yugoslavia had a president for life and also a federal parliament, as well as six republican and two provincial parliaments (all equal and subordinate to Tito). The state power balance was maintained by constituted federal units and a parallel social system of autonomous self management for each unit was established. This attempt at a power balance was created in order to influence political decision-making. The differences between economic development of the various republics and provinces were also marked. Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia were the most developed republics, while the Serbian province of Kosovo was the least developed region of the federation (Vojnic, 1995). These vast differences in economic performance directly and indirectly influenced the processes of development and hence the disintegration of the union of these republics and provinces. Initially, the economic development of the entire country had a high political priority and, as Vojnic (1995) described, according to UN criteria in the 1970s, Yugoslavia was classified among the newly industrialized countries of the world. In the 1980s, the developed republics were orientated towards greater market activity, which entailed economic and political centralization. However, the less developed provinces and republics tended to have a centralized inflow of funds. Such tendencies created an unspoken but very intense conflict of interest. The republics with accumulated assets and developed bureaucratic structure and thus thorough administrative redistribution came to dominate the less developed provinces and republics, both economically and politically.

Though the transformed post-war socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was a single-party state with an unelected supreme leader, some democratic rights were accorded its citizens. Yugoslav citizens were permitted to travel and to work abroad and they did not suffer the severe oppression widespread in the territories controlled by the Soviet Communist regime. The government in the Yugoslav federation encouraged the process of developing a new national consciousness and identity and these efforts were underpinned

by the suppression of pre-war ethnic identities and the encouragement of ethnically-mixed marriages in the developing industrialized country of socialist Yugoslavia. The collectivist culture of a society of ethnically-mixed marriages living in a communist-socialist milieu came to predominate over the folklore of pagan-tribal and patriarchal segments of the culture. An ethnically mixed marriage is one where the partners have different ethnicities (Agger, 1996) and in this context the terms can be applied to Bosnian Muslims, Croatian or Serbian participants. On the eve of the last war in the Balkan, nearly three million people in former Yugoslavia were either children of mixed marriages or were themselves living in mixed marriages (Agger, 1996).

The entire population was artificially divided into *citizens* and *working people*, all of whom were denied the right to vote, except at a local-government, self-management level. This awkward vocabulary was used to cover unspoken issues of social class division within the society, as in the communist Yugoslavia, theoretically and ideologically, there was no class struggle, nor were there any ruling class/subordinate class social divisions. The concept of 'working people' was in line with Marxist theory, which described 'working people' as all men and women employed in the state, where all institutions and enterprises were socially owned (Dimitrijevic, 1995). As Dimitrijevic explained, to declare oneself as or to officially belong to 'working class' people was a source of power and improved one's possibility for professional advancement, etc. On the other hand, the community of 'citizens' was made up of the rest of the population, considered as individuals who failed to be involved in self-managing organizations and socio-political communities. These individuals (clearly a class of people, analogous to the middle-class in the West) were treated as citizens with inherited bourgeois inadequacy. These people were further categorized according to their occupation, education, and background of belonging to the previous ruling class as well as in reference to their income (e.g. academics, artists, bankers, self-employed proprietors, etc). These 'citizens' could contribute to the society and act significantly upon their own lives only by and with the help of the 'working

people'. Theoretically, citizens were able to act together with working people in neighbourhoods and local communities and to reach electoral power only by being represented by a delegation of 'working people' (Dimitirjevic, 1995).

This system diminished the notion of individuality and emphasized solidarity, belonging to a socialist community and collective decision-making. Indeed, in the former Yugoslav society, the notion of the individual was not considered important, and his/her rights were only recognized within the framework of the collective (Dimitrijevic,1995). An ideal or doctrine of collective and community was deeply embedded in this culture, with the individual and his/her family always treated as being merely a constituent part of the collectivist socialist nation.

Dimitrijevic (1995) noted that an individual existence within the society was stigmatized as 'bourgeois individualism' (p. 69). Thus, individualism was completely neglected, as Dimitrijevic underlined, by denial of or restrictions on one's individual rights, so that a person was allowed to live only within the framework of the collective. Indeed, there was an absolute emphasis on collective suppression of differences, individuality, autonomy and religion. For example, socialist duties were implemented by acts and regulations, where each individual was enabled to decide on his/her own personal and common interests only within an organization of associated labour (a company), a local community or any other aspect of socialist society based on self-management.

The socialistic regime was deeply rooted in the collectivistic identity of peoples from the Balkans. Even the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) and the policies of unity, equality and brotherhood of all peoples that were implemented in the former Yugoslavia mirrored the collectivistic identity within the system. Indeed, the YPA was held up as a symbol of progress, trustworthiness and safety. Thus, the whole system and its institutions created the framework for basic trust and such a framework brought about the transformation of every individual psyche. This psychological transformation was evident for generations after WWII, during Tito's so-called pioneer-socialist years (Pupovac,

1995). Such a powerful psychological shift among the masses, communities and families aggravated the very specific psychological sense of community. As Pupovac noted, this mass psychological structure represented the sense of belonging or embodiment of the Yugoslav nation, while ties with the nation corresponded to family ties.

More specifically, a strong sense of belonging to the socialist community and a sense of patriotism were embodied in glorification of the YPA, which consisted of professional soldiers and 'volunteers'. The 'volunteers' were all males aged between 18 and 27 years old, from all ethnic backgrounds and from all states and autonomous provinces of the former Yugoslavia. Every male in the former Yugoslavia had a duty to serve in the army for twelve months and after this active army service to remain available for further recruitment until the age of 55. Therefore, the YPA was not only a symbol of political correctness but was primarily a symbol of unity – a symbolic or psychological representation of a united Yugoslavia itself. This psychology of dogmatic symbolism (a highly illiberal and naive belief system) created the illusion that every crisis in the country could be overcome or controlled by the actions of the YPA (Dimitirejvic, 1995). This ideological doctrine and collectivistic rhetoric existed for decades and greatly influenced not only individual thinking and decision-making, but also family dynamics. For instance, there were loose boundaries between the private/family domain and the public/economic and political sphere. Indeed, family dynamics and roles were wholly influenced or determined by the socio-political system and its policies.

Furthermore, Pupovac (1995) also suggested that Tito, as the national leader and the chief commander of the army, was not only the symbolic father of the nation but also served as the symbolic father figure of every community and family. In this way the specific dynamic existed where the less agency over the individual life a member of the masses had, the stronger was his/her identification with the leader, and the stronger was his or her childish need to rely on someone, to be one with the leader. Similar dynamics exist in the West, however, the dynamic present in the Former Yugoslavia is significantly

different from the individualistic-Westernised notion of psychological sense of community.

A psychological sense of community (PSOC) has been defined as "the perception of similarity to others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure" (Sarason, 1974, p. 157). Such a psychological sense of community could be considered to be either locality based or connected to relational communities (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) at both the individual and the collective level (Sonn & Fisher, 1996). In this sense, PSOC refers not only to a sense of belonging to a particular location, area or neighbourhood, but also to the community of interests, such as work settings, clubs and religious communities. When providing such a foundation on which to build and understand communities, McMillan and Chavis (1986) clarified four elements on which PSOC depends: i) membership (which refers to feelings of belonging or emotional safety while sharing rights and responsibilities); ii) influence, in relation to a group (as a sense of causing a difference to group members and allowing them to have equal levels of influence); iii) integration and fulfilment of needs (which refers to a collective sense of togetherness within community), and iv) shared emotional connectedness with similar experiences, history and common geography and architectural heritage. However, the very foundations of such a sense of membership, influence, integration and sharing are individuality and a sense of agency over personal life.

The collectivist homogenization, diminished individuality, newly developed ideals and unrealistic trust in the YPA, as well as a magnified personal bond with the nation's leader were the very foundations of the political and psychological growth of new waves of nationalism which shaped much of the later violence, national hatred and war in the Balkans region (Pupovac, 1995). Such phenomena may therefore provide an answer to the question of why peoples from the former Yugoslavia could not recognize the patterns that would lead them to disaster – a nationalistic and religious war that would last for more

than five years. As Pupovac suggests, the majority of these people did not recognize, at least not in time, how communism, after almost 50 years of ideological indoctrination, was being gradually replaced by a poisonous nationalism. This nationalism was able to flourish so rapidly because of the deeply rooted collective identity, which had been a part of the history of all the peoples in the Balkans for centuries. As another academic from the region, Puhovski (1995 p. 124) has pointed out:

… for decades society was indoctrinated with collectivistic rhetoric … it was relatively easy to transform one form of collectivist ideology into another, even if it was distant in content, so long as the collectivist nature of the ideology was preserved. Therefore, ethno-national collectivism was almost tailor-made to replace the old ideological schema.

As the health of the supreme leader of this modern Yugoslavia started to deteriorate so too did the federal institutions. When Tito died in 1980 there was a genuine national outpouring of grief for the loss of the head of the collectivistic state and the leader of the Yugoslav Army. The subsequent disintegration of the Yugoslavia he had held together occurred in three distinct stages over the following twelve and a half years (Janic, 1995). The first stage, according to Janic, involved the disintegration of the single-party system; the second stage saw the introduction of the multi-party election system in 1990, with the rapid development of nationalism. The third or final stage of disintegration was the civil war in Slovenia and Croatia from June 1991 until the eruption of war in Bosnia &Herzegovina in April 1992. This was also a time when the Warsaw Pact collapsed and Yugoslavia lost its strategic importance to the US government, which was preoccupied with the Gulf War. This meant the beginning of the end of the doctrine of Brotherhood and Unity, and very shortly after the death of its leader Yugoslavia was embroiled in a horrendous series of bloody internal conflicts.

As Necak (1995 p. xii) observed:

When Yugoslavia was swept by the wave of social and political change brought about by the demise of communism in Eastern Europe, these tensions surfaced and eventually erupted into a bloody ethnic and religious war. The post communist 'redefinition' of Yugoslavia in the form of a new federation was no longer feasible, and the recognition of full political independence of those constituent republics seeking national sovereignty became inevitable.

This was also the time when Europe began to unify in a new democracy. However, the sheer barbarity of the Yugoslav war, the fact that this nationalist strife and hatred had given rise to such violence on European soil in the late twentieth century reawakened European powers, which were forced to acknowledge the force of historical realities that had been ignored for so long. Initially, however, the tragedy engulfing the people of the former Yugoslavia was merely observed by the major European powers at the time, as mankind stood on the threshold of a new world order. Indeed, at the time Europe was faced with two parallel realities: the West and East of Europe. In the West there was peaceful economic and political prosperity, while the East was being consumed by hatred as neighbour fought neighbour in bloodthirsty conflicts. The powerful words of the prize-winning author Ivo Andric (1945, p. 55), quoted in part below, remind us that it is imperative that the world community recognize and always remember the existence of that dual reality, if such a conflict is never to be repeated, and those poisoned by hatred are not dragged into a vicious war by:

that swirling current which passed from dumb animal fear to suicidal enthusiasm, from the lowest impulses of bloodlust and pillage to the greatest and most noble of sacrifices, wherein man for a moment touches the sphere of greater worlds with other laws? Never, can that be told, for those who saw and lived through it have lost the gift of words and those who are dead can tell not tales. Those are things which are not told, but forgotten. For were they not forgotten, how could they be repeated?

This research project aims to listen to such wisdom and to help others to remember and understand, without despair, the abysses of trauma and human existence. With compassion and determination, it is hoped that those concerned by the effects of such trauma can face the challenges knowingly and learn further about family contexts within the Balkan puzzle.

2.2.1. Family contexts: family structure and relationships within the Balkans maze

As mentioned earlier, the cultural and historical milieu of the Balkans (the territory of the Former Yugoslavia) involves a mentality of conflict across national divisions, and an enormous experience of irregularity (Kitromilides, 1996). The irregularity and disorder associated with this region of the world (caused by frequent occupations and civil wars,

which have occurred every 30–50 years for centuries) are quite the opposite of 'civilised life in the European Northwest' (Kitromilides, 1996 p.163) and light-years away from the Anglo-Celtic Australian experience. Thus, there is no single form of family composition or unitary family pattern in the territory known as the former Yugoslavia region. Indeed, this very diversity has greatly influenced family structure. The religious roots of families from the territory of the former Yugoslavia, regardless of the confessions of faith of these families, all consist of a mixture of pagan and Christian beliefs and practices (Mitterauer, 1996). Indeed, many family rituals, especially those related to family health, have pagan origins and are borrowed or they derive from Illyrian, Greco-Roman, Slavic and Turkish culture. A common characteristic of the majority of the families from the former Yugoslavia is to treat the Church, though considering it an important institution, not so much as a representation of the particular religion but rather as place for social functions such as celebrations of births, marriages, deaths or other major holidays. The church has primarily been positioned as a pillar of national identification within a family from the Balkans. As Mitterauer (1996) elaborates, the relationship between the family household and the local parish was significantly different in the Balkans from that for countries in the rest of middle and western European. Due to a number of foreign occupations and wars in this region, the development of the parish as the fundamental territorial and community unit did not take place in the area known as the former Yugoslavia.

It is well recognized in the literature that in the West, the whole system of primary education was connected to the parish and was further closely connected with the social life of families. Moreover, in the West, marital and familial norms, canonical law and rules especially concerning marriage were also enforced by the parish. On the other hand, the five centuries of Ottoman rule over the Balkans region certainly weakened the Christian communities, thus strengthening the cult of the household that has been recognized as a phenomenon of many oppressed religious groups (Mitterauer, 1996). Psychological oppression, according to Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996, p.130.) refers to

the internalized view of self as negative and as not deserving more resources or increased participation in societal affairs, resulting from the use of affective, behavioural, cognitive, linguistic and cultural mechanisms designed to solidify political domination.

Thus, the cult of households from the Balkans, according to Mitterauer (1996) and Kitromilides (1996) refers to the distinctive household formation patterns with the inheritance system playing a key role. This inheritance system included the ideology of the *zadruga*, the South Slav extended family household, and the model of a prototypical household headed by a father residing together with his married sons and their associated nuclear families in a social unit. Such a patriarchal household in the early 19th century is depicted in the literature as having continued, with modifications, among more prosperous households, up to the time of World War II. A man's key kin ties were primarily to father and secondarily to brothers, as they carried on tradition, religious customs and rituals, education and training in traditional skills for future generations.

Moreover, institutions such as schools, courts and churches were largely absent at the local level in the Balkans region until the second half of the eighteenth century. Important in this respect seems to be the fact that the central focus of religious life within families was the worship of the ancestors. Indeed, though the religious influences of Islam and Christianity have remained powerful, at the same time this influence has been relatively superficial. The focus was patriarchal family clans which had their own burial and cemetery rituals and customs with the notion of transcendence of death embedded in conscious community ties. In this respect in the entire Balkans region, penetration into private life by institutions such as the feudal lord, the church and the state has remained extremely weak over the centuries (Mitteauer, 1996). These traditions and customs make the situation within families in the Balkans profoundly different from that of the patriarchal family structures in the rest of Europe. Indeed, Mitteauer has pointed out that the commonly understood concepts of a patriarchal regime or patriarchal culture are too general to provide a full understanding of these patterns in the Balkans.

The historical circumstances outlined above have created specific phenomena relating to families from the Balkans, with familial social forms such as joint family

households, neighbourhoods emerging almost as part of extended families as well as kinship groups. Puhar (1994 p.2) highlighted that families from the former Yugoslavia belong to:

a culture of joint families, known as zadrugas, as the basic family unit. These communal families, characteristic throughout all former Yugoslavia, except Slovenia, differ significantly from the conjugal families which we are familiar with in most of Europe; they involved several biological families living and working together, with men never leaving their native homes and with the eldest man functioning as the leading authority. Predominant features of this type of family life were therefore enormous resistance to change and fear of innovation

Puhar (1994) further observed that the very dynamic of this traditional family life included raising of children, particularly boys, with the strong pressure to avoid expressing feelings of affection, vulnerability or dependency; this was accompanied at the same time by a strong pressure to express feelings of strength, force against and dominance over commonly understood legitimate targets.

These phenomena further led to the specific conditions of family structures, for instance the situation where the family as a group would autonomously exercise justice. This 'justice' might include blood vengeance, the right or duty to kill members of one 's own household, or it could take different forms, with the right to impose various types of punishment on other members of the family. Mitterauer (1996) cited examples where conflicts like this would last for decades or even a century. Such families were representing not only their own religious and judiciary practices but also exercised economic power in a highly agricultural region which operated according to the so-called Byzantine agrarian system until WWII. Indeed, it is important to consider that after WWII, 83 per cent of the population of Tito's Yugoslavia was rural and a family represented a unit for the organization of work, with every family member a labourer with a specific role or task, thus the family was considered as an economic or financial unit (Vojnic, 1995). Within this financial unit, and with life over centuries analogous to constant warfare, women

had not only to maintain the household but also to work on the land and the farm in order not only to provide goods for economic survival but also to demonstrate that they were worthy of or in line with their men's courage (Puhar, 1994).

Puhar (1994) underlined the fact that constant warfare affected gender roles. As men where seen to die gloriously, women were degraded, and though it was considered that their role was primarily to do housework and maintain domestic life, these activities were not considered equal to those of the men, therefore they felt degraded and enslaved within the communal families.

In such circumstances, the family composition was structured by kinship and tribal connectedness, creating a framework of values and meanings that has underpinned the collective attitudes and legitimisation of patriarchal individual choices (Kitromilidies, 1996). These forms of behaviour, in a patriarchal social order based on dominance and a clear preference for sons, provided strong limitations for one family member to achieve a degree of personal independence, to be treated as an individual.

As such, the dynamics and structure of these families have remained relatively intact and powerful, even in the twentieth century, and seem to be incompatible with notions of individual responsibility or guilt (Kitromilidies, 1996). A sense of responsibility or guilt was expressed instead at the communal family level. More specifically, Puhar (1994) calls this phenomenon an 'undeveloped sense of individuality' and explained this process within the psychodynamics of the Yugoslav family. She further suggested that a communal patriarchal type of life was the unconscious model for the organization of the Yugoslav federal state, with Tito as great patriarch of the nation. Thus, regardless of the fact that the structure of the Yugoslav family and relationships within those

families may differ substantially from one region of the territory of the Former Yugoslavia to another, the literature (e.g. Kitromilidies, 1996: Puhar, 1994) suggests that there are common specific conditions, value system and communication patterns across the three nationalities i.e. Croatian, Bosnian Muslim and Serbian.

For example, active participation in community life has been very important for Croatian families (Tkalcevic, 1980). According to Tkalcevic, every family/community member discusses local issues and there have hardly been any events which have not been commented on by members of the community, with particular satisfaction being gained from criticizing and disagreeing with authorities. Tkalcevic has also highlighted the fact that individuals in Croatian communities have always been seen as acting on behalf of their families and not just on behalf of themselves. Thus, as Tkalcevic observed, any responsibility arising from an individual action has been regarded as responsibilities or obligations which have had to be met by his/her family. Tkalcevic further elaborated that despite the fact that revenge or vendetta was not common among Croatian families across most regions, this phenomenon did exist in Croatian families from the eastern mountains region of Croatia. Thus, according to the author, the perceived injustice or experienced insult against each member of the family was not only a responsibility for existing family members but also for their children and their children's children.

Therefore, the development and structure of the socialist regime and the later efforts by Tito's apparatus to develop a modern state have had no great impact upon the familial and tribal roots of life (especially in the mountain region, for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Metohija). Even

the fact that in the1970s, the former Yugoslavia was categorized by United Nations (UN) criteria as being a country that was rapidly developing (Vojnic, 1995), in stark contrast with this perceived modernity, the Balkans' family structure and family relationships were strongly defined by historical inheritance and deeply influenced by memories, traditions and stereotypes.

The researcher's own observations, education and life experience in the territory of the Former Yugoslavia, have led her to recognise that the average family in the former Yugoslavia had a strong family structure (generally based on a patriarchal hierarchy with clear roles for everyone) and very firm emotional boundaries (for instance, the father was a figure of authority within the family – his word was final, and he was disciplinary and ethically supportive and connected with his children. On the other hand, the mother/wife was less demonstrative. Her role was to nurture and care for all family members, including the husband). Every family served as a mirror of society, reflecting its main values, strengths and weaknesses. Children were the pride or the disgrace of their family, a joy or a disappointment. They were the reason for being, the source of happiness, of fulfilment, and the symbols of the continuation of the family heritage. Here, heritage is defined as a family's dignity, its stories and its family history.

Family tradition and dignity has always been the key to acceptance by society in the Balkans, in this researcher's experience. Thus who one is in these communities is inextricably linked with the question of whom one belongs to. Who are your parents or ancestors? The answer to that would be one's surname, and so the surname itself would be a label of recognition. One's surname has been a code for a generational connectedness and family dynamics (including conflicts and/or

harmony) that have shaped not only family values, but also political and social status.

Thus, despite the rise of the feminist movement and the rebirth of the middle class in Yugoslavia, these historical roles and values have remained deeply woven into the fabric of the Slavic society. These values and connectedness were partially a result, too, of the economic dependence on the Socialist state, the poor public services – (inferior tradespeople, cars, taxi services etc.) and the unpredictable Communist Party leadership. These factors affected everyone, regardless of education, profession or economic status. For example, it was crucial for family survival to know whose cousin was a plumber, electrician, lawyer, police officer or politician. It was equally important to know whose mother or sister had skills in fashion design, nursing, teaching and baking. Friends and relatives were always asked for advice when buying a house or a car. Older family members and friends were also supportive when someone was looking for employment, university or school enrolment etc.

Therefore, 'connections' were vital for family welfare. This family-community interdependence was predominant in the collectivist, socialist former Yugoslavia. Family values were lived intensively and inherited not only through patriarchal hierarchy, great expectations and emotional connectedness within a family, but also through family tradition, rituals and storytelling. Thus, at the outset of this project it was the belief of the researcher that many families who had sought refuge in Australia from the last war in the Balkans were coping with the loss of love, support and laughter that they had experienced through listening to the stories of their grandfathers and through participating in discussions with neighbours and

relatives about intense political and social issues, often raised by watching 'the box'- TV. That box might almost be seen as a family member itself!

The evidence from the literature and the researcher's own experience therefore suggests that the Balkans family context is very specific and the family from this region has been strongly influenced not only by the stories and customs of grandfathers but also by the obstructive and conservative force of history and socio-psychological and political confusion. A reconstruction or exploration of these factors is therefore necessary in order to develop adequate psychological knowledge of the families from the Balkans' now living in diasporas. The experience of exile and the notion of refugeehood aggravated by war and trauma will be defined in the next stage of this journey.

2.3   The labyrinth: refugees from the former Yugoslavia

The idea of a labyrinth or its metaphor exists in all religious traditions and in various forms around the world and involves the process of exploring alternative paths to the source of being. This concept of a multi-course maze can be useful in attempting to represent the interacting paths that the traveller has to explore. Travelling through a labyrinth involves a range of emotions, from a sense of deepest loss and sorrow to the realisation of joy. By entering this mysterious and perhaps threatening concept of labyrinth, the inexperienced traveller may have the opportunity to engage in an open-ended exploration of his/her perceived and experienced isolation, of his/her social networks; such an excursion might also assist in an understanding of how this labyrinth can also serve as a place to find focus and a mode for recovery, adjustment and renewal.

There are various definitions of 'refugee' in the literature (e.g. Boyle, Halfacree & Robinson, 1998: Momartin, et al., 2002; Nyers, 1999: Porter & Haslam, 2001; Rajaram, 2002; Refugee Council of Australia-RCOA, 2006). A refugee, in this research, is taken to mean a displaced person who was forced to leave his/her home in order to ensure safety of

self/or family. Such a person has experienced political, psychological and/or physical persecution due to his/her religion, ethnicity or marriage and has sought refuge in a foreign country (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees –UNHCR, 1951).

The arrival of refugees in Australia has been a pervasive feature of its history and has thus been the focus of much research (Jupp, 2002). In the past five decades, over 600 000 refugees and displaced people have been resettled in Australia (Refugee Council of Australia-RCOA, 2006). The constant flows of refugees (into Australia and other Westernized countries), with their increasingly complex and varied situations, have consistently been classified numerically and approached in crisis terms, without reference to their social and historical circumstances, which make their situation credible (Nyers, 1999). It is not only the number of refugees that constantly increases (which, according to the UNHCR has grown from 1.5 million in 1951 to over 45 million registered refugees in 2009), but the conditions and the circumstances that force such mass movements have also multiplied throughout the world (Nyers, 1999).

Specific refugee experiences may vary according to the socio-political and cultural context of the host society (Sonn & Fisher, 2005). Thus, refugees' subjective explanations of exile can be important determinants for successfully dealing with resettlement in a new country. However, the credibility of such subjective explanations has often been undermined because of the socio-economic interests and politics of the host societies. For example, statistics on refugee influx are usually subjected to negotiations and adjustments between humanitarian organizations, Westerns governments, their local authorities etc, and such negotiation usually deals with numbers, evidence of conflicts and oppression but not with people (Polingy, Doray & Martin, 2007). More specifically, Pedersen, Clarke, Dudgeon and Griffiths (2005) argued that community racism has been encouraged as a result of the stance of the Australian Government and its policies, where refugees did not have adequate education and health support in Australia, but were expected to be a new labour force in the country. There is also a large body of research (e.g. Colic-Peisker,

2000; Keel & Drew, 2004; Rajaram, 2002) that indicates various socio-psychological and structural issues related to negative and biased attitudes towards refugees on the part of Australian policies and practices. For example, regardless of the stance of the government, the Australian community generally has held negative attitudes and false beliefs about refugees, who are usually seen as insufficient or dysfunctional individuals who seem to have problems for the government or the community (Pedersen, et al, 2005). This researcher, however, will argue that considerations of the above circumstances are particularly important when working with refugees. On the basis of her observations, her education and her life in mainstream Australia as well as her experience with ethnic communities she will maintain that there is not enough emphasis on refugees' strength, at the individual level but also at the family and community level. Unless refugees and their problems are viewed in this wider perspective, the perception that refugees are unable to adapt and have no resilience is magnified.

The literature reviewed for this research project identifies the largest group of refugees to enter Australia as part of the humanitarian program in the past fifteen years as coming from the area known as the former Yugoslavia (Jupp, 2002). After Yugoslavia was dissolved as a political unit in the wars of 1991–95, refugee families fleeing from the national/religious divides embodied in these wars began to arrive in Australia (Colic-Peisker, 2000). These refugee families who escaped from national/religious conflict identify themselves as belonging to three constitutive ethnic groups: Bosnian Muslims, Croatians and Serbians. However, a large number of these refugee families consist of ethnically mixed marriages, i.e. one where the partners have different ethnicities, and this fact has impacted greatly on their experience of the war, displacement and resettlement. Since such ethnically mixed marriages are common in people from the former Yugoslavia, it is argued here that there is a need to look more closely into the interconnection between adaptation to the multicultural host society and psychological acculturation.

2.3.1 Psychological acculturation and adjustment

Where do I belong?
A bridge had collapsed
Behind me
All washed out
No way to cross over
Cut off from the people who
Matter to me
Here are bits of me that cannot fit in a new pattern
I hold onto the memory
It links me to the other side
Of the river
I hold on tight to it
Like a child who treasures
Her doll

Shah (2000)

Psychological acculturation involves changes in identification, attitudes and values, the acquisition of new social skills and norms as well as adaptation to a changed environment (Berry, 1992). This process affects individuals and groups from different cultural backgrounds and reflects changes such as stress due to a clash of values when subject to those of the dominant culture in the new society (Berry, 1992). Adaptation is defined as the range of strategies used during the acculturation. This is equivalent to adjustment, which can be identified as the direction taken to reduce conflict between a group or an individual and the new environment (Berry, 1992). Such adjustment exemplifies a high level of autonomy and sense of environmental mastery.

Berry (1997) also explained that the core of everyday adaptation consists of values of cultural maintenance (the extent to which migrants consider their cultural identity important) and values of cultural interaction/ relationship with the host society. These two factors determine acculturation strategies, which are defined by Berry as assimilation, integration, marginalization and separation. An assimilation strategy refers to a devaluation of the original cultural values while seeking to interact with members of the host society. A separation strategy refers to a tendency to hold the original culture on a higher level while avoiding interaction with other groups, particularly with members of the host society (Berry, 1997). An integration strategy includes a positive attitude towards the maintenance of one's cultural heritage as well as interaction with members of the host

society. Marginalization, on the other hand, includes little or no interest in cultural maintenance as well as avoidance of interaction with members of the host society (Berry, 1997).

The preferred strategy of acculturation may or may not be permitted by the dominant group in society (Sonn & Fisher, 2005). Therefore, it is important to take into account the nature of cross-cultural contacts and, particularly, the degree of acceptance and openness towards newcomers by members of the host society as well as the possibilities for integration. For example, Markovic and Manderson (2000) explored patterns of refugee experience in 52 refugee women with a mean age less than 30 years who were born in the former Yugoslavia and who came to Australia. The data, derived from in-depth interviews, revealed disruptions of self-identity, socialization and unemployment among highly educated refugee women. Non-recognition of overseas qualifications, regardless of the women's educational credentials and skills, led to economic disadvantages and resulted in difficulties in finding even manual or unskilled employment. Such circumstances lessen the capacity for adaptation in the host society and give rise to perceived discrimination (Markovic & Manderson, 2000). In addition, it was reported that women resorted to informal networks (close friends) as a coping strategy to reconstruct their value system, status and identities. This study also indicates that reconsideration should be given to gender as an influencing factor in acculturation practices and outcomes: it was found that the perceived truth that men adjusted more successfully to migration was not the case for the refugees from the former Yugoslavia examined in this study.

Furthermore, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2003) reported that unemployment and the marginalization of communities were important factors influencing refugees' adjustment in Australia. A grounded theory approach in this qualitative study provided an insight into the resettlement services and acculturation issues concerning more than 200 refugees from the Horn of Africa and the former Yugoslavia. The data, derived from in-depth interviews, focus groups and participants' observations, suggested that a refugee's

resettlement style was influenced by the refugee's own resources, but primarily by the mainstream society and its ideology and policies. Overall, this study illustrates how the Australian Government (formally or informally) relied on the support of ethnic communities in the provision of settlement services (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003).

Successful resettlement in a new country is the foundation of multiculturalism (Berry, 2001). Berry introduces the construct of multiculturalism as being recognition of the complex diversity of a pluralistic society which highly values cultural maintenance and shared concerns that link all people, regardless of their differences. On the other hand, Mullay (2002) pointed out that the term multiculturalism designates the emergence of distinctive cultures or unequal cultures in terms of power. Culture can be understood as shared knowledge, experience, beliefs and meaning (Marshall & Wolett, 2000), and can be viewed through cultural groups (Pedersen, 1994). Cultural groups can be defined not only through ethnographic variables (religion, language, ethnicity and nationality), or demographic variables (age, gender and place or residence), but also through status variables such as educational and socio-economic background and formal and informal affiliation (Pederson, 1994). In this sense, multiculturalism assumes that these variables operate independently of one another, positioning people in ethnic, gender and class groups with unique identities and with no interactions occurring among these variables (Mullay, 2002).

The above arguments underline how adaptation interweaves in the identity process. The concept of identity in this research is derived from the theory of social interactions, where the identity is created within a particular social context and within a specific historical period (Breakwell, 1986). According to this approach the structure of identity is a dynamic social process, an interaction of the capacities for memory and consciousness with the physical and societal characteristics that influence the social context. There are two dimensions to the structure of identity: the content and the value dimension. As illustrated by Breakwell (1986), the content dimension comprises

characteristics that define identity as social identity (interpersonal networks, status, groups, memberships and inter-group relations) and as personal identity (values, attitudes, cognitive style). At the same time, the value dimension is an on-going revision of the system of social values. As such, the identity structure cannot be distinguished from the social and personal identity (Breakwell, 1986).

The importance in identity reconstruction of personal resources and social context within a particular historical period is well addressed in a study conducted in Australia by Colic-Peisker and Walker (2003). The authors explored processes of acculturation and identity reconstruction through observations and semi-structured interviews with 35 refugees and 25 settlement workers who had come to Australia from Bosnia and Herzegovina (former Yugoslavia). The results of this study suggest that the chosen coping strategies for identity reconstruction are determined by social structures and social processes, over which immigrants and refugees, as minority groups, have little or no control (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). This study revealed that refugee status was synonymous with undesirable refugee identity. It was reported that refugees did not succeed in reconstruction of their identities where continuity and self-esteem were threatened or even lost. Colic-Peisker and Walker's findings underline the notion of community connectedness and practical support in the participants' culture as a main source of strength for identity reconstruction.

The dynamic context of exclusion and difference emerges as a common feature of the above studies. The nature of cross-cultural contact and the resulting identity reconstruction seems to be influenced not only by non-dominant group choices but primarily by the dominant groups in the host society. Therefore, the above results are disturbing. They indicate a lack of integration and reconstruct refugees' experiences as disconnected. Their identities have been shattered and their experiences are predominantly of loss and failure. Such perceptions and interpretations of the refugee social realities in Australia have been accompanied by memories of refugee and war experience before

arrival. This interaction between refugees' personal resources surrounded by their anguished memories and internalised remorse and their experience of social influences and restrictions creates a powerful conjunction. With such limited information on the psychological impact of war and trauma on refugee families, this indicates the importance of an exploration of refugee adaptation processes that goes beyond an approach to individual human rights, and issues of resettlement and health.

2.4 War and trauma in the territory of the former Yugoslavia

This section maps the conceptual terrain of war, trauma and recovery. However, it does not establish fixed boundaries within which the traveller is compelled to undertake their journey; rather it seeks to indicate reflective and critical avenues along which the traveller may continue to wander in search of a deeper understanding of how refugee families exist and have existed in the aftermath of war.

In this study, the word war is used to refer to an armed conflict between three ethnic, national, political and religious groups, which have attempted to take over an entire country or to gain independence from that particular country (Krippner & McIntyre, 2003). The wars (1991 – 1999) in the territory of the former Yugoslavia produced 3.7 to 4 million refugees, and the situation has been recognized as one of the greatest human rights crises after World War II (Krippner & McIntyre, 2003; Poulingy, Chasterman & Schnabel, 2007). A campaign of ethnic cleansing started in 1992, supported by military and paramilitary forces, which attacked civilians in their homes, villages and cities throughout the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Basic, 2007).

As Basic (2007) and many other experts suggest, the range and degree of violence which occurred within the wars of the 1990s on the territory of the former Yugoslavia were enormous. The widespread killings and related atrocities included violence against neighbours, friends, families; sabotage, torture, rape, massacres and mass executions. These perpetrations and that variety of the horror including widespread killing and related atrocities are referred to by the term 'mass crimes' (Poulingy, Chasterman & Schnabel,

2007). The mass crimes in the former Yugoslavia context were indeed committed in the immediate domestic and communal environment of the perpetrators, and frequently involved neighbours, relatives, school friends and colleagues. Thus, the necessity to disaggregate the category of perpetrators has been crucial in understanding the complexity of war and trauma for people from the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Basic, 2007; Poulingy, Chasterman & Schnabel, 2007).

For example, Basic's (2007) anthropological research reveals that the experiences of the perceived victims, perpetrators and bystanders in the conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia and its successor states were very heterogeneous. It was almost impossible to draw a clear line between victims, perpetrators and bystanders. Basic collected biographical stories of former combat soldiers in the wars in the former Yugoslavia with the aim of analysing the formation of violence (readiness to fight and kill) and the formation of new identifications after the war. Her findings highlighted the importance of defending or protecting one's belonging to a particular family, country and nation. Moreover, Basic's analysis suggested that all soldiers in the conflict identified more strongly with the other soldiers than they did with their family and that fighting and dying was easier for them to deal with than the suffering they experienced in returning to "normal' life after the war.

Basic's analysis therefore appears to show that, irrespective of their nationality or ethnic origin, the soldiers as a group had more in common with each other than with their fellow citizens. During and after the war, they were forced to find shelter in overpopulated refugee camps, with poor hygiene, shortages of food and water; others were detained in concentration camps and exposed to torture and violence. It was in these camps that the horror for thousands of people really began. It was within the concentration camps, but also in the refugee camps, that women were made pregnant by their torturers and men were raped and tortured by their neighbours (Gutman, 1993; Othenin-Girard, 1997; Richter-Lyonette, 1997). So the people who had survived exodus from areas torn by war then had

to live in the new nations that were born in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. These new refugees were now stigmatized by their own people and treated as an unexpected burden without solution.

Thus, the psychological impact of the trauma experienced by the refugees from the former Yugoslavia has been multiple and diverse, arising first from war combat, then from exodus, as well as from the genocide perpetrated between families and social groups, and between urban and rural dwellers (Poulingy, Chasterman & Schnabel 2007 p.33). The word genocide has been used here in accordance with the definition used by the UN General Assembly Resolution 260 (III) A, 9 December 1948, where genocide refers to killing or causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of a group, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction in whole or in part of that group, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, forcibly transferring children of the group to another group, with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.

It should be added here that within the context of the former Yugoslavia, genocide also included massive exodus of families and communities, and forced rapes caused pregnancies in a deliberate attempt to create a new biological-ethnic law of 'purity and non purity'(Agger, 1996, p. 121) where impure refers to humiliation and shame – trauma. The pain of psychological trauma refers to:

… an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force ... Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning
(Herman, 1997, p. 33).

Herman's (1997) notion of psychological trauma includes the concept of war trauma, where the effects of war are defined as severe, prolonged and massive exposure to threats to life or bodily integrity. In this study, war trauma refers to:

- exposure to physical violence, imprisonment, systematic torture, rape, hunger and/or attempts at deliberate extermination, and/or

- witnessing violence and death, leading to feelings of intense fear, loss of control and experience of destruction during the war.

However, a further dimension of moral, psychological and physical suffering occurs when people are forced to fall further into the abyss of humiliation and violence – to become refugees. This study focuses on this notion of refugee trauma, where subjects are affected by forced uprooting, deportation, escape, starvation and temporary reduction to nothing but the actual physical self. The physical self becomes 'speechless and without agency, a physical entity' (Rajaram, 2002, p. 251). Such trauma triggers feelings of deepest loss: loss of home, family member, community ties, or loss of identity. Consequently, subjects experience a deep feeling of loss of existential meaning. This is followed by a feeling of hopelessness and chronic uncertainty within an insecure environment. The prolonged and extremely dehumanising uncertainty removes people's capacity for self-determination and self-efficacy and has profound implications on their mental health (Pedersen, Clarke, Dudgeon & Griffiths, 2005). As Carlos et al (1993) emphasized the effect of refugeehood or uprooting is a continuation of genocide and torture and refers to massive losses together with a sense of depersonalization and helplessness, where feelings of mourning dominate a person's inner world. Exodus and uprooting are often experienced as a psychological death of the person. As Malkki (2007) elaborated, the experience of exodus usually transforms the meaning of history and of belonging, and quite often refugee camps have been converted into the sites where further traumatic experiences, memory, nightmares and rumours of violence shape and reshape the moral and ethical categories of good and evil. Such horror, according to Malkki, leads to further disturbances.

More specifically, people's mental health when they are living as refugees could be affected by disintegration of their cognitions, memories and emotions (Herman, 1997). While for the majority of refugees trauma continues long after the initial circumstances have changed, (Mares, 2002: Rajaram, 2002; Silove, et al, 2002), the disintegration, as Herman suggested, tends to be disconnected from the actual events and to take on a life of

its own. For example, refugees may remember the past experience as a traumatic intrusion, numbness and/or in overwhelming affective responses such as fear, rage, grief and guilt. This process further produces a complex set of these interactive physical and emotional responses which are called traumatic stress reactions. While stress stretches beyond limits a person's everyday capacity to deal with their demands and resources, trauma confronts a person with situations that exceed and overwhelms their coping capacity.

Traumatic stress reactions are results of aroused feelings of fear and anger, altered snapshots of events that may not reproduce the reality with indelibly frozen memories (Herman, 1997; Resick, Monson & Rizvi, 2008). Over time, these reactions may produce a range of cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioural responses. As the authors elaborate, cognitive responses consist of difficulties with memory, lack of concentration, poor judgment and inability to make choices. Emotional responses could be manifested through withdrawal, flashbacks, and feelings of helplessness, fears and generalized anxiety. The emotions might be further manifested in responses such as a loss of control, loss of connection and meaning. All these can be accompanied by physical responses, and psychosomatic complaints. All these responses may then lead to specific behaviour (responses) which often include irritability, hyper-alertness and communication difficulties. These responses are conceptualized in a variety of different ways and according to Herman they are specified in the three main clusters: hyper-arousal, intrusion and constrictions.

Hyper-arousal refers to a person's permanent state of alertness and fear of danger that might recur at any time. An individual suffering from this symptom tends to be easily irritated, have trouble sleeping, have nightmares, be hyper-vigilant without a basic sense of safety and security, perceiving danger everywhere (Herman, 1997). Intrusion refers to a state where the traumatised person experiences the inescapable presence of traumatic memories. These traumatic memories do not reflect the usual recall of events, where one remembers the story as a chronological and logically unfolding story. Instead, such

memories include vivid sensations and images without context – this is a static, wordless, timeless memory. According to Herman, a person experiencing this state is reliving the traumatic event as a present experience. These flashbacks might occur any time during sleep or when the person is awake or engaged in other activities. On the other hand, Herman's notion of constriction refers to a shutdown of emotions where the traumatised person responds to overwhelming feelings of helplessness and powerlessness by appearing to be indifferent. Such a person may appear detached and calm and the perceptions of such a person are usually numbed and/or disorientated. Thus the person appears emotionally disengaged, passive, with a distorted sense of time and reality. However, such a response is not fixed as the person usually moves from one post-traumatic stress reaction to another (Herman, 1997). Indeed, it is well recognized in the literature that many refugees or asylum seekers in Australia who have suffered from disturbed memories of past torture and human rights abuses have exhibited crying, nervousness, anxiety or withdrawal (Mares, 2002; Silove, et al, 2002). Such disturbances caused by re-experiencing traumatic events, avoidance or arousal of strong and overwhelming emotions related to traumatic experience may last for at least one month or they could appear after six months for a diagnosis. The symptoms are perceived as distressing or the cause of functional impairment. Such impairment has been strictly diagnosed and categorised by Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV-TR as a post-traumatic stress disorder – PTSD (American Psychiatric Association- APA, 2000).

A great proportion of trauma survivors exhibit symptoms consistent with a PTSD diagnosis immediately after the traumatic events. As the incidence of these symptoms drops substantially within three months after the trauma, the PTSD is diagnosed as being acute – acute stress disorder or ASD (APA,2000). In recent years, in order to asses trauma in more detail and explore the length and nature of traumatic symptoms after the traumatic events, structured interviews have been developed for assess ment (Barlow, 2008). Nevertheless, if the manifestation of symptoms begins six months after the traumatic

event/s or episode/s, then these symptoms become classified as 'delayed onset PTSD' (APA, 2000).

The developed disturbances of cognitive processes following exposure to extreme traumatic stressors include: long-term problems of behaviour, memory, concentration and interpersonal relationships (Herman, 1997; Harms, 2005). Trauma survivors are also at risk of developing depression accompanied by substance abuse, complicated grief reactions, somatic complaints and disturbance in family life (APA, 2000).

Such a diagnosis is at least twofold, as it provides an easily identified checklist of symptoms for an individual and provides generalisation for those included in medical, legal and research processes (Harms, 2005). However, as Harms elaborates, PTSD also serves as a labelling tool within a psychiatric category and indentifies exclusively external sources of causation, from subjective experience of trauma and inner sources of psychiatric disturbance. Such a widespread application of the PTSD diagnosis has given rise to enormous criticism over the years as the diagnosis focuses only on a clinical approach or the cognitive experience of distress, ignoring the vast historical, socio-political, spiritual and meaning disturbance of effects of trauma (Harman, 2005).

Moreover, as Miller (2004) has specifically highlighted, despite denials in the the field and among the experts, clinical work is inherently and crucially a form of moral engagement with moral objectives such as reduction of emotional pain, promotion of greater harmony, love, freedom and peace of mind. However, this engagement, according to Miller, has been expressed through a language of behavioural attributes (e.g. attachment, assertiveness, effectiveness, interpersonal reciprocity, etc.) 'which conceal but do not alter the essential moral nature' of the relationship and the transactions between client and therapist or participants and the researcher.

In essence, to speak of trauma today means almost inevitably to speak of PTSD. Thus, the researcher urges the traveller not to be seduced by Western trends, categories, classifications and epistemological assumptions of and about individuals and families who

have lived through a long siege of violence and poverty. Trauma, as such, obliterates any hegemonistic cultural approach and assumptions. Trauma, as interpreted by this researcher, is a complex interplay between individual and collective stress responses and coping capacities; it is a delicate imbalance between remembering, forgetting emotional pain and reinventing moral questions. During such imbalanced, arrhythmic interplay, the only constant is a person's conscious ability to discard labels and to dismiss categorising of trauma that has been suffered. Thus instead of representing only the tip of the iceberg of the traumatic experience, and labelling injured people and families, including those who have normal reactions to abnormal events, it is crucial to postulate our broad understanding of an emotional disorder in the aftermath of trauma . For the purpose of this study:

A disorder is not normative, but is out of the ordinary, and not necessarily a part of common human experience. For example, feelings of sadness and distress become a disorder when they interfere with our social connectivity and are prolonged and not in relation to, or in proportion to a triggering event. In a similar way happiness and joy too can become a disorder when they interfere with a person's optimal functioning, as in the case of the elevated emotions associated with certain mood disorders...thus whether or not a refugee suffers an emotional disorder after a war experience is not certain but will depend on a variety of factors including, pre-existing emotional strengths, the degree, length and nature of the trauma, and the possibilities for later physical and emotional support.
      (I. Milton, personal communication, September 3, 2009).

      From this platform of understanding of an emotional disorder, it is interesting to consider Tollin and Foa's (2006) quantitative review of 25 years of clinical research in trauma. The primary aim of this study was to examine specific risks that would produce post traumatic stress disorder and gender differences in vulnerability to PTSD. The attempt was to specifically investigate if women and girls were more likely than men and boys to meet diagnostic criteria for PTSD. A comprehensive meta-analytic procedure was followed in order to investigate the clinical sample (n = 454). The sample consisted of individuals who had experienced a range of types of traumatic events (e.g. child sexual abuse, non-sexual abuse or neglect, combat, war, witnessing death, etc) and the results obtained demonstrated that, regardless of the type of study, type of assessment and other methodological variables, women and girls were more likely than men and boys to meet PTSD criteria. It was also observed that female participants reported greater frequency and severity of PTSD than did male participants.

The researchers further reported that the observed gender differences seemed to be more evident when the PTSD assessment was explicitly applied with regard to one specific traumatic event. For example, the article identified 96 comparative studies of PTSD in male and female participants who had experienced combat, war and terrorism as civilians. The findings indicate that there is a significantly greater likelihood of PTSD among female war survivors and refugees than among males. However, gender differences in vulnerability to PTSD in female and male soldiers were not observed. It could be assumed that soldiers in general, and regardless of gender, are well trained and prepared for coping with and especially reporting about traumatic experiences, while civilians, unprepared and unprotected, tend to respond to gender role expectations and coping styles across cultures with regard to vulnerability and resilience in the aftermath of war and refugee trauma.

Moreover, when Tollin and Foa (2006) reviewed the difference in symptom patterns other than those related to PTSD, they reported that male participants were more likely than female participants to exhibit traumatic symptoms other than those related to PTSD. The authors provided an alternative explanation of such observed gender differences in traumatic symptoms, with male participants more likely to exhibit post-traumatic distress in the form of irritability, anger, violent behaviour or reduced interest in everyday life activities. Indeed, when compared with females, male participants were less likely to report internalized disorders such as anxiety or depression, alone or together with co-morbid conditions, but were more likely to report externalized disorders such as conduct disorders or substance abuse disorders, alone or with together with co-morbid conditions. While, the authors emphasized that these findings were not part of the classical PTSD assessment and that further research was needed, with a more precise examination in the field of PTSD, it is important to consider the broader social concept of trauma when exploring the post-traumatic effects in contrast to the narrow clinical dimensions.

While an expanding body of research has challenged the PTSD diagnostic structure, the PTSD diagnostic criteria have not been reviewed for more than a decade (Resick, Monson & Rizvi, 2008). For example, the persistent symptoms of survivors

exposed to prolonged atrocities do not fit exactly within the existing psychiatric diagnostic canon (Herman, 1997). As Herman specified, the somatic symptoms of survivors of war and refugee experience are not in line with the ordinary psychosomatic disorders (Mares, 2002; Rajaram, 2002; Silove at el, 2002). As Herman has highlighted, there is no accurate or comprehensive diagnostic concept for war trauma due to disconnection of context or meaning between the person's current symptoms and the traumatic experience. Indeed, numerous research reports have demonstrated high rates of PTSD in populations exposed to different kinds of trauma all over the globe. According to Herman, these high rates are a reflection of inadequate diagnostic criteria based on clinical, individualistic, Westernised prototypes of combat, rape and disaster (Herman, 1997).

For example, it needs to be understood that the incidences of rape in WWII and in the wars conducted in the former Yugoslavia did not occur merely as outbursts of pathological sexual violence. Rape was deliberately used as a weapon of war. Therefore it will be argued here that those who have survived rape in Bosnia and other areas of war cannot be treated in the same way as any other victim of rape in Australia. There is a political and moral context to the rapes that occurred during the wars in the former Yugoslavia, and it is crucial that this is acknowledged and understood. Rape and torture were systematically used as political tools of terror, aimed not merely at individuals but at their families, friends, communities and the society at large. It was deployed deliberately to break a person and to break his or her family and to break society through a circle of humiliation, shame, silence and dehumanisation. It should be noted that after the war in Yugoslavia, for the very first time in the history of International Humanitarian Law, the Geneva Convention acknowledged that rape was a war crime or an instrument of torture or inhuman treatment (Mutschaler, 1996, p.109). Within the ideology of ethnic purity, what Agger (1996) has referred to as inter-ethnic rape and the pregnancies that resulted from such rapes, producing children of mixed ethnic origin, were used deliberately as a strategy of power, that would lead to psychological and social destruction of the victims (Agger,

1996; Mutschler, 1996). Thus, according to the experts from the field who worked with victims of rape and torture, the understanding of how these events were related to the ethnicity and political and historical background of the victims and the perpetrators has been absolutely crucial during sessions and therapies with these people. Cure and recovery would be impossible within the local westernised individualistic approach to therapy as process, where therapist should remain neutral and should not mix therapy and politics.

According to the Western diagnostic system, (including assessments conducted by ECTF, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO) almost the total population from the territory of the former Yugoslavia is suffering from a post-traumatic stress epidemic and there is intergenerational transmission of pathological responses. While this diagnostic system has failed to provide an effective solution for such a phenomenon it has certainly succeeded in providing simplistic, ideologically coloured explanations of the conflict, describing an ethnic group or even an entire population as inherently belligerent and violent (Poligny, Chesterman & Schnabel, 2007). Reflecting on the experience of the Balkans in the light of his long-term work in anthropology and his expertise in psychiatry, Beneduce (2007 p.59) declared that the abuse of the medical-psychiatric category of PTSD and its trivialization of the effects of the Yugoslav wars represented 'the expression par excellence of the hegemonic will of psychiatry and of Western medicine'.

During the last war in the Balkans, it was confirmed by Summerfield (1999) that various communities who had survived war, torture and refugee camps had not necessarily benefited from the PTSD categorisation, which had its socio-political roots in Western biomedicine and psychology and was developed after the Vietnam War. As Summerfield suggested, this traditional socio-political trauma discourse is primarily concerned with an individual's suffering and coping style and does not pay enough attention to the suffering that arises from the social context and the meaning attached to such suffering.

Two years before Summerfield's reflection on million-dollar programs that were designed to address PTSD in war zones and on the globalization of Western cultural trends

in psychological and psychiatric therapies, Herman (1997) considered a complexity of traumatic experiences within the core concept of the PTSD diagnostic criteria. She observed that prolonged exposure to abuse and atrocities might result in personality and relationship changes. She went a step further by making an appeal for a new diagnosis which would look at the effects of prolonged (months to years), severe exposure to threats to life or bodily integrity, which she refers to as 'complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD)' – (see Appendix A). By naming this syndrome, Herman (1997) suggests a new perspective within the clinical tradition of psychological observations related to war and post-war and enables consideration and inclusion of the moral dimension of suffering of traumatised people.

Weine, et al (1998) argued that Herman's (1997) notion of CPTSD was sufficiently broad clinically to encompass the experience of war and refugee trauma (e.g. concentration and refugee camps, state-sponsored violence, etc). The authors suggested that mass trauma leads to persistent changes in personality functioning and that there is no means for adequately representing trauma-related personality changes within existing diagnostic instruments and categories, Their study, based on prior research, found evidence for so-called 'chronic acculturation syndrome' proposed by Westermeyer (1988). Thus, in order to assess personality changes in Bosnian survivors of genocide residing in the USA, the researchers developed and proposed (to WHO and for DSM-IV) 'Disorders-of Extreme-Stress instrument -DES.

Despite the fact that DES was not accepted into DSM-IV, it is important to acknowledge this construct as it represents an attempt to conceptualize broad post-mass trauma stress syndrome and it encompasses trauma related problems not included in PTSD. The instrument includes a) altered effect of impulse regulation; b) altered attention or consciousness; c) altered self-perception, d) altered perception of the perpetrator; e) altered relations with others; f) somatisation and g) Herman's (1997) altered systems of meaning (Weine, et al 1998). After assessment of 24 severely traumatised Bosnian war and

refugee survivors (12 women and 12 men), it was found that none of the participants met the criteria for DES. Initially Weine et al's results suggested that a paradigm of post-traumatic personality dysfunction seemed to be inadequate as a model for understanding the psychiatric outcome of genocide. The authors strongly recommended extending the phenomenological focus beyond PTSD to emphasise the social, cultural, existential and moral dilemmas embodied in these people's memories. A decade later, Beneduce (2007) defined memory and trauma as being moral rather than psychiatric issues and argued that healing should occur within the traditional socio-cultural models and family systems, including geopolitical and socio-economic issues.

For example, with regard to moral and socio-economic issues, Favaro et al (1999) conducted a study which included 40 refugees aged between 15 and 54 years, with different ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian and Albanian) who were assessed three years after the war trauma. The results from chi-square and t-test analysis of these refugees' questionnaire responses revealed that they were suffering from complex trauma and 'complete shattering of their entire human environment' (p.308).

The results of Favaro et al' s (1999) research indicated that PTSD symptoms could be attributed to the fact that the refugees were living in the refugee camp at the time of assessment. These findings also indicated that the symptoms of refugees diagnosed with PTSD symptoms tend to change over time if refugees succeed in their resettlement. As the researchers highlighted, when making such assessments it should also be taken into account that refugee families in a host country usually experience enormous pressure due to the language barrier and dislocation from their culture and tradition. These factors in themselves may be major reasons for disrupting emotional recovery for all family members, especially when compatriots from their own community may also be perceived as a threat. At the same time, the psychological consequences of forced displacement have also been found to have been particularly severe for the various refugees groups from the former Yugoslavia who lived in institutionalized refugee camps (Porter & Haslam, 2001).

In order to conceptualize the impact of war and exodus on the mental health of refugees and people who were not forced into exodus from the former Yugoslavia, Porter and Haslam (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of seventy-two empirical quantitative studies that measured mental health in refugees from the former Yugoslavia and compared the analysis with the results of assessments of a non-displaced control group. All the refugee participants manifested chronic stress as a consequence of forced displacement. However, the symptoms of these participants were also found to vary significantly according to type of displacement and accommodation in exile. As Porter and Haslam revealed, refugees forced into exile outside their country of origin were found to be significantly more impaired than refugees displaced internally. Moreover, refugees who lived or were detained in refugee camps in exile were significantly more impaired than those who lived in private accommodation during their exile. These findings are in accordance with the work of various researchers and theorists working in refugee studies, whose work has indicated that living in an institutional refugee camp is more disruptive than the experience of refugees who lived in private accommodation within the community. Porter and Haslam have highlighted that chronic stressors for refugees included stigmatization or almost demonization attached to their minority status, socio-economic disadvantages, poor physical health, malnutrition as well as collapse of social support and, eventually, adaptation to the host culture.

Similarly, Silove (1999) argued that the psychological and social functioning of refugees may be more correlated with trauma-related stress rather than with symptoms of PTSD and that uprooted and displaced persons could be primarily occupied with current and future uncertainties and pressured by social, relational and economic functioning rather than by the psychological impact of the past trauma.

Thus, in the light of such evidence from the literature as well as from personal experience, this research project is motivated by the firm belief that it is an ethical imperative for any professional to consider individual symptoms within the context of a

refugee's specific post-war context. Unfortunately, in the previous decade a number of internationally recognized experts have often ignored or failed to understand such people in their post-war specific context (Poulingy, Chasterman & Schnabel 2007). The first step in a professional approach to dealing with problems in the aftermath of war is to make a genuine attempt to understand the community's needs, rather than to try to explain those needs with reference to already created categories. There is no lack of evidence about the negative impact of broad-spectrum war trauma on community, family and intimate relationships (Catherall, 2004; Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture – VFST, 2002). In fact, the damage to relational life and the meaning system which links an individual with family and community is the primary effect of trauma (Herman, 1997). However, not all survivors develop PTSD (Weine, et al, 1998) or CPTSD and different traumatic reactions may change over time.

2.5 Open Wounds: The effect of war and trauma on family relations

My mother groand! my father wept.
Into the dangerous world I leapt:
Helpless, naked, piping loud;
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.
(William Blake, *Infant sorrow*, verse I)

The consequences of mass crimes and refugee experiences are born out of repeated prolonged violence and exile which have ripped the fabric of life into shreds, penetrating meaning systems and demanding a complete transformation of self, world and relationships (Ajdukovic, 2005; Grant, 1996; Herman, 1997; Poulingy, Chasterman & Schnabel 2007; Walsh, 2006). The psychological impact of having experienced horror, suffering and subjugation is always implemented in social processes, extending beyond the individual and into the community, with long-lasting effects on family –the basic cell of any society. When massive violence and provocation for exodus are intentionally inflicted on selected individuals, groups communities (Ajdukovic, 2005) and families, the consequences are mass, individual and family traumatisation. The word trauma comes from the Latin word for wound, and the term family trauma, for the purpose of this study,

refs to the situation where a family suffers psychologically from war and refugee wounds, with each family member experiencing a range of emotional pain. These wounds may not only be toxic, infected and contagious during the survivor's lifetime but they may also be transmitted to children in the next generation (Volkan, 1999).

There are many studies on the multi-generational effect of trauma, with identifications with parental trauma caused by the Holocaust, by involvement in WWII and other major conflicts. These studies have indicated that second and third generations of survivors are likely to suffer traumatic stress reactions and varieties of psychological problems (e.g. Danieli, 1997; Rowland-Klein, 2004). Such psychological problems can be manifested in dysfunctional relational patterns, anxiety, depression, etc. (Grant, 1996; Herman, 1997; Matsakis, 2004). Indeed, traumatised parents may transfer their traumatised self-images into the developing identities of their children (Volkan, 1999). Volkan has elaborated on the experiences of Holocaust victims who became well adjusted later in life by transferring different aspects of their traumatic self-image to their children's selves. Thus, according to Volkan, after a shared massive trauma, children's self-images can be affected by and linked to the same trauma. Furthermore, as Volkan (1999) argued, when trauma occurs on a massive scale, group identity is also affected on a massive scale, and though each individual child has its own personality, all children of this huge group of traumatised parents share similar memories, traumatised images passed on to them, and an unconscious need to deal with such memories. Thus is created a hidden network, sometimes consisting of millions of people, most often linked by a common need to keep alive their parents' memory of trauma, to mourn their losses, but also to seek some kind of resolution or revenge for the humiliations they have suffered.

Volkan (1999) also pointed out that the tasks of the inheritors of trauma may change from generation to generation, with, for example one generation needing to mourn the losses suffered by their ancestors while the following generation may feel it is up to them to seek revenge. The primary task for all these affected people, however, says Volkan

is to make sure the mental representation of the trauma of their ancestors is maintained. Such a widely shared burden ensures that a group identity is maintained and, Volkan argued, such 'mental representations' or 'chosen trauma' continues for generations and, in many cases, for centuries.

However, despite the existence of this body of knowledge, there are very few studies on the effect of trauma on family relations, and even fewer which focus on memories of interpersonal family relationships during periods of war and refugeehood. Given this lack of research the main source of information has been clinical and community practice. But such information overlooks family wounds and family trauma at all levels of family functioning, including family history, socio-economic status, biological health, psychological, religious and spiritual needs and the wellbeing of the family (Catherall, 2004). The effects of war and refugee-related events are of particular concern in families where all family members have experienced trauma. In this situation, they might be reflected through a cycle of emotional instability, regression, hostility or paranoia, creating a climate of original trauma (Matsakis, 2004). The effects depend largely on interpretations of each family member of such experiences – on their individual resources, including personality factors and individual attributes. These resources and factors are interdependent; each family member uses them to support and strengthen the totality of family resources. However, since strong personal resources are not possible without social resources (Schum, Vranceanu & Hobfoll, 2004) (and social resources in a war are almost non-existent considering atrocities, betrayal by neighbours, exodus, destroyed homes and communities,) the loss or depletion of personal resources or attributes leads to a multitude of family losses and shifts in family value systems and moral norms (Ajdukovic, 2005; Schum, Vranceanu & Hobfoll, 2004). Thus, in order to understand the effect of war and refugee trauma on families, the impact of war on each family member has to be considered. This includes the traumatic impact on family members' self-esteem, perceived self-efficacy, interdependence, and optimism.

According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995), optimism refers to an ability to preserve hope across many life situations, an expectancy that positive things will happen and that challenges or difficult and traumatic situations are temporary. The effect of trauma on people's optimism was explored by Mollica (2006), who noted that people in the aftermath of wars try to survive in the middle of personal turmoil with hope struggling to avoid dominance by despair. Such a struggle of the human mind, as Mollica highlighted, continues long after the traumatic events and is analogous to the psychoanalytic concept of 'splitting the ego' (Mollica 2006 p.68). This phenomenon is known as mind struggle, where a person tries to maintain sanity by holding to all previously accepted concepts, beliefs and values, while the other part of their mind continues to turn towards the chaos and darkness of atrocities. This struggle with the person's destructive thoughts and emotions generated by violence and humiliations often occurs and causes a profound reconstruction of the person's interpretations of the world and its meaning (Mollica, 2006).

Meaning making is an attribute which refers to a deeply personal process where a survivor assigns new meaning to the trauma, to the self as a trauma survivor and to the world (Harvey, 1996). Many psychiatrists, psychologists and authors have suggested that the exploration of personal and hence family meaning of the trauma is critical to life in its aftermath (e.g. Harvey, 1996; Herman, 1997; Mollica, 2006;Walsh, 2006). According to the literature and the researcher's personal observations and experiences, many war and refugee survivors have discarded their damaged selves and found new pathways of transformation, strength and compassion, transforming their experiences into creative pursuits or determined actions or spirituality. However, the researcher would also argue that is very difficult if not impossible to create meaning out of annihilation and atrocities. As Langer (1991) explained, the notion of anguished memory of the divided self represents an inability to create any meaning from the past, where every memory, every wound has been infected by atrocities. In such circumstances, a person becomes a split observer as he/she is too honest to conceal the original wound but helpless to heal it (Langer, 1991).

Such separation of agency and event, the struggle to reconcile the loss and the assignment of responsibility for that loss leads to lasting confusion. The survivor's anguished memory as such, the very confusion, could be further transferred into lasting confusion or a common memory of anguish which may then result in family division and fragmentation.

Indeed, disintegration of basic life supports or personal resources undermines the security of an entire family as well as the independence of its family members. Independence in this context refers to safe boundaries between a person and those of others, and reflects a degree of emotional disengagement and separation so that family members can follow their own rational beliefs rather than conforming to external demand (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). These safe boundaries are closely linked to perceived self-efficacy or a person's judgment of their capabilities to organize and realize courses of action that are required. It regards not only skills that a person possesses but also the perception of what the person can do with these skills (Bandura, 1986). Previous research has found that when compared with someone who has a positive perception of self-efficacy, a person with negative perception of their skills and attributes has a lower level of competent functioning in relations with others (Muller, Kraftcheck & McLewin, 2004). Additionally, the overall evaluation or appraisal of the person's worth reflects the person's self-esteem.

As Ajdukovic (2005) has illustrated, the psychological effect of mass trauma and exodus is damaged self-esteem and self-awareness, feelings of personal insecurity and distrust, including dysfunctional interpersonal relations. Langer (1991) named this process the *besieged self*, and explained it as a process where the person retains memories of humiliation (p.77). Moreover, the researcher would argue that these individual besieged selves chain their families to their memories of individual humiliation so the memories become those of family humiliation (p.77). Langer further explained the notion of memories of humiliation as involving a process which ignores the impulse to historical inquiry and forces a person (or all family members) into an unnatural relation with the past due to existing knowledge about the 'choiceless choice' *then;* and 'the other of moral

evaluation' *now*. In this situation harmony and integration are not only impossible – they are not even desirable' (p.83). Thus a meaning-making process or self-examination is impossible. The besieged individual remains shrouded in silence and stillness, hovering over an abyss where words are separated from events; this can be evidenced in cases when a person has to recall the event that causes them such inner remorse as well as the perpetrator's act of humiliation. Such testimony represents the genesis of humiliation – anguish and silence (Langer, 1991). The survivor's anguished memory, as such, could be further transferred into a common memory of anguished silence and lack of communication between family members, which may then result in family division and fragmentation.

The destructive force of humiliation (as an inevitable experience throughout the war and especially during the period of refugeehood) has been successfully ignored by modern psychology (Mollica, 2006). But there is evidence to show that an initial state of humiliation often rapidly transforms itself into various emotions such as anger, despair and grief, and can also lead to psychological death within one's own mind, Mollica argues. Furthermore, these psychological and emotional transformations of humiliation are maintained and even strengthened by the accepted social norms and rules of the family and community. Such inner frustration and anger that cannot be suppressed nor disguised and is caused by external pressure, leads to further conflict-ridden societies, hatred and revenge (Mollica, 2006). The hatred and revenge then take away the moral dimension of life or it transforms and displaces the value system into the justification of such deeds.

Though there is obvious need for research in this neglected area, Beneduce (2007) has emphasised that the research processes must be approached with commitment to the local values and meaning systems which often contain the hidden roots of these types of behaviour. According to Beneduce, the commitment to revenge or vendetta within families can represent an obstacle in supporting them after the war and refugee experience. Thus the question of individual and family memory can be seen to play a crucial role in the

circle of oppression. In this circle of oppression there is no self-examination, thus no possibility of exonerating a person's feeling of guilt (Langer, 1991; Volkan, 1999). The inner turmoil that many victims feel, as rage and desire for revenge jostle with feelings of helplessness, humiliation and victimization prohibits the development of psychological processes that are essential if the victims are eventually to assimilate in society and come to terms with their past tragedies (Volkan, 1999). Referring to Freud's work on mourning Volkan maintained that it is essential for humans to mourn their losses and changes before they can accept losses and changes. Without undergoing this mourning process, an individual or an entire family 'remains hiding in the basement' long after the war is over, trapped in a struggle that will prevent them adjusting to a new life in a time of peace, said Volkan (1999, p.82). Individuals, families, groups or even whole societies who have been deliberately traumatised by others tend to remain hiding in this metaphorical basement. Thus their sense of shame, humiliation and helplessness may become internalized, which consequently complicates the feelings of guilt of survivors.

Indeed, individual and/or family trauma serves as a breeding ground for various types of guilt (Kubany, 1997; Matsakis, 2004). Additional complexities arise with strong feelings of guilt that can inhibit and harm relationships, influence roles and alter responsibilities within the family. Matsakis (2004) provided eight categories for feelings of guilt within traumatised family members; some of these could be manifested as: a) a feeling that a person does not deserve a supportive relationship, b) permitting oneself to be exploited (financially, sexually, emotionally) as an expression of unworthiness or a form of atonement, c) over-grieving and over-protectiveness in relationships, including lack of assertiveness – the feeling that others are more important and that the person does not deserve to have their needs met, d) alienation or distancing from others, for instance, not returning calls, not keeping appointments and promises, irritability and verbal or physical abuse, or both and e) ending relationships if they become too intimate or loving, due to many or all of the above factors. This mixture of feelings, thoughts and behaviours,

according to Matsakis, creates a pathos of the family dynamic at the very time when family members need each other the most; their traumatic reactions strain their relationships. However, it should be noted that these studies regarding the interpersonal consequences of trauma were limited to examining cases where only partners has been traumatised, so called 'dual-trauma families'. These studies did not include children, but couples only, and they were carried out from a clinical perspective only, within the PTSD framework (Matsakis, 2004, p.24).

However, there is a growing body of clinical and empirical studies that investigate the relationship between adults' attachment styles and changes in the various roles and obligations of families in the aftermath of war (e.g. Johnson, 2002; Muller, Kraftcheck & Mclewin, 2004). Indeed, Bowlby's 1969 theory of attachment has recently been widely re-considered. According to Bowlby, attachment refers to an inner force in every human to seek and maintain contact with significant others across the lifespan. But this inner force or dependency has been interpreted as pathological in Westernized cultures (Bowlby, 1988), even though one might argue that dependency has always been fundamental to the human condition. As Johnson (2002) elaborated, there is no such thing as complete independence from others. Rather, there is primarily an effective or ineffective dependence where effective dependency refers to attachment to a secure base. The secure base fosters autonomy and self-confidence, provides comfort, security and builds responsiveness. The responsiveness refers to any emotional engagement (even anger) and it serves as a communication/connection tool between family members.

Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory identifies three attachment styles: secure, anxious-avoidant and anxious-ambivalent and considers the primary attachment bonds critical to personality and social development, operating throughout one's perception of the self and others. However, attachment types do not reflect specific personality traits, but primarily styles of engaging in relationships. This theory describes the quality of a

relationship and how it develops in response to situations of fear and stress and provides a secure base for enduring bonds throughout life.

An important extension to this theory was made by Hazan and Shaver (1987), who elaborated on how these three attachment styles are related to an adult's personal relationships. They found that secure attachment enables the formation of trust and belief that a person is worthy; thus people with secure attachments are able to develop romantic relationships that are based on trust, intimacy, closeness and supportiveness. Ambivalent people's relationships were found to be characterised by jealousy, emotional instability, worry about being abandoned and difficulties in depending on others as a reflection of insecure attachment. This was developed as an internal working model of a person with a deep sense of unworthiness, distrust and a sense of emotional emptiness.

According to Sroufe et al (2005) there are four attachment patterns in adults and they refer to i) autonomous, ii) dismissing, iii) preoccupied, and iv) unresolved. A person with an autonomous attachment pattern deeply values attachment-related experiences and is able and keen to create a coherent story regarding the relationship. A person with a dismissing attachment pattern tends to minimize attachment experience, idealise or devalue relationships and to downplay dependence. On the other hand, the preoccupied pattern of attachment includes a person's ongoing emotional involvement with past conflictual relationships, while the unresolved attachment pattern includes great disorganization in depiction of attachment experiences – lack of resolution of loss or trauma. However, it is important to emphasize that adults' attachment pattern and qualities are not fixed, they change according to different circumstances (Sroufe, et al, 2005).

Johnson (2002 p.39) highlighted the fact that traumatic events, fear and uncertainty activate attachment needs and create proximity to a loved one with such proximity serving as 'an inbuilt emotion-regulation device' within the relationship. Thus, the different ways of dealing with trauma, as Johnson emphasized, involve a working model of self and inclinations towards particular behavioural responses in interactions.

However, it is important to note that Johnson's suggestions were based on therapeutic practice with a couple who had been traumatised, but not from the experience of war and refugee status.

There is a growing body of literature that explores attachment patterns in adult survivors of trauma, and indicating an increased incidence of insecure attachment within this population. For example, Muller, Sicoli & Lemieux (2000) examined the relationship between attachment and psychopathology among formerly maltreated adults. They reported that a combination of maltreatment and insecure attachment style may increase risks in such people of developing psychopathology. Similarly, an earlier study conducted by Mickelson, Kessler and Shaver (1997) found that both anxious and avoidant types of attachment were associated with psychiatric disorders in adults, including major depression and PTSD. It was also reported that insecure and ambivalent adults were fearful of abandonment and preoccupation with relationships while avoidant adults felt discomfort in intimacy, closeness and interdependence (Mickelson, et.al, 1997). However, these researchers based their work on the argument that insecure attachment leads to psychopathology while there is a lack of research into the effects of war and refugee trauma on attachment styles in adults and on their relationships.

One of the rare studies in this area was conducted by Mikulincer et al (1993), who investigated the relationship between adults' attachment styles and their response to war trauma during the Gulf War and Iraqi rocket attack on Israel. The study focused on 142 Israeli students and provided an important framework for an understanding of the impact of traumatic events on relationships. Their findings revealed that adversities, including war trauma, are manageable and may foster stable constructive behaviour within the relationships. Mikulincer et al found that attachment style in relationships could be important for those affected by war trauma where secure people seek more support. However, ambivalent persons tended to use emotion-focused strategies more frequently within a relationship. The researchers suggested that where a person had an insecure

attachment style they seemed to be predisposed to emotional maladjustment which would become evident primarily in traumatic situations. However, they also indicated that regardless of attachment styles and personal differences, during the war people functioned within their relationships primarily in a problem-focused instrumental way. This particular way of functioning during the war may indicate that there was no expression of feelings, no confiding, no intimacy or closeness and connectedness in the relationship throughout the period of atrocities. Rather, it seems that the partners were supportive in survival mode with withdrawn or frozen emotions. Overall, the entire set of Mikulincer at al's (1993) findings give an insight into the potential dangers of drawing implications from attachment styles which may themselves be affected by the stressful events and trauma of a war. Thus, as the researchers suggest, interpersonal and relational consequences of traumatic events have to be considered from a family dynamics perspective where yet again there is a gap in the knowledge about families where all members have experienced trauma. For instance, their findings revealed that in at least one family, one member had been traumatised in combat, but other family members had put their own goals and needs aside or restricted their social contacts and outside activities, and had thus become isolated in the same way as the survivors of the conflict (Matsakis, 2004).

A whole range of difficulties encountered in post- war family life have received relatively little research attention, including relationship between siblings, with the extended family and with children (Becker-Blease & Freyd, 2005). Another issue worthy of attention could be how parents with a history of combat handle the issue of disciplining children. Traumatized parents are often not able to emotionally support and protect their children and children are also quite often taught not to trust anyone (VFST, 2002). Apart from finding difficulties in being able to trust people, children from refugee backgrounds and who have lived through wars may have had their moral concepts affected, with their perceptions and experiences of adults, and parents in particular, being unaccounted for. These children could be very sensitive to injustice and might suffer from loss of continuity

of themselves as well as from loss of faith in their parents' ability to protect them (VFST, 2002). Extreme disturbances in parents, who may, for instance become violent, might become new traumas for children who may become preoccupied with feelings of failure; of having failed to do something more to avert violence, which may further lead to self-destructive behaviour, self-blame or avoidance of others, due to shame (VFST, 2002).

Ispanovic-Radojkovic (2005) has explored the experience of Serbian children who were affected by war, displacement and the drastic material and spiritual impoverishment of the Serbian society. She revealed that the children affected by war and refugee experiences suffered due to disruption of social support and inadequate parental support, polarizing ideological beliefs and resulting in a new social memory, new genocides and a range of traumatic events. Ispanovic-Radojkovic indicated underlying unrecognized depression in these children, manifested in aggressive and self-destructive behaviour and inclinations to anti-social activities. She further highlighted that family life after war and refugeehood was greatly affected and children often suffered from neglect and even emotional and physical abuse. It was also revealed that most frequently the fathers in these families would display dysfunctional behaviours due to their depression, which was the consequence of war experience as well as adverse life events.

Pine, Costello and Masten (2005) have summarized recent literature relevant to the effect of war and terrorism on children's mental health. The key finding was that the predictor of children's mental health outcomes after the atrocities appeared to be how adults behave, as their anxiety was reported to be the most influential effect of the trauma. The author also highlighted that the most dangerous environment for children was that which involved the longest exposure to war and refugee camp- a situation which involved massive trauma with the complete collapse of a child's ecology. Pine, Costello and Masten also reported that children who had been exposed to horrifying trauma had been diagnosed with PTSD, but had surprisingly low rates of emotional and behavioural symptoms.

Mikus Kos (2005) highlighted the inappropriateness of the PTSD categorisations for children and families in Bosnia and Herzegovina and appealed for a reconsideration of its application, suggesting that instead of classifying people within a spectrum of individual psychological disorders, they should be seen to be manifesting a range of phenomena related to the families' suffering (especially those of the children and adolescents). In order to define suffering in this context, it is necessary to consider suffering caused intentionally, by human agency and experienced collectively. Such suffering can be further defined as psychological or spiritual condition; it is an actual or perceived threat to personal and/or family integrity. According to Mikus Kos, the families from Bosnia and Herzegovina could be suffering from humiliation, deprivation of moral, emotional and social dimensions of life, including loss of dignity and power to cope. Thus, she appealed to professionals not to focus on categorizing psychological disorders within the families but instead to look at the whole range of family suffering. Mikus Kos appealed against the use of diagnostic categories as tools to describe and assess suffering, humiliation and deprivation of children and their families from Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as their morals, emotional and social richness. Moreover, Mikus Kos insisted on emphasising the notion of suffering versus disorder, arguing that the notion of disorder seems to be inadequate when covering a range of traumatic experiences of children from non-Western war zones.

The western clinical approach to suffering has incorporated the notion of suffering into a complex range of emotional, cognitive and behavioural states to produce a kind of existential suffering that arises from the failure to achieve personal and relational goals (Gilot, 2003). As Gilot suggested, mental suffering always involves drives, feelings, thoughts and behaviour, manifesting itself through the subjective expression of painful emotions and distorted thoughts as well objectively through destructive and irrational behaviour. On the other hand, suffering that is an inherited part of the human condition, has been integrated into higher orders of meaning, (Grant, 1996) and is integral to a search

for meaning. It implies a sense of moral injury, of having been unfairly harmed, of being undeserving of the pain and misery that has been inflicted upon one. This kind of suffering is caused by external trauma. In all concepts of suffering, however there is an acknowledgement that suffering is linked to one's fortune, which reflects the frustration of fundamental human needs. In essence, suffering is

the experience that arises when we encounter something we don't like (aversions) or are separated from something we do like (attachments). It is mental disquiet, agitation or unhappiness and can occur in gross (e.g., anguish) or more subtle forms (e.g. boredom). Suffering then is ubiquitous experience for all of us and seems an inescapable part of conscious life
(I. Milton, personal communication, September 3, 2009).

Thus feelings of suffering could be seen as universal human responses to a range of severe traumatic events, and such responses could include some PTSD features. However, the tendency to assume that a regularly identified response can be generalised in all settings, contexts and societies might create false categorisation (Summerfield, 1999). In addition, war is a collective experience and the destruction of communities and the social world of families are embodied in their history, identities, values and roles. Thus, their suffering has to be approached within their own particular complexity of events.

Indeed, Milton (2009) suggested that it is not unnatural to expect that a person who has suffered the horrors and devastating after-effects of war, might also have been so badly wounded as to produce a disorder that will exist alongside the extraordinary suffering. Thus, according to Milton, we do not need to say that suffering and the manifestation of a disorder are mutually exclusive. Instead, he pointed to the delicate complexity of mixed feelings and referred to Ekman's (2003) appeal that prolonged sadness, as part of suffering, may help heal the loss. Without those feelings of suffering from loss, the actual suffering might endure longer and become more complex and indistinguishable from a disorder. More specifically, Ekman suggested that another purpose of sadness as the main feeling in suffering is for the person to preserve energy while rebuilding their resources and values. However this reconstruction is unlikely to happen if sadness becomes agony, which will destroy any resources.

Thus, the researcher argues that is a human's duty to mourn and suffer as an essential part of the process of rebuilding and reclaiming one's life. Suffering, as Ekman (2003) elaborated, occurs within the circle of other people's suffering. This extension can then create a call for help within the family and community. Individual sufferings confront each other, and in this way family members may actually be enabled to reduce their own misery as well as that of the community. Although the whole suffering community may have been oppressed and treated as a ghetto, with its individual members often treated as being less than human, together they may be able make up for the lack of help and support they have received from outside (Ekman, 2003).

It is important to point out that the circle of suffering for children in diasporas (e.g. Australia) may also be perpetuated within the family as a result of bad news from the country of origin, which may also trigger feelings of distress and guilt associated with having left the family behind, as well as reviving a sense of injustice and violation. Furthermore, many families also suffer from the additional burden of financial difficulties and inter-generational conflict. The inter-generational conflict within a war-traumatized refugee family may be greatly influenced by the reaction of children and adolescents to the trauma of war (VFST, 2002). The children and adolescents from war and refugee backgrounds often have damaged capacity to trust and a heightened sense of betrayal. However, in the few studies that exist, the psychological effects of war trauma are generally portrayed as being static consequences rather than being considered as a part of the survivors' process towards new and better conditions (Becker –Blease & Freyd, 2005). Indeed, Weine, et al., (2004 p.156) revealed 'extraordinary intensity' in the parent-child relationship in Bosnian refugee families, with the children providing the main source of hope for a better life in the future for all family members. The family members reported changes in their roles and obligations, where flexibility, tolerance, trust and family togetherness were a major force in rebuilding their lives. These families also reported the importance of expressing emotions and sharing experiences among family members as a

trust-building process. Moreover, all consequences of war trauma on these refugees tended to be perceived through the family lens. This was due to their culture, which considers family as a core concept of the value system (Weine, et al., 2004). Weine's study documents a distinct lack of research regarding the processes of recovery and healing within the refugee family, based upon an understanding of the refugees' culture, values and family relations.

The above findings demonstrate that there is an urgent need to reformulate our understanding of the refugees' life experiences and their coping systems in host countries, beyond the findings of the limited empirical studies and outside the narrowly defined psychiatric diagnosis of mental disorders (Polugny, Chesterman & Schnabel, 2007; Walsh, 2002; Weine, 2004). Indeed, insufficient attention has been paid to how well many people have transformed themselves (and their relationships) after their war and refugee experiences.

2.6 Recovery and healing relationships

Since the core experiences of psychological trauma comprise disempowerment and disconnection from others, the first steps towards recovery should be towards empowerment and new connections (Herman, 1997). In addition, recovery occurs only within the context of relationships and requires the basic ability to trust, as well as integrity. For the purpose of this study the term integrity refers to: a) capacity to reconnect with ordinary life, b) ability to accept life realities without despair and c) a foundation of trust in caretaking relationships (Herman, 1997).

The sense of trust is very difficult to rebuild, even within the family and intimate relationships, as many survivors tend not to disclose feelings connected to traumatic experiences to family members (Herman, 1997; Langer, 1991). The notion of trust in this research refers to trust in self, trust in fellow human beings, and trust in the environment, the international community and in the systems of justice. However, justice, as Neuffer (2001 p. xviii) observed: 'often comes about in the very personal act of searching for it'.

Such a process of rebuilding trust and seeking justice leads directly to the very essence of human wholeness that is, according to Wilber (2000), composed of body, mind, soul and spirit. The wholeness, according to Grant, (1996) requires and embraces all these dimensions of inner and outside world. More specifically, as Grant argued, the mind and spirituality refer to a grounded ability to foster relationships, while a soul refers to spiritual and religious aspects of consciousnesses, personality and transcendent aspect of a person. Indeed, in the aftermath of war and refugee experience, some people tend to develop a new paradigm for life and safety which tends to be spiritually orientated, while others gravitate towards religion (Grant, 1996; Walsh, 2003). The researcher argues that this wide spread phenomenon has been directly connected with recovery and healing as, according to Maslow (1968, p.206) 'the state of being without a system of values is psychopathogenic'. Everybody needs a framework of values, a philosophy of life, or some form of religion ' to live by and understand by' Maslow claimed. However, while religion can offer a rigid system of values and, indeed, often filters painful experiences, at the same time it has often been uncomfortable with the experience of pain (Grant, 1996). On the other hand, the researcher argues that spirituality, which is here taken to refer to openness to the wounds; can promote an emotional preparedness to make contact with one's fundamental insubstantiality and the very persistence towards such openness refers to faith. Looking across centuries of history of the Balkans, over the oceans of human vulnerability to Australia's shores, we can reflect that the peoples from the former Yugoslavia, with their collectivistic-rhetoric-pagan-tribal mentality, and ruled by the communist indoctrination, have been guided not towards healing and reconciliation but towards be poisonous nationalism. "Safe" from the war in their new home, Australia, enclosed within their ethnic ghettoes, confined by religious and ethnic institutions, their open wounds have continued to fester, as they have opted for the only solution offered them for togetherness – identifications. To ensure that the alternative path to healing and reconciliation is truly accessible the researcher will argue that there is an urgent need to focus on the family dynamics and its patterns of healing where a person's wholeness and their tendencies are

equal to the person's ethics or to the degree of importance of one's values and actions in life.

However, 'trauma respects nothing' (Grant, 1996, p. 9) and disrupts the core of identity (Alcock, 2003) and therefore includes remembering and processing of the events that have caused the trauma. Recovery occurs through the process of re-evaluation and embracing of one's values and ethics leading to self understanding and a new formation of trust. Thus, trust is a precondition for self acceptance – an integration of personhood and relationships – and recovery. In other words, critical to the formation of self is to establish trust. It is also critical to rediscover one's sexuality, as during war, torture and refugeehoood one's sexuality is assaulted and may be turned into a weapon against trust and humanity (Gonsalves, Torres, Fischman, Roos & Vargad, 1993). This assault is directed towards individuals, family and society.

Fallot and Harris (2002) revealed how gender roles can be important in the trauma recovery. Their research describes the trauma recovery and empowerment model (TREM) that was designed for women trauma survivors with severe mental disorders and documents how women were more likely than men to be exposed to different kinds of violence and therefore experienced higher levels of depression and anxiety than men. However, they revealed that while recovering, women tended to reduce their stress level by engaging themselves in nurturing and social networking activities more than men and women also expressed their preference for women-only therapeutic groups (Fallot & Harris, 2002). The authors found recovery was enhanced in women by opportunities for them to learn from other women. It was suggested that crucial to successful recovery is elimination of 'otherness', and that recovery groups made up of survivors of the same gender survivors can help in healing and re-establishing trust.

Thus, it can be seen that to build trust in the aftermath of war is an extremely complex process, as each family member has different emotional problems regarding their war and refugee experiences (Catherall, 2004; Weine, et al., 2004). On the other hand, the

sharing of traumatic experience with others is a precondition for war survivors to create a meaningful post-war world (Herman, 1997). The construction of new meaning after war and refugee trauma is at the core of the psychological dimension of recovery, and occurs through the struggles of traumatized people to deal with their destructive thoughts and emotions generated after mass violence and exodus (Mollica, 2006).

Communities play an important role in creating a meaningful post-war world (Herman, 1997) as community responses may determine the outcome and process of recovery for whole families. Such a response from a community, according to Herman, requires a political commitment; a need for the whole community to acknowledge and name injustice and thus provide survivors with a context or a sense of belonging. Without such acknowledgment, the whole community can also suffer from negative experience and a negative context, especially in the case of traumatized refugee families living in a host society (Alcock, 2003). As Alcock explored the process of recovery from refugees' internal and external reality perspective, she highlighted the importance of communities in providing a context during the process of people's internal transitions and adjustments. Alcock's analysis suggested that government policies of isolating refugees within hostile communities left the refugees frightened and bewildered. She further elaborated how refugee families, already facing various challenges in their new country, (e.g. language and cultural barriers), may be further constrained by a highly controlling ethnic community which could develop into a so-called ghetto culture. Living within a ghetto may reinforce survivors' feelings of entrapment and paranoia and this may further trigger feelings of worthlessness or a sense of guilt (Alcock, 2003). Indeed, suffering, as Summerfield (1999) noted, arises from and is resolved within the social context. Yet there is no research on the role of ethnic communities in recovery and how their political, situational and socio-cultural frameworks shape recovery from war-related psychological trauma in Australia.

According to Gonsalves, et al (1993) attempts to promote recovery from war, torture, refugee experience and political repression must focus on: restoration of physical

integrity, psychological reorganization, examination of multiple losses in exile and refugeehood and reintegration of survivors into socio-political life. Thus, in order to create a meaningful post-war world it is absolutely vital for survivors to learn how to frame their traumatic experiences within the historical, socio-economic and relational context in which they occurred. As Fischman (1998) specifically highlighted, in order to build a new life or meaning system, it is absolutely vital for survivors to learn how to frame their traumatic experiences within their system of inner values and ethics, as values sustained before, during and after the trauma sometimes may provide the only option or path to recovery. This is very important to consider in contexts such as the Balkans wars, where often there was no clear cut boundary between perpetrator or victim or where even family members turned against each other. In such circumstances any inner values sustained may be the only light in a deep ongoing darkness. Thus recovery has to include the family sphere, the relationships between men and women, parents and children in the aftermath of mass crimes (Polugny, Chesterman & Schnabel, 2007). Recovery refers to opportunities to grieve, to focus on marital and familial relations, to deal with losses caused not only by war but also by the experience of being a refugee and of resettlement and by naming those losses, atrocities and injustices, as well as by reinforcing the integration of self in the host society (Fishman, 1998; Gonsalves, et al 1993).

2.7 Factors that impact on recovery and healing relationships

Researchers need to consider the impact of political, historical, situational and family factors when developing psychological knowledge. Every war has its own history, war patterns, and political, socio-economic and cultural forces. All these factors must be considered before assessing or exploring the complex dynamics of war-related trauma and its recovery. The factors that impact on recovery and healing relationships are at macro level (decisions by state and government) but also at micro level. Indeed Westernised health models often neglect community and family when structuring their intervention, which are therefore often unhelpful for refugees and war survivors (Polugny, Chesterman

& Schnabel, 2007). As shown by Polugny et al, the ineffectiveness of these interventions is often due to insufficient attention to the radical transformation in belief systems, actions and behaviours that has occurred within the individuals, families and communities. Such transformations comprise reconstruction issues: rebuilding trust, naming injustice, the writing of history, questions of communal and ethnic identity, justice and reconciliation within the host society and adjusting to its new political system (Polugny, Chesterman & Schnabel, 2007). Thus the interaction between individual, family and community in recovery is the key factor which can overcome the limitation of applying Westernised, medical, psychiatric and psychological methods alone. The first obstacle to be faced is to understand the historiography of mass crimes and analyse local forms of violence and their historical roots as well as understanding how they have been woven into the social imaginary of the people (Polugny, Chesterman & Schnabel, 2007).

Specifically, the cultural and historical milieu of the Balkans (the territory of the Former Yugoslavia) involves a mentality of conflict across national divisions, and an enormous experience of irregularity (Kitromilides, 1996 p.163). The countries of the Balkans, with their histories of civil war and foreign occupation, tend to view trauma within their own traditions and meaning systems, which are not analogous to a westernized framework or assumptions of psychological trauma (Summerfield, 1999). For example, the war-survivors from the Balkans tend to support their members and each other by communal or religious rituals, literature, drama, songs and story telling. In this way the pain and struggles are made legitimate, thus reducing social stigma (Catherall, 2004). For example, the challenges for cultural competence in Western PTSD and recovery from this disorder could be classified differently by specific populations (Polugny, Chesterman & Schnabel, 2007) It is also of great importance to emphasise family and community rituals and narratives that sustain collective and individual memories of the history, causes and course of the wars and exile in the Balkans and to allow the reinterpretation and reinforcing of the belief systems. Polungry, Chesterman and Schnabel further warned that

travelling along the road to recovery and healing involves a complex and ambiguous journey where imaginary and symbolic worlds play a crucial role in the transformation of history and a sense of belonging. In this context, healing requires courage, as the sufferer struggles to exist according to the framework of their own or their family ideas and values, it also requires an ability to find an existential meaning and direction, for each person or family member to face the great themes of life and confront the family's history in particular; if these qualities are absent, the road may end in discouragement, boredom, insignificance and eventually despair (Gilot, 2003).

Moreover, in families from collectivistic cultures, such as countries from the Balkans, selfhood is defined in terms of belonging to and/or fulfilling obligations toward the family and neighbours. The term collective culture is used here to refer to the framework of values and meanings underpinning interdependence, self-sacrificing acts and sharing. Traditionally, families from this cultural background would regard loyalty to the family or community as more important then personal growth. Therefore, the relationship of traumatized family members within the family group could be quite different from assumptions and psychological and psychiatric frameworks provided by Western cultures (Catherall, 2004). Yet there is little research worldwide on the limitation of applying a Western model for dealing with PTSD to those who come from a different culture. Thus, the notion of a balanced interaction between family members and community actors, between cultural strategies and interventions rooted in specific community/family knowledge can become another key factor that impacts on recovery and healing relationships (Beneduce, 2007). However, as Beneduce maintains, no generalization can be allowed as there is no approach or solution which can pretend to be able to stand up to the power relationships and dominating forces within each (ethnic) community and their complex interaction with families from a war and refugee background. Indeed, social memory and family or social silence play an important role in the process of psychological recovery, where the right to speak but also to remain silent must be given back to the

people who survived atrocities and who are searching for life in the present, while also needing to establish a connection or maintain a correct distance with those who died (Beneduce, 2007). As Beneduce notes, recovery from the horrors of war is unspectacular and involves gradually resuming the rhythms of ordinary daily life. But perhaps the most difficult task is the most important factor in recovery – to overcome feelings of loss, humiliation and death without resorting to anger or trying to exact revenge. Most wars are civil wars, so any residual feelings of mistrust and desire for revenge have to carefully negotiated in a post-war situation.

If professionals are to assist in the recovery of these people, an interdisciplinary and critical approach is needed to guide any intervention which has family and community as its central focus.

2.8 The concept of family resilience

Family resilience refers to family processes that may elicit personal and relational transformation and growth out of adversity (Walsh, 2002). As such, family resilience does not include only the ability to survive or withstand war and refugee trauma but rather, a resilient family actively fosters family processes, which include family belief systems, organizational patterns and communication processes. In this way, family members are able to create new meaning from their experiences of adversity, converting family damage into family challenges by developing new competencies and mutual support among family members. In addition, the family resilience model consists of strong community and health-care support within the broader socio-cultural system. It involves all family members over the multi-generational life cycle. This approach leads to prevention of emotional instability and empowerment of vulnerable families in crisis, opening up opportunities for them to reappraise priorities and strengthen their relationships, also affirming their reparative potentials rather then being seen as dysfunctional (Walsh, 2002).

Walsh (2006) further described the family resilience approach as the connection of an individual with those significant people around them and suggested that even those who

have experience of prolonged and severe trauma and very troubled relationships have potential for recovery and transformations across the lifespan and generations. Walsh further argued that caring and committed human connections are pillars of resilience in adversities; resilience is, according to Walsh, built up and maintained by strong family, community, cultural and social bonds. Thus, resilience is not a single moment in time, nor is it a response to immediate crisis or adjustment, rather it is an interactive process, an ongoing developing ability to manage disruptions with flexible and varied coping strategies. Resilience is also far from being an assumption of invulnerability or self-sufficiency – it is not an enduring trait that is consistent in all challenging circumstances. For example, flexibility, easygoing temperament, self-efficacy and self-esteem as well as higher intelligence, though they could be very helpful, are, however, not essential for resilience (Walsh, 2006). With regard to individual resilience that is a predisposition for family resilience, Walsh (2006) has highlighted three general characteristics of individual resilience from previous findings. These characteristics are: a) belief that one can control/influence events in their experience, b) ability to be deeply involved and committed to activities in one's own life, c) openness to change and the challenges of life and the future. An ability to be optimistic is also important for personal resilience, which then leads to positive family belief systems and to transcendence. Thus, Walsh suggested, resilience refers to openness to 'experiences and interdependence with others' (p.5) where every resilient adult has one person to rely on and every child has at least one person in their lives who accepts them unconditionally.

Thus Walsh (2002) introduced the family resilience framework as an alternative to traditional mental health services for refugees. These traditional services, which tended to assess and treat individuals and families as dysfunctional and/or within the diagnostic category of PTSD were perceived in the Bosnian refugee communities in Chicago as inadequate, according to Walsh (2002). The resilience framework is an approach to recovery that revolves around a resilience-based community program pioneered by Stevan

Weine in 1998. This program aimed to enhance family strength and resources, such as cohesiveness and adaptive role flexibility. The refugee families in this program shared their stories of suffering within a compassionate setting as part of a nine-week multi-family program. The program illuminated the refugees' connection to their communities and cultural heritage, healing their wounds from the past and empowering them to handle future uncertainties. Moreover, this approach engaged refugee families by showing respect and compassion for their struggles and affirming their reparative potentials rather then treating them merely as war-survivors or dysfunctional families.

In addition to the experiences described above, following traumatic life events people frequently report positive, unanticipated changes and growth (Harms, 2005). According to Harms, since the 1980s new concepts have evolved concerning the recognition of positive outcomes of trauma. This perspective considers personal and family strength rather than focusing on perceived deficits in coping and adaptation. As Harms outlined, there are various measures of strengths but common to all such interpretations is the view that positive changes of self-perception, changes in relationships with others and changes in the world view should be considered positive outcomes. Harms insisted that positive changes in self perception include an increased sense of self-reliance and a sense of being a stronger person. This change inevitably leads to self-evaluation by the person as having greater competence, particularly in the face of difficult situations. Recognition of such enhanced resources can then lead to further assertiveness, self-understanding, empathy, altruism and maturity. This process then directly links to the enhanced coping skills and resilience of the entire family, whose members then may regulate their affects, seek help from each other and solve problems logically. Enhanced relationships with others include an increased closeness to others, such as family and friends, as well as the experience of a greater sense of community closeness. Such connectedness within the community then opens up the lines for discussions of the consequences of the events that have been lived through and the need for self disclosure. Self disclosure, as recognition of

individual vulnerability and resilience can then evolve into desire to give oneself to others and an increased sense of altruism (Harms, 2005).Thus, the family resilience model is not only a conceptual approach but an ethical one and, for this reason, it will serve as a bridge over troubled waters throughout this journey of research. The following chapter will explain how.

2.9 Destinations, detours and the poetry of truth

Traditionally, this section of the chapter should outline the theoretical, conceptual and methodological assumptions that will guide this journey. Indeed, we want to embark on this journey with an awareness of preconceptions and assumptions, because the main purpose of our expedition is to find truth along the way, recognizing it in the participants' experience as expressed in their own stories. The next stage of our journey will, then, be an attempt to make an interpretation of these truths. By doing so, we will participate in a continuous hermeneutic conversation. Interpretation in this context refers to a relationship between the real world and that of the participants, the real world and that of the researcher's and the reader's conscious experience of these realities. If we hope to discover and re-discover the poetic truths of our lives, such an interpretation requires reflection – from the participants, the researcher and the reader. It is no coincidence that this thesis incorporates references to poetic insights, metaphors and lyrical subtexts from writers and thinkers of various generations and cultures. This approach to storytelling – for that is what, in essence, we are doing here, reflects a significant aspect of the style, language and content involved in the narrative identity of the peoples from the Balkans. In this region, oral tradition is cultural treasure and, as Maksimovic (1983) so eloquently points out:

If you moan in this region
It turns into a poem.
If you sin in deed or saying
The bells will toll a prayer of atonement.
If you bear a child
A lullaby will be heard.
If you die

A lamentation will follow
If you fall in love
Verses be spoken
In painful sleeplessness.
Whatever you do
It will turn into a poem.

Thus, our intention on this journey is to be both truthful and poetic, as we travel across different disciplines (psychology, history, culture, etc) on roads that run around and between individuals, family and community, creating interconnecting pathways that will eventually lead to a greater truth. Guidebooks can be helpful as preparation for a journey, but when following a path of inquiry a traveller who seeks to recognize previously unrecognized truths must be prepared to listen to and know such truths and understand how these relate to their own values and modes of perception. The journal included at the end of this thesis is a record of the researcher's attempt to document and recognize her own assumptions and expectations and how these have impacted upon the research. Before embarking on this journey of discovery, the reader/traveller is invited to make a short detour to this section. Of course, the researcher does not claim to have completely revealed all her emotions and aspirations in this journal. Such a complete act of revelation can never be achieved. But it is hoped that this journal will help to cultivate the reader's awareness of issues, ideas and emotions that may be relevant along the way.

2.9.1. Conclusions and beginnings – the roundabout

This chapter began by emphasising that a journey can be enhanced by preliminary reading in order to take advantage of insights offered not only by various books and academic journals, but also by the sayings and poetic truths and insights that have been handed down by wise and perceptive thinkers and observers from various political creeds, cultures and generations. Thus we have attempted to provide an overview of some of these insights that seem most relevant to our quest to deepen our understanding of the Balkans regions, its culture and history and to draw closer to a resolution of the conflicts that have engulfed it and its people for centuries, and have spread across generations as well as to

foreign shores. In so doing we have considered various directions, viewing the territory for further exploration as a labyrinth of pathways that lead to and from the wasteland that represents the aftermath of battlefields and refugee camps.

In this preliminary stage of our journey we have learned that attitudes, behaviours and unconscious expressions have developed over centuries in the Balkans as a result of a continuous history of oppression, occupations and assimilations. These defence mechanisms have been modes of survival and self preservation and as every nation and ethnic group has carried the baggage of being a victim or persecutor in relation to another nation, new versions of memory have been created.

These extremely complex historical developments have been greatly supported by strong attachment and allegiance to the different religions and social integrations, creating along the way many silent and poisonous instances of dual reality. To begin this journey we must first recognize and always remember the existence of that dual reality. At the time Europe was faced with two parallel realities: in the West there was peaceful economic and political prosperity, while the East being consumed by hatred as neighbours fought neighbours in bloodthirsty conflict.

And if we are to understand and to help reduce and eventually eliminate the suffering of refugees and survivors of war and atrocities, we must become thoroughly familiar with the conceptual territory of war, trauma, suffering and recovery. Along the way we must be prepared to learn about family contexts that are specific to the peoples who come from the Balkans, in order to shed light on the forms and functions of their understanding of the notions of family and justice, of the specific conditions, value system and communication patterns that exist across the three nationalities.

We have not been able to map a straight and easy route through this territory of open wounds, towards our ultimate goal – to ensure that the kind of conflict that occurred in the Balkans in the late twentieth century is never repeated, that those poisoned by hatred are not drawn into vicious wars again. Rather we have identified that the journey we must

take will be through turmoil, along a bumpy, sometimes barely marked road that begins and ends at a roundabout, from which me must now move into a new stage of exploration. And along the way we must encounter the sufferers of those open wounds and seek to understand that in many cases all members of a family group continue to remain vulnerable and in ever-lasting transition long after the physical war is over. We have learned that applying a narrow clinical dimension when attempting to help such people is often not seen to be appropriate, so a primary purpose of this journey upon which we are about to embark is to keep our eyes, ears and minds open in order to arrive at a better understanding of the very nature of moral, psychological and physical suffering, and to recognise the complexity and long history that has made those wounds contagious. Only by so doing may we hope to identify more effective responses to extraordinary suffering.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY: THE BRIDGE TO KNOWLEDGE

3.1 Overview

A conceptual framework acts as a road-map to guide the research process (Goodrick 2005) and thus should enable those who wish to accompany the researcher on the journey to recognise the signs they read along the way, and understand how they relate to the underlying principles that have guided the researcher in selecting the way and the procedures for arriving at the final destination. Thus, it is hoped that when researcher and reader arrive at the journey's end they will be able to understand and evaluate what they have experienced together in the same way.

A researcher's selection of methodological approaches is influenced by their epistemological preferences, by their views and assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the 'best' way to access that knowledge. Thus to ensure others can evaluate the research within this context, the assumptions that underlie the research practice, and which reflect the researcher's stance on important issues, must be adequately explored and explained (Goodrick 2005) at the outset. This section will thus outline the justification and rationale for the methodology chosen to undertake this study – that is, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), and then outline the procedures used to gather and analyse data – the method, in this case reflective inquiry activities that aim to interpret the aspects of meaning or meaningfulness that are associated with the question: How do family members rebuild their lives in the aftermath of systematic political violence, displacement and the refugee experience?

This chapter outlines the stages of the methodology used for this project and includes a description of the nature and purpose of the qualitative inquiry. First, the research paradigm and its analytical tool are described, then the characteristics of participants will be outlined and the sampling procedure and the processes of data collection will be provided. Later sections provide details of how the analysis and

interpretation of the findings were conducted. Additionally, there will be a discussion centring on the reliability and validity of the qualitative method that has been adopted for this project.

Each of the above stages will be considered from an insider's perspective, as, having come from a background and culture similar to that of the participants in this study, the person who conducted this research can be considered to be such an 'insider' (Asselin, 2003). In her own personal account of her experience, the researcher identifies from an emic perspective the issues raised during the project, thus bringing a subjective, informed and influential stance (Kanuha, 2000). The researcher also brings passion, curiosity and care to her work and attempts to provide a unique perspective and a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied (Charmaz, 2004). However, the researcher is also aware that her position as an insider may be both an asset and a liability (Kanuha, 2000). As a result, she recognizes the existence of multiple meanings and truths and the necessity to reach a level of balance between the experiences of the participants and her interpretations. In this inquiry the student-researcher has tried to be responsible and sensitive with regard to her previous knowledge and assumptions about the culture and communities involved.

This section, however, should not be seen as merely an interruption of the narrative journey on which both the researcher and the reader have already embarked, in order to explain the methodology used. Rather, readers are invited to consider that they have now arrived at the shore of a deep ravine, from which they can glimpse far away in the distance the subjects of this study. To reach these particular participants and an understanding of their internal world, the researcher has designed and constructed a unique bridge. This metaphorical bridge has been constructed from the horded materials of her own past and present – theories that have been developed over decades, and sometimes centuries, teachings and experiences from her own culture, bound together with intuition, values and beliefs – to create a span strong enough to carry her and the reader from the shores of current knowledge to hear new tales from the other side, told by people whose

voices we have not yet heard or understood. By constructing this bridge, it was hoped not only to reveal the unique history and philosophy of the participants in this study but also to be able to penetrate their internal world in order to know the meanings that these people attribute to the phenomena they have experienced. But such a bridge must be built on strong conceptual foundations, for without an attempt to explain what, why and by what means the stories that will be revealed have been interpreted, there may be no memory, as Andric (1945, p.27) so eloquently contends:

The common people remember and tell of what they are able to grasp and what they are able to transform into legend. Anything else passes them by without deeper trace, with the dumb indifference of nameless natural phenomena, which do not touch the imagination or remain in the memory. This hard and long building process was for them a foreign task undertaken at another's expense. Only when, as the fruit of this effort, the great bridge arose, did men begin to remember details and to embroider the creation of a real, skilfully built and lasting bridge with fabulous tales which they well knew how to weave and to remember.

3.2 Building on strong foundations – the conceptual framework

This bridge and the exploration that it enables has been built on the firm foundation of the philosophical discipline of phenomenology, and made strong by the use of two tools – phenomenological psychology (Spinelli, 2005) and narrative psychology (Crossley, 2000a). Epistemologically, phenomenological and narrative psychology are similar, as they are both concerned with subjectivity and experience, coming to grips with how a person thinks or feels about what has happened to them (Lyons & Coyle, 2007; Spinelli, 2005). Phenomenological and narrative psychology share a commitment to the importance of language and qualitative analysis as both disciplines explore connections between language and experiencing the self (Smith, et al, 1997). According to Smith et al, the two approaches differ in terms of the status they assign to or the degree to which they are concerned with the subjectivity and the experience of the self.

Since this research is informed by epistemological assumptions drawn from phenomenological research perspectives, it draws on and refers to different domains of inquiry: i) various traditions such as transcendental, existential, hermeneutic and ethical

phenomenology; ii) philosophical and/or methodological attitudes associated with the

phenomena of the study; iii) the procedural dimensions of this phenomenological inquiry

were explored in terms of reflective methods (e.g. thematic reflections, insight cultivating

reflections, interview reflections, etc); and iv) the process of writing up the research report

was seen as an attempt to interpret and to describe the phenomena; to give voice to shared

experiences and to reflect a diversity of experiences of refugee families living in Australia.

3.2.1 Phenomenology

Pure logical thinking cannot yield us any knowledge of the empirical world; All knowledge of
reality starts from experience and ends in it.
(Einstein, Podolsky & Rosen, 1935)

The term phenomenology is derived from the two Greek words *phainomena* or

'appearance' and *logos* meaning 'reason' or word', thus it could be translated to mean

'reasoned inquiry' regarding the world we experience, the world of phenomena. Though

the term phenomenology has been used by many philosophers (e.g. Hegel, Kant, Marx,

etc.) the philosophical school of phenomenology was founded in the early twentieth

century by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Husserl's aim was to develop a science of

phenomena or an inquiry into how objects are experienced, how they present themselves

through our subjective consciousness, and the content of our subjective experiences

(Kockelmans, 1994). In developing an approach to inquiry that is generally known as the

phenomenological method, Husserl rejected the rationalists' approach to hypothetical

speculations and emphasized reflective attentiveness in order to disclose an individual's

lived experience. More specifically, Husserl (1973) rejected the traditional doctrine of

evidence and argued that the notion of evidence has to be differentiated from the

conviction that something is true. He voiced that evidence is subjective and an essentially

private experience and he aligned the idea of evidence with the phenomenon of 'seeing'.

Literal seeing is, according to Husserl, the paradigm example of evidence, as Levinas

(1995, p.117) has pointed out:

Husserl was looking for the primary phenomenon of truth and reason and he found it … in 'vision', the ultimate source of all reasonable assertions. Vision has 'justification' as its object in a direct manner; in as much as vision realizes its object, it is reason.

Indeed, Husserl aimed to develop phenomenology as a discipline that would allow for the suspension of judgment and that would rely on an intuitive grasp of knowledge, free of preconceptions, assumptions and intellectualizing (Kockelmans, 1994: Levinas, 1995). According to this method, a researcher should begin each study by examining their own prejudices, commitments and assumptions in order to set them aside or 'bracket' them out, in order to arrive at a more adequate knowledge or better understanding of reality. However, Heidegger (1962) – a student of Husserl – doubted that the removal of prejudices was actually possible and suggested that the term highlighting be used rather than bracketing. While taking account of Heidegger's ideas about highlighting, the researcher nevertheless empathizes with Husserl's (1965) central argument that we do not experience the world as it is, in its real state, rather the world we experience is an interpreted world that has been determined and shaped by experience based on values, beliefs, attitudes and biases.

Husserl (1965, 1973) also explored and examined the way people construct their reality and provided many concepts as a basis for phenomenological psychology. Phenomenological psychology emphasized two orientations, one to do with issues of essence – transcendental phenomenology, and the other concerned with issues of meaning – existential phenomenology (Spinelli, 2005). According to Spinelli, this phenomenological psychology applies the phenomenological method in order to reach a more adequate understanding of people, who are seen as active interpreters of their experience of the world.

More specifically, Husserl (1965, 1973) believed intentionality to be the basis of all conscious experiences. Intentionality refers to our most basic interpreting processes – intentional meaning-making for objects and things that exist in the world. The word intentionality refers to the notion of consciousness of something or about something that originated from scholastic philosophy in the medieval period and was reintroduced to

philosophy by the German philosopher and psychologist Franz Brentano (1838–1917). Brentano concluded that all consciousness is always directed towards the real world in order to interpret it in a meaningful way (Spinelli, 2005). Consequently, such structures of consciousness (e.g. perception, fantasy, memory, etc) are called intentionalities (Husserl, 1965, 1973, Kockelmans, 1994; Spinelli, 2005). Thus, Husserl (1965, 1973) adapted Brentano's idea by arguing that humans do not have or do not practise direct access to knowledge of the real world as it is; instead they interpret or translate the various stimuli between themselves and reality – interpretation is the essence of our mental experiences. Since every interpretation comprises the questions what and how, thus Intentionalities, the acts of knowing which were born out of interpretation, were labelled by Husserl (1973) as noema and noesis. The term noema defines the directional elements of one's experience – the object to which a person directs their attention (the what). On the other hand, noesis refers to the mode in which one defines an object and is thus the reference (the how). The following example should illustrate these concepts.

A family has survived war and comes to Australia. Every Sunday morning, all family members listen to the news in their native language on the ethnic radio station. After listening to the news, spouses and their children may react differently to the same news regarding the war crimes tribunal and of the pursuit of justice. Some family members may become enthusiastic or pleased with the news, while the rest of the family members may become irritated and disturbed by the news. Thus, in the noema context there is a question about what part of the news' content was heard by each family member .Then with regard to noesis, the question arises of how the memories of the war experience (together with their cognitive and affective biases) of each family member create new elements of meaning in the experience of hearing the news and how they respond to their different interpretation of the news. Furthermore, the question may arise as to how the whole family as a unit interprets or has a common stance towards the heard news or their subjectively interpreted reality. Thus, the concepts of intentionality together with noematic

and noetic focuses, resulted in Husserl's development of a specific approach to interpretation – phenomenological method – which consists of and has implication for psychologically-related issues (Spinelli, 2005). This method has been adopted for the purpose of this research expedition.

The researcher has also emphasized Husserl's (1965) attempt to explore and explain how we construct our reality, by introducing the structure of intuition, which can be characterised as a mode of thought or consciousness that makes an object present to us, but which is the opposite of intention or representation (Levinas, 1995). As Levinas has pointed out, Husserl's theory of intuition goes beyond his concepts of intentions. According to Husserl, intention is unrealized, as intention refers to an invariant relationship between the real world and our conscious experience. Thus, the object is not processed in any way – it is only thought about. However, as Levinas further explained, intention, as our way of understanding and interpreting, can be realized in an image of perception and actualized in relation to its object. This process is intuition.

Intuition, in Husserl' theory, as described by Levinas (1995), actualizes mere intention, which aims at someone or something, through intuition as a theoretical act of consciousness. It is through this process that objects are made present to us – we relate directly to the object, thus we are able to reach it. For example, according to Immanuel Kant (1724−1804), a German philosopher, intuition is synonymous with sensitivity; it refers to the faculty that represents the data that we might receive involuntarily from our senses (Kant, 2010). By contrast, the term intuition, according to Husserl (1965), refers to an extended awareness, a commonplace occurrence and/or a basic psychological function that happens in almost every waking moment. It is an in-depth reflective process, where we look at or observe something first hand. Therefore, intellectual intuition was applied as one of the analytical tools in this study. In fact, Husserl himself suggested that intellectual intuition could be used to grasp logical forms and categories – therefore the interpretation or meaning-making process of the phenomena under study was accompanied by self-

reflections on the part of the researcher, and also resulted from her experience, memories, conscious thoughts, beliefs and intuition (e.g. trusting herself, being aware of her own feelings, paying attention to the interview transcripts). It is hoped that this process has resulted in an overall genuine transcendence – where one's own psychological consciousnesses is fundamental in relation to others (Sartre, 2005). It is a knowing within: a search for new understanding through the focus attention (of the researcher's passion and compassion for the participants and the world).

Therefore, the overall meaning of this enquiry does not exist in the phenomena as such, but in the mode in which they are presented, in the very mode in which they have been experienced. The reader and the researcher and the participants are not divided, there is no 'them and us', all share similar experience, and thus constitute the 'we' – a group of people being in the world after war and refugee experience. Such subjective experience creates inter-subjectivity, meaning that one's own experience of oneself is a subject among other subjects. This common experience or inter-subjectivity builds appreciations of the experience, recognises the other's emotions, intentions and intuitions and leads to empathy (Husserl, 1973). Empathy, according to Husserl, or inter-subjective achievements of truth, becomes manifested by evidencing itself (in its description and intuition perceived by all of us). In this way, everything encountered on the entire journey that we have embarked upon here can be seen as evidence.

Overall, the notion of phenomenological psychology, together with its fundamental concepts (evidence, intentionality, noema and noesis, intuition and intersubjectivity) does not refer to a specific school of thought (certainly not in the reductionist way of defining specific canons and hypotheses), rather, these concepts refer to a meaning-focused approach or an orientation towards the exploration of central psychological issues (Spinelli, 2005). As Spinelli highlighted, the primary goal of phenomenological psychology, which is broadly derived from phenomenological philosophy, is to explore conscious experience and to present a description of the

phenomena. Such description does not replace the existing systems in psychology, rather it complements them or, where possible, its implications reveal unnecessary assumptions and/or divisive biases (Spinelli, 2005). Such an approach to philosophy and psychology, in the context of this study, emphasizes subjective meanings constructed and based on families' shared histories, understandings and interpretations of their traumatic experiences. Indeed, Husserl's phenomenology was appealing, as it promised to enable this researcher to explore the diversity and changes of human experience.

However it would be inadequate or wrong to identify all phenomenology as being primarily Husserlian or transcendental phenomenology (Spinelli, 2005). Husserl himself criticized his own work, as did many others who further developed the concept of phenomenology. A major divergent stream of phenomenology is known as existential phenomenology or existentialism, and though principally influenced by Husserl's writing it was further developed by his assistant Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) who was particularly interested in matters of human existence. Heidegger's existential interpretation was further developed into existentialism, which was then expanded by many philosophers and researchers (e.g. Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995), Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980). Thus, Husserl's philosophy was based on the phenomenology of essence, Heidegger further developed the phenomenology of existence, and Sartre's existential phenomenological inquiry was primarily concerned with human freedom.

3.2.2 Existentialism

How does it feel
To be on your own
With no direction home
Like a complete unknown ...
(Bob Dylan)

Sartre's (2001) atheistic existentialism concerns the uniqueness and meaning of human lives, where subjective experience is more important than 'objective' truth. For Sartre, every person should have free will, determinism, or the ability to choose their attitudes, values and way of life. For example, according to Sartre, while France was occupied by the Germans in WWII, one was still free to say 'no' to the occupiers. As Sartre suggested, the collaborators who did not say 'no' were morally corrupted. Thus, he further argued (Sartre 2001, 2005) that every person is free (to choose), as to be free is a part of being human. As he highlighted, every person is condemned to find or choose his/her own mode of existence.

Indeed, Sartre (2005) believed that every human being seeks to express his/her potential and to reach self-actualization. He named this process 'Being-for-Itself' and suggested that it consists of anguish or a feeling that a person cannot escape from a sense of profound responsibility. On the other hand, Sartre (2005) also argued that there is also a state of Being-in-Itself, which provides a person with meaning, by being incorporated into the person's body, culture, family, place, historical framework etc. This also allows that person to escape the anguish of freedom by a willingness to adapt to different modes of unfreedom. In other words, one is responsible for his/her avoidance of responsibility, of being passive in the world, or to refuse to act upon things. What is crucial, then, in Sartre's scheme of inescapable inter-related conflict, is awareness of and response to the conflict that exists between human freedom and unfreedom. This conflict, according to Sartre, is not an inner mechanism of tension, as explained by Freud, but rather refers to the inter-relational consequence as a form of inevitable relationship.

Sartre (2005) further suggested that there is no real separation between the self and the other. Thus, according to Sartre, Being-for-Others emerges from the conscious ability of a person to consider the world as it is perceived by another being and in that way to consider our own conflicting aims and motivations. This might lead to discovery of our difficulties and the differences between us and the other, but it can also establish universally common core values and beliefs that are shared by us and others (Spinelli, 2005). Spinelli (2005) lucidly illustrated Sartre's notion of Being-for-Others by giving an example of what has been broadly suggested to be the major differences between the fundamentalist Christian and the fundamentalist Muslim worldviews. Spinelli elaborated on how the two fundamental sides might appear to be moving in direct opposition to one another, whereas a more careful analysis might reveal that the source of mutual conflict lies at the heart of commonly shared assumptions in their respective world views. Thus, again, Being-for-Others refers to acceptance of a mutuality of being (Sartre, 2005; Spinelli, 2005).

However, though appealing for the idea of Being-for-Others, and despite his search for it, Sartre (2001, 2005) did not find evidence of Being-for-Others within his lifetime. He revealed that instead of mutual acceptance, he discovered the existential conflicting phenomenon of self-deception or, as he called it, bad faith. Bad faith, according to Sartre (2001), refers to a stance where an individual becomes an object with no agency over their own life. Such circumstances, when analysed, are explained by the person's beliefs about what he/she can or cannot do. Such beliefs then start to dominate the person's being or family dynamics, and are enhanced in the moral order that consists of the notions of should/must. As such, they create fragmentation in an individual's autonomous behaviour. This notion of bad faith can be seen to be echoed in Heidegger's request for people to live authentically, or with integrity, in this complex, dangerous and confusing world. However, Sartre (2005) pointed out that it is extremely difficult to achieve individual integrity in a society which favours hypocrisy and therefore collective

authenticity can only be achieved in an authentic environment. Sartre also suggested that we should confront our weakness and be aware of how difficult it is for us to avoid to being in bad faith. He explained that we are confronted with the fact that we hold ourselves responsible for the lies we have told and the abuses that we choose to do and the myriad ways in which we humiliate and limit ourselves and others. This limitation and humiliation result in a state of overwhelming, sickening and revolting nausea. Thus, according to Sartre, our avoidance of responsibility, which keeps us in a state of unease, is the most vivid image of nausea that mirrors our inauthentic being and our bad faith – freedom imprisoned.

Although the thoughts of Sartre have had a great impact on psychology and psychotherapy, Sartre has always been considered primarily as a moral philosopher whose philosophy was developed from existentialist and Marxist systems into a political ideology. Sartre (2001, 2005) claimed that we live in a world of oppression and exploitation and appealed for academic writing to be a form of 'acting in the world'. According to this French philosopher, academics have a responsibility to write about social, economic and political conditions as a way of facing up to their potential for being; he believed that they must accept their freedom and the circumstances and conditions that permit them to make expressions of freedom (Spinelli, 2005). This freedom, according to Spinelli (2005, p.125) refers to the:

ability, if not 'condemnation', to give meaning to our experience. As such, we are responsible for whatever we make meaningful about our unique and specific existence, that of the world and that of others.

Indeed, Sartre's existential phenomenology complements this study as his interest was captured by Husserl's (1965) intentionality that describes human beings as active interpreters of their experience of the world. Sartre (2001) argued that people are condemned to choose their way of existence and tend to escape from this knowledge which leads to further anxiety and suffering. According to Sartre, one makes his/her own identity in and through their own decisions and action; accordingly one is nothing other that that which he/she chooses to be. In this way, Sartre emphasized an ethics of responsibility, in

contract to one of rules and principles. He argued that, if individuals are to face up their potential of being, they must accept their freedom to choose a way of being among a number of possibilities. Indeed, these possibilities are not limitless imaginations, but are actually contingent 9especially after war and refugee experiences). Moreover, whatever stance one adopts towards being or existence, it confronts him/her with its inevitable inter-relational basis (the self and the other are inextricably bound together in an inescapable relationship).

Such understanding of Sartre's existentialism guided the researcher throughout question on how do traumatic experience affects his/her possibilities of being-for-itself, or how does the presence and demands of the family members affect his/her choices? Indeed, the analysis of inter-relational experiences is a central defining characteristic of Sartre's phenomenology. Thus, the notion of self refers to a construct which emerges from interaction between people/family members and challenges numerous assumptions regarding the self as a unified, coherent and relatively constant entity. This notion of self allows for a more adequate analysis for this study. Overall, Sartre's existentialism has served as the basis for a descriptive analysis of subjective processes that are based on the narrative power of the participants. The narrative power was elicited by open-ended interviews, where lived experience was expressed through language, then transcribed and translated into text. The text was then interpreted or analysed with reference to hermeneutics (Ricoeur, 1991).

3.2.3. Hermeneutics

I ceaselessly must listen to and keep
the sea's lamenting in my awareness,
I must feel the crash of the hard water
and gather it up in a perpetual cup.
So, through me, freedom and the sea
will make their answer to the shuttered heart
(Pablo Neruda, *Poet's Obligation*, verse II)

The word hermeneutics comes from the Greek word *hermeneuo* and means 'to translate or interpret'. It was introduced into philosophy by Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias [On Interpretation]*. (c.360BC) which examined the relationship between language and

logic. Aristotle pointed out that spoken words are symbols or signs (*symbola*) of affections or interpretations (*pathemata*) of the soul (*psyche*). He further suggested that, regardless of different histories, cultures and speech/languages:

The mental affections themselves, of which these words are primarily signs, are the same for the whole of the mankind, are also the objects of which those affections are representations or likenesses, images copies.
(Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 1.16)

The further historical development of hermeneutics has involved various theories and religions that concern the meaning of the written text. However, Ricouer's (1991) hermeneutics focuses on the relationships between the author, the text and the reader. As a process of interpretation then, hermeneutics is believed to reveal the meaning beyond its manifestation. For example, Freud looked for hidden meaning in dreams and in lapses of language, beyond the surface of manifested reality. While Freud sought to cause a person to distrust conscious knowledge itself, including illusions and religious beliefs, Ricouer (1991) pointed to Freud, Nietzsche and Marx as demystifiers of hermeneutics, as they interpreted individuality or a person as being the surface of reality. Thus Ricoeur promoted hermeneutics as a reflection of the aesthetic experience of language. In this view, when interpreting meaning it is important to pay attention to what is not said or shown or done when an experience is being described; only though this reflective method can meaning be elucidated. In the course of developing his anthropology, Ricoeur made a major methodological shift from existential phenomenology to combine phenomenological description with hermeneutic interpretation. As he argued (Ricouer 1991), self-understanding is not possible if it is not mediated by signs, symbols and texts. Therefore, Ricoeur refers to hermeneutics as a hinge-like structured interpretation between language and lived experience. As such, his concept of hermeneutics complements Sartre's philosophical foundation for the methodological tool that has been applied throughout this journey. Indeed, Ricoeur explained hermeneutics as a form of experience that supports the interpretation of written texts, tracing differences and repetition and connecting narratives to make rich meanings. For the purpose of this journey, the researcher proposes the notion

of narrative to refer to a dialectical self-reflection on conscious experience as well as on unconscious cultural, social and individual processes. Such synthesis or combination of opposing assertions supports an exploration of the participants' inner and outer world – of their individual, family and community experiences. Moreover, given the nature of this journey, the researcher has drawn on her own experience as a part of going round the hermeneutic circle, and has analysed in her own way, thus, she has also been constructing a narrative.

Thus, Ricouer's hermeneutics as a form of textual or narrative analysis has served the researcher as a basic resource for articulating the main themes in order to understand the phenomena. To understand, or the process of gaining an understanding, does not mean to grasp something fully. In this research it means to get closer to war-survivor families and to people in our communities. This research, then, is an attempt, in Ricoeur's words, to perceive the families not as mere subjects of this inquiry, but as part of historical consciousness. For example, Poligny, Doray and Martin (2007) adopted Ricouer's hermeneutic approach (by 'picking up the pieces' and re-reading') in their attempt to understand stories about atrocities and mass crimes. They suggested (pp.24–5) that:

To understand is neither to absolve nor to eliminate all responsibility through the kind of reasoning that postulates that men inevitably become violent when placed in a particular socio-historical context. Also taking an interest in individuals who participated in the massacre of their fellow beings, including of their former neighbours or family members, is not to forgive but rather to acknowledge the fact, that in the descent into violence, the perpetrators are rarely 'insane'

Therefore, the bridge on which we now stand and the map for this whole journey were both designed from the perspective of meaning-making. Thus we are attempting to enter the participant's subjectivity through the hermeneutic process and from the platform of existential and transcendental phenomenological inquiry, in order to try to 'understand the other'. Such a delicate and complex process should ultimately dismiss the notion of otherness. Participation in this journey itself creates inter-subjectivity, with empathy, and

hopefully a new mode of apprehension: a new way of being and knowing in the world after the war and refugee experience.

Throughout such a journey the researcher needs to be engaged in constant critical analysis of her underlying perceptions of the participants' experiences and of her own, similar experience. This should involve a process of constant examination of memory and opinion about war, violence and peace. Aware of these requirements and demands, before embarking on this journey, the researcher decided to apply the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in this research as a revealing analytical tool that includes all, though is not limited to, the above philosophical dimensions.

3.2.4 Justification and rationale for using the analytical tool – IPA

This journey attempts to explore and understand the interconnection of the psychological, social and political dimensions of trauma and to provide an account of the power of healing relationships, family strength, resilience and the recovery process of refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Therefore, considering the researcher's 'insider' position and the way she interprets the world, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis appeared to be the most appropriate analytical technique for the methodological needs of this enquiry. IPA is a relatively new qualitative methodology which has been developed primarily for psychology (Smith, 1996; Smith & Osborn, 2003,) with theoretical foundations in phenomenology, hermeneutics and the idiographic mode of inquiry (Smith & Eatough, 2007). According to Smith and Eatough, IPA also has its roots in a traditional concern with personal accounts and subjective experience in psychology and with symbolic interactions – the primacy of social interactions in meaning-making or interpretation. Moreover, IPA investigates human experience and provides an in-depth understanding for culturally-constructed aspects of a person Being-in-the-World (Shaw, 2001). IPA also focuses on cognitive and emotional entities, where the researcher attempts to reveal a person's thoughts and feelings and employs self-reporting data, which will then be subjected to a sophisticated thematic analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Indeed, the IPA

focuses particularly upon the uniqueness, quality and meaning of a person's life and it has the capacity to explore one's experience within a cultural context.

Moreover, the IPA attempts to retain reflexivity of personal experience and is committed to explore social and linguistic constructs through the concept of narrative (Crossley, 2000). Accordingly, the researcher opens herself to the research experience, facing ambiguities and transforming herself during this exploration. This approach to the process of understanding (the events/stories demand a continual process of self reflection from the researcher as well as from the participants and the reader) and the need to take such a psychological and ethical viewpoint can sometimes be painful.

At the same time, the perspectives of the narratives will have a particular meaning for and influence on the researcher as she shares a similar experience to that of the participants in the study (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Indeed, this shared experience generates in the researcher a desire to integrate truth and knowledge or at least to elicit and engage the narrative of each participant, as a potentially powerful communication tool for society. Thus, for the purpose of this journey, desire is not a mere wish or longing and does not refer to descriptive eruptions of impulses. The researcher uses the term desire to refer to an activity of creating a story, as according to the researcher, desire functions as a source or drive for our most advanced intellectual capacities including our ability to reason and analyse as well as to support and process the emotions. It is a liberating force of energy capable of accelerating and expanding our consciousness – our acting in the world.

Weine (2008) suggested that desire for story has been at the heart of trauma survivors' accounts who also have the desire for plot in their narrative. The plot is more than the mere description of horrific details of an attack or torture, desire for plot in trauma survivors' stories offers a means for including disparate and extreme experience, memories and emotion, which are otherwise not articulate, into one coherent narrative. Thus, according to Weine, trauma stories with their plot convey a point of view, add an attempt to represent the survivors' interpretation of the events. As such, dialogue between the

participants and the researcher comprises multiple voices and perspectives. It becomes a testimony –a story with plot or a full trauma story (instead of a toxic trauma story). The full trauma story includes the broader experience and knowledge of the trauma survivors. As such, the full trauma story and the researcher's interpretative position within this story provide congruence between the philosophical foundation and the methodological processes and instruments in this study. This means that the researcher learns and develops new concepts from the data but does not expect to prove any theoretical framework. Within this context, the IPA is a revealing analytical technique which emphasizes the active role of the researcher. Indeed, access to the participants' experience depends on and is complicated by the researcher's own experiences and conceptions throughout the interpretative process.

Thus, according to Smith and Eatough (2007), the researcher was required to be involved in a two-stage interpretation process – a double hermeneutic. The participants were trying to make sense of their world and in turn the researcher was trying to make sense of how the participants were trying to interpret their world. This double hermeneutic was illustrated by the researcher's active role; at one level the researcher was like the participants, as she shared similar experience with the participants and she drew on mental faculties they shared. At the same time, the researcher was different from the participants, as she was constantly engaged in second-order sense-making of the participants' experience. Thus, part of this method derived from the process of interpretative activity where, according to Smith and Osborn (2003) the researcher' s own conceptions are required in order to make sense of a participant's personal world. This approach allowed the researcher to have an interpretative engagement with the study from an insider perspective (Smith & Osborn, 2003). This assumed that participants' words have a particular meaning and influence on the researcher, who shares a similar experience to that of the participants in the study.

Furthermore, IPA combines this process of double hermeneutic with Ricouer's (1991) critical hermeneutics. Consistent with its phenomenological roots, IPA attempts to understand what it is like to be in someone else's shoes – to try to see something from the participant point of view, though this is never completely possible. At the same time, a detailed IPA approach required from the researcher to try to hang back, to be a little bit detached, in order to be able to ask curious and critical questions about what the person or family was trying to achieve, or to recognise that perhaps something being indicated in this interview that was not intended. Therefore a double and critical hermeneutics approach was used in this inquiry and an ideographic mode of inquiry (where each story was equally attentively analysed) emphasized (Smith & Eatough, 2007). However, before applying this analytical tool advice was sought from its creator, Jonathan Smith, on how to travel within the hermeneutics circle. This was his suggestion:

1. Write an account of your perception of the phenomenon before starting interviews.

2. Try to put that to one side as you interview your participants.

3. As you bring their interviews back to where you are, examine the relation between how your prior account helps make sense of the new experience of the participant and vice versa.

4. Stay alive to what is new and unexpected in your participants' accounts and what is different from your own account.

5. Overall try to allow your participants' experience to come through even if in some instances it disagrees with what you thought.

6. Write your own account at various intervals – monitor how it may change in the light of the new data you are encountering.

(J.A. Smith, personal communication, 6 March, 2007)

Overall, the conceptual framework of this metaphorical bridge and its tool has defined the way the researcher has conceptualised her role in producing knowledge. Broadly, this particular view of knowledge has three aspects: knowledge as participation (understanding), personal knowledge (being), and knowledge as text (thesis). This thesis, the phenomenological knowledge-as-text, has conceptual, ethical, poetic, informative and formative dimensions. Indeed, this knowledge created by active involvement in the sense-making process by both participants and the researcher was a core concept of applied IPA (Smith, 1999). The benefits of this research approach include inclusion of in-depth data on this subject that might otherwise not have been accessible. The researcher as a human instrument in this study certainly did not only have a commitment to understanding emerging perspectives but also to making an effort to be balanced and reflective in analysing and reporting (Patton, 1990). Indeed, the researcher entered the phenomena and opened herself during the research journey (see reflective journal; Appendix A). While this resulted in rich data and grounded analysis, there were limitations to the insider position, which will be discussed in the following sections describing the procedure used to gather and analyse data.

3.3 Methods and Procedure

In this inquiry the researcher made a distinction between methodology (the rationale for the applied methods) and methods (the procedure used to gather and analyse data). Strictly speaking, methodology also refers to 'methods', but more in the sense of philosophical methods or the researcher's general attitude. In this section the researcher describes the procedural methods or activities that she has employed throughout this exploration.

3.3.1. Sampling frame and design

While the sampling framework, based on the research questions, comprised a set of elements from which the members of the samples were drawn, the sample design determined the particular sampling technique which was selected. The purpose of this

study was to gather information about how families from the former Yugoslavia access and manage changes following their experience of war and refugee trauma. After approval for this research was received from the Ethics Committee of Victoria University (Appendix B) an emergent or purposive sampling design was employed (Patton, 2002). The participants were selected on the basis of their background and experience with issues that are relevant to the study. (This sampling framework included continuous adjustment of the sample to focus on what was relevant to the questions.) This type of informant selection is also known as an information-rich case where, according to Patton, the person's own words provide rich data. To accomplish purposive information-rich case samples, participants were invited to take part in the study through informal networks. As well as informal networks known to the researcher, assistance was sought from community leaders, in order to identify families from the former Yugoslavia in Melbourne. It was initial criterion that all participants in this research had come to Australia in the last 20 years, due to the fact that the exodus of refugees from the former Yugoslavia to Australia started in 1992 (Jupp, 2002). In order to ensure purposive sampling across a wide demographic, the researcher considered war-survivors-refugees from intact parenting families, who were not included in clinical populations and not known to be diagnosed as suffering from PTSD. (For the purpose of this study a family was defined in a traditional way to be a two-parent family and its child/children. This decision was taken in order to reduce range of dimensions or variables under study.)

In line with this sampling technique, snowballing strategy was applied. This strategy consisted of asking one informant to recommend other participants who might be interested in participating in the interviews (Patton, 2002). Such strategies entailed housing 'gatekeepers' who, as Neuman (2000) pointed out, were people who had formal or informal authority to recruit participants. A person in this role is an also known as a key insider, who enables the researcher to recruit some participants (Bailey, 1996). But as the researcher in this study shared the culture, background and many similar experiences with

the participants, the gatekeeper had an informative role, introducing the researcher to the participants, so that isolation could be diminished. Indeed, the researcher's background and her personal experience of the phenomena studied allowed her access to the settings and enhanced the selection of information-rich participants. These factors are likely to have increased trust and decreased the possibility of an uneven power balance during the sampling and interview processes (Patton, 1990).

However, an issue of time lapse and recruitment difficulties arose at this stage of the study, due to the renewed flare-up in the Balkans as a result of the declaration of independence of Kosovo (at the beginning of 2008). This affected political/social dynamics within/and among the relevant ethnic communities in Australia, including the researcher's own family. Due to the delicate nature of this project, some families who had previously indicated their willingness to participate were now reluctant to be involved with the project. However, the researcher explored other avenues and further recruitment was then possible, so that data collection was successfully completed. Indeed, these refusals were bridged by direct personal contact with initial participants/gatekeepers from the community who had a reputation within the community as people of trust, respect and with no history of nationalism throughout the war, during their period as refugees and later in Australia. The reputation of these gatekeepers and their recommendation of the researcher as an 'honest person' created an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect and enhanced insider rapport qualities during the interview.

Furthermore, using participants' native language was also a key part of the snowball procedure, as use of the English language during the sampling process might have lead to sample bias. Potential participants with less fluency in English were less keen to participate in the study. After providing verbal information and a plain language statement about the nature of the study, translated into the participants' first language (Appendix C), the interviews were arranged at a time and location convenient to the participants, thus most interviews were conducted in the participants' home. The

participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix E) and were able to withdraw from the interview at any stage.

3.3.2. Participants

People who took part in this research were refugees from the territory of former Yugoslavia who (before the war in their country of origin) lived in intact families and who have continued to live with their partner and child/children after migration to Melbourne, Australia. The participants had been living in Australia at least two years at the time of the interview, and some of them as long as 14 years. (The median number for resettlement was 10.45).

According to Smith and Osborn (2003) and Patton (2002) a relatively small number of individuals/units of analysis enable a rich portrayal of phenomena studied. However, the literature did not provide any criteria regarding the number of members of a family that should participate in narrative-family research. For example, most family research deals with data on dyads (or relationship between two family members), mother-child studies and focus groups (Greenstein, 2000), whereas this research explored a 'family as a system of individuals', where each individual from the system becomes a potential storyteller.

Indeed, each family member was considered as an informant or as an author of the story that he/she was living (Harvey & Miller, 2000) and each provided important data on the relationship between family members (Astedt-Kurki, Paavilainen & Lehti, 2001). However, one family member was considered to be giving only one aspect of the story. To avoid the effects of biased perception, this research was concerned both with individual family members and with the family in its entirety. As the aim of this study was to explore the whole-family unit in the context of whole-family interaction, this line of inquiry comprised two groups of participants: i) Individual Family Members (IFM) – parents sequentially, ii) Multiple Family Members (MFM) – families concurrently. Initially, 12 families indicated willingness to participate in this study and one family later declined

further participation. The sample size consisted of 22 parents (IFM) and 11 family units (MFM). The 11 couples who participated had children, most (eight) couples had two children and (three) couples had three children. There were 25 children participants with age range from 6 to 25 years and one family also had an adult 40-year-old daughter (the median number of the children participants' age was 20.84.). Taken together, the overall number of participants involved in this study was 47 (n = 47). The age of family members ranged from six years old (the youngest child informant) to 61 years old (the oldest parent informant) (the median number was 33.51).The participants belonged to either of three ethnic groups: Bosnian Muslim, Croatians, and Serbians. Five out of eleven families interviewed in this study involved ethnically mixed marriages where the spouses were from Croatian and Serbian background or from Croatian and Bosnian Muslim background. As a consequence of the war, the participants were refugees who had come to Australia with Special Humanitarian or Refugee Visas. For two of these families Australia was the country of second asylum; however, nine families had been refugees in their own country of origin before arriving in Australia.

There were families with rural background (n = 7) and families with urban background (n = 4). The educational background of participants was as follows: 3 families had parents who had graduated from university, 3 couples/parents had high school-vocational education and some tertiary education, 5 couples/parents had finished primary school. Furthermore, eight children had graduated from university, fourteen children were attending primary or high school education and three children were already in the workforce with completed high school education. All the children, regardless of age, education and their marriages, lived together with their parents. Two family units also lived with their grandchildren (n=5), however the grandchildren were not interviewed, though they were physically present during the interviews; their age range was not taken into consideration and this sample profile is not necessarily representative of the refugee population from the former Yugoslavia in Melbourne, Australia.

The individual and family interviews represented only the initial stage of data generation. Subsequently, the data were then synthesised into eleven unique family stories about the experience of war and the trauma of being a refugee and the eleven families can thus be seen as eleven participants. This study is therefore somewhat larger than the usual IPA sample size, as there seems to be a convergence in clinical and health psychology postgraduate programs, where six to eight participants is an appropriate number for IPA study (Smith & Eatough, 2007). However, Smith and Eatough have also pointed out that IPA studies have been published with samples ranging from one to 42, with the norm being towards the lower end. Their and this study confirmed that it is the phenomena under study that dictates the method (not vice-versa) and also the type of participants selected.

3.4   Collecting and generating data

The choice of data collection in this research is determined by the research questions. The data were collected and generated through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the participants, using an interview schedule developed by the researcher. The interview schedule served as a flexible guide to elicit each story. This open-ended, semi-structured approach allowed for the development of rapport and enabled, to a certain degree, the psychological and social world of the family to be revealed without responses being predetermined (Patton, 2002).

All the interviews were digitally recorded with the participants' permission. Home interviews allowed family members to freely express themselves and the researcher was placed in the role of a visitor (Astedt-Kurki, et al, 2001). During the sampling procedure the researcher kept a journal that detailed the procedure, providing valuable reflection on the recruitment experience (Miles & Huberman, 1994). At the end of each interview, the participants were debriefed in order to identify and ease potential emotional disturbance and given contact information for support services.

The quality of the research also depended to a large extent on interacting with people in their own language and on their own terms (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Use of the English language was thought to represent a barrier to valid disclosure, consequently, these interviews were conducted in the participants' native languages by the researcher, who speaks Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian fluently. At the end of each interview, the participants were debriefed in order to identify and ease potential emotional disturbance and they were also given contact information for support services.

There were four steps in the data generation process: Creating interview relationships, Personal interviews, Family interviews and Memoing.

3.4.1 Creating the interview relationship

There was a whole-family contact before formal interviews. Following expression of interest in the study by one family member, the researcher visited the family home to meet all the family members and ascertain their interest in participating. This was a process of creating the interview relationships or establishing a starting point for the interviews. As such, the process was beneficial in reducing tension and uncertainty that might surround an interview session, so that participants could freely describe their feelings. At this stage, digital recording was not used. Overall, this study required a total of 12 hours of family contacts before formal interviews occurred. This process enabled power sharing between the participants and the researcher and as such it contributed to genuine discoveries about the phenomena under study (Riessman, 2008). It also allowed the forging of trusting relationships and created an atmosphere of safety for the researcher and the participants (Pouligny, Doray, & Martin, 2007).In this context and before starting to gather details of direct interest to the researcher, the time spent with the participants was very valuable and a full degree of consent on the part of the participants was achieved for this particularly difficult interviewing topic. In this way, according to Pouligny, Doray and Martin, the researcher chose to listen, she formulated a scheme to be undertaken jointly with the participants, for her further exploration, where the researcher honoured her

participants, who then truly became 'the subjects' of the research. Moreover, this approach, in the domain of phenomenological psychology, prioritized the 'meaning' over the mere 'data' and provided the design and the background image for the researcher to understand where, how and why the trauma narrative was created. In order to seek a more precise account of traumatic events and to depict possible resilience within the families, by creating interview relationships, the researcher was able to come to the grips with the entire complexity of the subjective events. Thus, this process contributed to ethical, comprehensive and meaningful data collection (Pouligny, Doray, & Martin, 2007)

3.4.2 Personal interviews (closed and open questions)

The second step of the interview process took place on a separate occasion and comprised data collection at the individual level. This meant that personal/face-to face interviews were conducted with each partner/parent separately. The design of this stage was based on the assumption that an individual family member's perspective was a valuable source of information about the family (Astedt-Kurki, Paavilainen & Lehti, 2001). The questions in personal interviews focused on: background (profile questions) within a chronological (past, present, future) timeframe in order to reflect the experiences and worldviews of the participants (Patton, 2002). These questions engaged participants' reflection on their individual feelings without them needing to consider anyone else in the family. These types of questions were called 'linear questions' (Gelcer & Schwartzbein, 1989). When conducting this type of interview, the researcher needed to be very sensitive to the status and the various roles played by each family member within the family structure, at the time of the interview (Greenstein, 2006). Overall, the items were divided into three sections:

3.4.2 (1) Closed questions:

Participants were asked to give basic demographic information, such as age, where they were born, religion, education and anything else they might want to add (Patton, 2002).

3.4.2 (2) Open-ended thematic questions:

Open-ended thematic questions were asked in order to explore participants'
feelings and viewpoints, and to understand the processes they went through during and
after the war. These questions were based on qualitative interviewing developed by
Charmaz (2001) and explored the interconnections of psychological, social and political
dimensions of trauma and aimed to provide an account of the family relationships from an
individual perspective. The items were also included in an attempt to elicit the participants'
responses on their perception of strength, trust and stability in their families, now and in
the future. These items were based on Key Processes in Family Resilience developed by
Walsh (2002, p.132).

The duration of each interview was one hour, on average, in order to provide rich
and detailed information and to allow themes to be fully explored. The individual
interviews of between 1 and 1.5 hours were held with each of 22 parents/partners.

3.4.2 (3) Open-ended debriefing questions:

At the end of each interview, the participants were debriefed in order to identify
and ease potential emotional disturbance. The following debriefing questions developed by
Ward and Finkelhor (2000) were applied at the end of the personal interviews:

1. How are you feeling at this point?
2. What kind of feelings are you aware of regarding history, duration of refugee status and
   current place of residence?
3. What recollections of thoughts about the war and your experience as a refugee have been
   raised by the interview?
4. What are you likely to do about these feelings or thoughts?

The debriefing, guided by the above questions, was not recorded but it was
regarded as important information.

3.4.3 Family interviews (circular questioning)

The third step was a family interview using circular questioning in an attempt to
generate a unique story of relationships or a theme within each family. This stage consisted

of data generation at an interpersonal level (Harvey & Miller, 2000). In order for the researcher to capture shared meaning, the whole family was interviewed (Astedt-Kurki, Paavilainen & Kristina, 2001, p.291). These interviews consisted of circular questioning developed by Milan Associates. Circular questioning was originally described as a part of family therapy and was used as a means to investigate the family system (Gelcer & Schwartzbein, 1989). This process involved asking family members questions, in order to elicit a description of social realities. It aimed to help a family to define or discover potentially destructive interaction patterns, so that they might settle on or be forced to develop an alternative interaction pattern (Krause, 2003). However, the primary aim of circular questions in this research was to elicit information that could answer the research questions.

Thus, for the purpose of this study, circular questions referred to questions asked during a family interview and referred to a method of data collection. It involved repeating the same question to each family member throughout the interview. The questioning asked family members to answer the same question one after the other. In addition, circular questioning included intentional overlap with the thematic questions from personal interviews (Please refer to Appendix B). Thus, the circular questions served as meaning markers for more in-depth knowledge of family relationship, comprising verbal and nonverbal or analogical information (Penn, 1982). In regard to nonverbal information, memoing was applied. This pattern of circular questioning also invoked differences and similarities within each war-surviving family, and incorporated so-called 'interventive and descriptive questions' (Penn, 1985, p.225). It needs to be born in mind that the interventive circular questions' were hypothetical or orientated towards future events, as they arose from the researcher's pre-determined questions. On the other hand, the notion of descriptive circular questions referred to probing and depended upon questions that originated from family members' narratives (Penn, 1985).

The technique of circular questioning also included a 'subsystem comparison'. This referred to a process of asking a third family member in a relationship about a relationship between two others in that family (Penn, 1982, p. 271). In other words, 'subsystem comparison' represented the researcher's attempt to gain triadic information asking a family member to describe a dyad (or relationship between two family members) within the family, both members of which were present in the room at the time of the interview.

For example, instead of asking a mother about her relationship with her child, the father was asked: "How do you see the relationship between your son and your wife?" Such questions explored not only the relationship between dyads and other sub-system relationships; it drew a finer distinction between a whole family system (including comparisons between subsystems and within subsystems). Indeed, the researcher included a whole family as an informant, while attempting to answer the research questions on family roles, obligations and expectations. Moreover, the 'subsystem comparisons' elicited feedback as a centre of communication within a family (Krause, 2003). The feedback further provided a basis for 'explanation questions' (Penn, 1982, p.272). The 'explanation questions' referred to probing and were dependent upon feedback. Their purpose was to illuminate former (war and refugee) experience or past relationships in the family (e.g. How would you explain this?). This stage of interviewing involved the following items: i) questions asking family members to compare their experiences or feelings on particular issues, ii) questions asking about participants' roles, obligations and expectations within the family, iii) questions that concern how the participants felt/coped with traumatic reminders of disaster or unpunished criminals .

These family interviews of 1 to 2 hours were held with each family unit. Overall, this study required a total of 55 hours interviewing. The interviews were carried out over a 12-month period as the data collection and data analysis occurred concurrently.

3.4.4 Memoing

The fourth step of data collection was 'memoing' – another important source of data collection in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.69). 'Memoing' referred to the researcher's reflection on the processes during the data collection, which further clarified each interview setting. For the purposes of this research, 'memoing' comprised observations throughout the circular questioning, and the researcher observed the analogical behaviour in the family. Such behaviour referred to a 'subtext' that was developed between the researcher and participants, and consisted of: family members' eye contact, postural shifts, gesture, proximity, tone of voice, interruptions, etc (Penn, 1982, p. 270). Thus, the 'subtext' was a result of overlapping data collection strategies as the researcher was fully engaged in experiencing the settings and interactions – talking with and observing the participants. This complex process was defined by Patton (2002, p. 267) as 'real-world fieldwork. Thus, notes were kept on observations made during the interviews, such as evidence of emotions, and the researcher's further thoughts regarding the interaction were immediately recorded after the interview. Such appropriate description/note-taking of family interactions contributed to further knowledge regarding family dynamics.

The next stage of the research involved framing the analysis.

3.5   Framing the Analysis

The analysis of the data was guided primarily by the research questions. The criteria of the analysis were adopted from Smith and Osborn's (2003) IPA approach, but they also included elements of Patton's (2002) techniques and narrative coding process developed by Fiese, et al (2001). All these approaches and elements of the analysis were in accordance with the principles of thematic analysis. The stories elicited from interviews were transcribed verbatim in the language of the participants (Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian) and then translated into English by the researcher. As narrative interviewing generated the detailed account, the transcript ranged from 12 to 31 pages with a median of

21 pages. This process did not include systematic transcription of features of speech; however it included the appropriate descriptions in parenthesis (e.g. expression of emotions: crying, sighs, laughs and silence). In the text of the thesis ... denotes that parts of the quotes are missing. In the text, where quotes were thought not to make sense out of larger context, contextual material was inserted in parenthesis, for instance: 'I do not know. You should ask them probably.' (The participant is crying) Pause, Silence). As is evident; the English transcript was used in the analysis process.

3.5.1 Stage 1: Initial Analysis

The entire process of transcription was far from being technical, rather it was enormously complex, emotional, consuming and deeply interpretative (Riessman, 2008). It created a delicate and complex process of empathy (Ricouer, 1991) and uneasy reflection on the researcher's war and refugee experiences. It comprised a process of listening to the recorded conversations, the translation as a process of transformation of complex verbal exchange into object – the written text. This process required the researcher to engage in four to 5 hours work for every hour of the interview. Firstly, the researcher listened and then translated the dynamic conversations into linear written English – a word-for-word translation. Then, she listened to the interviews again, interpreting her listening and understanding into the adjusted English translation. Furthermore, the researcher engaged a professional editor in interpretation and discussions about syntax in order 'to find equivalent words in English for referential content – never easy in any translation' (Riessman, 2008, p.31).

Thus, the text as final material for the analysis was 'composed jointly, crafted in a collaborative conversational interaction' (Riessman, 2008, p. 43) between the participants, the researcher and the editor. In this way, each text (with its key features, parenthesis, the editor's stanzas, etc,) shifted with its constituent parts finally forming an idea unit. These idea units, as transformed several times during the above described process, were actual data for the analysis. During this initial stage of the analysis (transcription and translation),

the researcher kept a record of initial thoughts, comments and points and throughout

further interpretations she would go back to these valuable and useful indications for the

overall analysis. This process is a fundamental step in IPA and the researcher continued to

go back to readings of transcript several times; the left hand margin was used to make

notes on anything that seemed to be important (Smith & Eatough, 2007). As Smith and

Eatough highlighted, and as was evident throughout this analysis, with each reading the

researcher became responsive and freer to the textual analysis, using the particular

language style and comments to identify and to clarify what the participants meant. From

this platform, the actual process of generating themes included the following series of

steps.

3.5.1 (1)   Mapping – the What

This idiographic approach started with reading, annotation and coding of the

transcript with a focus on the meaning rather than on the frequency of the words in the

transcript. Each transcript was analysed in detail before moving onto the next one (Smith

& Osborn, 2003). After the transcript had been read thoroughly, the researcher produced

wide-ranging notes about language, tone and mood in each interview. At the same time,

the researcher was alert about bracketing or highlighting her assumptions, allowing space

for unexpected concepts to emerge. Further re-reading of each transcript was undertaken in

order to detect important issues associated with key words that captured the meaning of

some passages (Patton, 2002). This detection process altered many aspects of interpretative

frameworks (Storey, 2007). Creating interpretative frameworks included identification of

any connections or contradiction between the key words. As such, this coding process

included an interpretative effort in itself while attaching meaning to the research questions

and analytical intent. In order to capture and explain initial themes that reflected the

researcher's questions (e.g. trauma, perceived justice, etc) consistency as well as

inconsistency across the data were considered. This approach comprised holistic

dimensions called holistic content (Bleakley, 2005). The holistic content referred to the question of what happened in a story and how the narrative was seen in an overall pattern. Such content emphasized the structure of a story and was considered in the initial interpretation. Table 1 presents an example of this coding process.

Table 1 An example of content coding

_____

Interview Extract

1.There was not a big difference between being a prisoner in the local school and

2.being a registered refugee. There was not much difference, I am sorry to say.

3. I mean, I can't say anything but the truth..

4.(pause, silence)

Coding

        1 .a refugee = prisoner

        2. a registered refugee (perceived refugee status in society, resignation)

        3 .truth telling

        4. hesitation

        Question: What does hesitation indicate?

_____

Interview Extract

        19. I would not treat a dog like that.

        20. I will remember all these humiliations until I die.

        22. Wretchedness, wretchedness is all it has been

Coding

        19. values

        20.humiliation

        22.anger

        Question: What is this person's story about?

_____

2. 3.5.1 (2) Interpreting signs along the way

At this point, the researcher pulled together signs and insights from each interview to make a coherent whole and was encouraged by her supervisors to summarise each interview and to reflect upon it. This phase consisted of exploration of data , maintaining an open mind as far as possible. Thus, the researcher exercised further her intentional meaning-making and intuition as she attempted to provide responses to cues of 'shared understanding', going beyond conscious judgment or invocation of theoretical and intellectual frameworks. This process inevitably involved the researcher's creative insights and cultural heritage. Indeed, at this stage of analysis, the researcher nurtured her initial understanding of the interviews through her personal and in-depth reflection on the stories, the experiences and the accounts of the participants: she sought new and refined understandings, incorporating intuitive and in-depth reflective processes by reading compassionately-transcribed storytelling. This was, according to Esbjorn-Hargens and Anderson (2005), a further development of iterative cycles of interpretations. Indeed, after the verbatim transcript had been read thoroughly, the themes were grouped into different clusters associated with the research questions. The segments of the modification and intuiting processes are illustrated in the journal (Appendix A). The following table illustrates an effort to create a comprehensive unit relevant to the research questions.

Table 2 Initial Modification

_____

Trust and stability

       Explore trust in more depth

Communication, intimacy, roles and obligations

       Being vs. roles/is this typical cultural?

Coping with traumatic reminders /unpunished war criminals

       Explore further on age and gender regarding injustice and a sense of natural life circle that has been disrupted

Rebuilding social networks and community connectedness

       Explore further social connectedness, value system, awareness of time and history

_____

3.5.2 Stage 2: Identifying and labelling themes

This critical phase looked at the whole experience expressed in each family story and selected a focus and scope for the study, by considering the literal context of the narrative together with field notes and observational data. Patterns and similarities between participants' accounts were synthesised, as the researcher tried to discover meaning beyond the face-value of the participants' stories. As suggested by Smith and Osborn (2003, p.51), the researcher posed questioning and empathic hermeneutics, asking: 'Is something leaking out here that wasn't intended?' and 'Do I have a sense of something going on here that maybe the participants themselves are less aware of?'. The purpose of these questions was to stimulate different perspectives –ways of seeing, interpreting and understanding the phenomena studied. The main component in this process was to define, label and develop preliminary themes (Storey, 2007).

In order to recognize the key components of the conceptualization of tentative master themes the researcher used theoretical lenses to make maximum psychological sense of the data. This iterative process involved a cycle of re-reading the stories, looking for further themes and renaming them, eliminating, revising and reconceptualising sub-themes. Throughout this process, the researcher shared her evolving sub-themes and themes with her two academic supervisors, who would challenge the researcher to justify and sustain the tentative themes, pointing out new perspectives, but remaining family-interaction discovery orientated, as this was the main concern or the principal point of this analysis. This process took eight months and created further idiographic mapping.

3.5.2 (1) Mapping – the How (and the What)

This stage of the analysis included the holistic form-dimension which, according to Bleakley (2005), referred to the question of how the pattern of the story unfolded when

taken in the family context – looking at the whole experience expressed in each family story. The further identification of any connections or contradictions that followed between the key words contributed to the interplay between the individual and family levels of analysis as necessary steps in order to reach interconnectedness of the fullest sense of understanding and the meaning of the phenomena under study. In order to identify such connections and contradictions, the researcher developed a family interaction coding system – analysing family dynamics through their interactions and the stories they told. A family story, for the purpose of this analysis, consists of communication patterns and meaning-making processes.

Family Interaction Coding System

The basic concept of this coding system is grounded in the answers to research questions that have been found to be central to family functioning (Intimacy/Boundaries, Roles/Obligations, Values/Challenges). The three analogous dimensions of this coding process were partially based on the family narrative coding system developed by Fiese et al. (2001). This group of family researchers developed systematic methods to evaluate family processes with a focus on how family meaning was transmitted across generations. This method was created for a non-clinical, systemic family environment, to enable observation of processes, including relationships among all family members (e.g. cohesiveness, engagement, etc) and, as such, it appeared to be an appropriate basis for this inquiry.

According to Fiese et al (2001), this coding system was developed to assess naturally occurring behaviour and conversation within the family interview context. It was especially designed for culturally diverse families. Moreover, this well-structured coding allowed comparability across the interviews in further stages of analysis. In this way, the researcher adopted three dimensions of this coding system. These dimensions are: i) Narrative Coherence, ii) Narrative Interaction and iii) Relationship Beliefs. The following table illustrates the structure of this coding system.

Table 3 A toolkit to explore family processes

A family story

Personal interviews		
	Narrative Coherence	
Internal Consistency	Flexibility	Congruence
Intimacy/Boundaries Roles/Obligations Values/Challenges		

Family interviews/Interaction	
	Narrative interaction
Couple narrative style	Coordination
Intimacy/Boundaries Roles/Obligations Values/Challenges	

Family social world	
	Relationship beliefs
Relationship expectations	Interviewer Intimacy
Intimacy/Boundaries Roles/Obligations Values/Challenges	

Narrative coherence

This reflects the ways in which the partners, interviewed separately and together, organize the narrative. Coherence consists of distinct qualities: a) Internal Consistency, b) Flexibility, c) Congruence of Affect and Content (Fiese, et al, 2001).

The internal consistency of the family story refers to how well the different parts of the individual interviews form a cohesive whole, a family story. Flexibility refers to the family's ability to explore and accept new alternatives within the host society. The Congruence of Affect and Content refers to the emotions expressed throughout the

interviews; accordance between description of events or actions and corresponding emotions. Tone of voice, facial expressions and emotional content are basic components of congruence. Lack of congruence refers to inappropriate laughter, inappropriate crying, nervous laughter, inappropriate intensity of affect (Fiese et al, 2001).

Narrative interaction

This reflects the ways in which family members construct the story, or pragmatics, of the narrative. They can do this in two ways: a) Couple Narrative style, and b) Coordination. The Couple Narrative style incorporates the content and the storytelling process (Fiese et al, 2001). This process consists of positive and negative references. The negative references for the family/couple narrative style include such things as the couple's discrepancies, different opinions, parallel stories, occasions of anger. As Fiese et al highlighted, positive references include additions to the partners'/children's story and functional interactions. Coordination refers to how the couple and family work together to resolve their disagreements, if any. Thus, this process requires attention to content – the what – and to the story telling process –the how. Negative references include disconfirmation, strong opinions and/or exclusions. According to Fiese et al, positive references include polite turn-taking, confirmation of opinions, asking the other's opinions, asking for clarification and "we" statements.

Relationship beliefs

The third dimension of this analysis represents the way the families construct their social world as reflected in the narrative content (the What) and the style (the How) of the interviews (Fiese et al, 2001). According to the authors, this reflection has two components: relationship expectations and intimacy with the interviewer. Relationship expectations refer to comparison between the partners' separate interviews regarding their relationship and their expectations regarding their families of origin. Interviewer intimacy refers to an analysis of the participants' ability to trust the interviewer when participating in the conversation. This involves an analysis of how open and willing the families were to share their personal stories with the interviewer.

Thus, different components and dimensions of this coding system enable an analysis of the functioning of the families and constitute an attempt to understand how family members work together to create their story. Indeed, storytelling – the process of telling family and individual histories – family interaction and individual functioning are core concepts of this analysis.

3.5.3 Stage 3: Linking themes/thematic clusters

This stage identified shared themes/initial definitions across the interviews, where a connection between themes was established. It included the selection of relevant illustrative data for the reporting of the broader theme. At this point, the researcher actually transformed participants' storytelling language into expressions appropriate for the academic research (Groenewald, 2004; Spinelli, 2005). She formulated meanings from all the stories and the processes and organized the aggregate formulated meaning into clusters of themes. Some of these themes were contradictory or even unrelated to one another, and this phenomenon required the researcher to be open to ambiguity. Furthermore, there were also some formulated meanings that did not fall into clusters of themes but stood alone. However, all these themes were synthesized into the final list of thematic elements. The list of thematic elements was then integrated into an exhaustive description of the investigated phenomena. At this stage, the researcher consulted her supervisors, seeking their comments, amendments, corrections and novel additions. The supervisors helped to differentiate between guiding principles and themes, thus the master themes and superordinated theme were established. Then the researcher produced a further exhaustive description of the phenomena, finalizing the writing process.

3.5.4 Stage 4: Writing as final stage of interpretative analysis

Reflective writing and editing was also part of the iterative cycle that helped to re-shape numerous drafts. The process of rewriting numerous drafts enabled the themes to be further explored in depth, serving as a very important part of the process of discovery to produce the results section of this thesis. In this way the writing process identified the central concerns – the superordinated theme and consistent sub-themes, as a principal aim

of the IPA (Storey, 2007). During this process the researcher 'bracketed' her interpretations again, as she wanted to avoid the process of over-writing and/or over-interpreting (Storey, 2007).The researcher further transformed and refined this final stage of interpretation through intuitive inquiry (Esbjorn-Hargens & Anderson, 2005). According to Esbjorn-Hargens & Anderson, this intuitive inquiry was the most important feature of interpretive-intuitive breakthroughs, or illuminating moments where the final insights regarding data reveal themselves as almost fresh information. The researcher drew both small and large circles that represented themes or stray ideas and shifted the patterns and modified the size of the circles. By doing so, in the final stage of writing up the thesis, she was recalling the entire emotional experience and phenomena studied, together with distraction and incubation periods between work sessions. Thus the whole process of living and re-living her life experiences throughout this thesis was implemented in this crafting of the text. Once again reflection and re-examination of the text was employed to ensure appropriate connections between the chapters and themes. The researcher's attachment to the text reached the stage of 'letting go' to the reader/ traveller for further and indeed never-ending interpretations.

3.6   Credibility: the truth of experience

This section regards rigour in the application of this qualitative inquiry. The traditional criteria for reliability and validity have their roots in positivist epistemology. These terms do not translate well to qualitative methods and other terms are employed to outline related concepts in qualitative inquiry. This study uses the term credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002) and opens the way to a different approach to 'valid or truthful' research.

According to Patton (2002), the issue of credibility for qualitative inquiry refers to credible or believable results in qualitative research and depends on three different elements. These are:

(i) rigorous method, high-quality data and techniques and procedures to ensure integrity of findings

(ii) credibility of the researcher which depends on her training, experience, perspectives and record keeping as well as her status and presentation of self, and

(iii) the research paradigm orientation and the belief in value of this qualitative inquiry. Techniques for promoting integrity for this inquiry included prolonged engagement, triangulation, audit trail, peer debriefing. All these techniques are relevant to the descriptive and interpretative design and were employed in this research in order to enhance the validity of the developing analysis and findings.

3.6.1 Prolonged engagement

As outlined at the outset of this thesis, the researcher herself shares the background and similar experiences of the participants, having lived through war and as a refugee, as well as having lived in ethnic communities with war survivors in suburbs of Melbourne. Thus her prolonged engagement with and her understanding of the culture or context of the explored phenomena (Lincon & Guba, 198,) combined with her thorough understanding of the research paradigm has ensured that this qualitative inquiry is credible and reliable. The recursive nature of the interviewing and analysis process ensured the researcher was intensely engaged in the research for over twelve months. The support of the ethnic communities and their leaders further enhanced this engagement and understanding of the culture, environment of experience of the survivor families in Australia. Such understanding, as a result of long engagement, allowed time for the development of rapport between the researcher and the participants and helped the establishment of a relationship of trust. This trust was further enhanced by careful attention to issues of confidentiality for each informant and for each family and by adhering to their choice of interview place and time.

3.6.2 Persistent Observation

As the participants for this research were recruited through reliable contacts (establishing interview relationships, gatekeeper, community leaders, etc) it was expected that they would thus feel they could trust the researcher to a certain degree. The tape

recording process and the participants' right to alter or withdraw their information at a later date was raised and discussed early in the research process, and this helped to ensure the participants felt a sense of ownership of the interview material. In addition, the researcher's awareness of her position in relation to the explored phenomena was assisted by formal research supervision, discussion with trusted colleagues as well as the writing of a reflexive journal. The journal recommended by her academic supervisors, the IPA inventor Jonathan Smith as well as by the wider literature (Goodrick, 2005; Patton, 2002, etc) recorded the researcher's feelings and expectations, the development of the method, theoretical questions and insights.

Throughout the research process the researcher continued to refine the aims of observation and to concentrate on those aspects under exploration. Such persistent observation can also be called focus of observation, and was concerned with depth of observation, while prolonged engagement was concerned with breadth. This balance between breadth and depth hinges upon the researcher's skills in focussing on both scope and detail. Persistent observation involved discarding irrelevant material, openness to the researcher's own assumptions, considering the meaning of the atypical and awareness of the process of decision making – the hermeneutics circle (Smith, 2007).

3.6.3 Resonance-transferability and peer debriefing

The researcher embarked on this study aware of her position and the tensions involved in insider research, with the intention to be as open as possible to any influences that could affect the phenomena studied. The fact that she was indeed open to the experience of the research can be evidenced by the fact that in the end the theme emerged from the data and not from her prior expectations about trauma and resilience. Thus this attitude to the research succeeded in creating a space where unexpected data/themes could emerge (Charmaz, 2004). The decision-making process during the development of themes was also recorded, and some information was discarded in the course of the development of the focus. By regularly submitting the work in progress to the scrutiny of supervisors

and by continuing to make presentations of the study's aims, methods and findings at professional forums and conferences throughout the research period, the researcher continued her efforts to avoid biases and premature closure of the research project. By having transcripts of the work read by colleagues the researcher also managed to remain open to unexpected possibilities that could enhance resonance validity (Esbjorn-Hargens & Anderson, 2005). According to Esbjorn-Hargens and Anderson, resonance validity refers to the capacity of the study and its findings to produce resonance and an understanding in its readers. By applying the principles of resonance validity the researcher evaluated transferability of the findings.

The transferability of these findings was substituted for internal and external validity (Patton, 2002) and for the purpose of this study it was considered at two levels – the story told by the participants and the validity of the analysis, which refers to the story told by the researcher (Riessman, 2008). According to Riessman, in the final analysis, a 'valid' story persuades readers that data are genuine and that interpretative analysis was plausible and reasonable, therefore the whole journey of discovery becomes evidence. Thus, peer debriefing in this study occurred in three different forums. The main one was PhD supervision, where the researcher felt free to express herself. Since the researcher was an undergraduate student at the local university, she has been supported and guided by her current supervisors for many years. She also works as a sessional lecturer at this university and her relationship of trust and intellectual exchange over a numbers of years with her supervisor made her confident about using the supervisor relationship as a debriefing forum.

Secondly, psychologist colleagues read sections of the thesis and provided constructive feedback and different viewpoints as another form of peer debriefing. These alternative interpretations were considered and some novel ideas were incorporated in this thesis, strengthening the researcher's theoretical and methodological claims and supporting

the findings. Thirdly, the presentation of this conceptual framework, the methods and findings of the research at various professional forums also allowed peer debriefing.

3.6.4 Transferability

Reduction of bias in the analysis was accomplished by triangulation (Lincon & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994), involving an examination of data from extensive and different theoretical perspectives (Smith & Osborn, 2003). These different viewpoints included historical, sociological, cross-cultural, community and clinical psychology perspectives, including family-system theories. The participants' perspectives on various issues were also compared informally with those of other groups and individuals, including staff of Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian ethnic agencies, older generation immigrants and Australian-born people. By triangulating the historical literature (e.g. publication of Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Serbs) regarding life, war and exile from the former Yugoslavia, the researcher improved her understanding of the research topic and was able to establish the best way to interpret the results in order to best reflect the authentic voices of the participants (Lincon & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002).

An audit trial was also developed by collection and restoration of all raw data, journal notes on the development of method, and constructions of categories/codes and findings (Lincon & Guba, 1985). To prevent bias, direct involvement in the interpretation of the data demanded reflexivity and careful self-monitoring on the part of the researcher (Shaw, 2001). To ensure monitoring of personal responses the student researcher maintained a 'reflexive' stance by writing a reflective journal throughout the study process (Smith, 1996).The supervision process allowed for debriefing sessions that would help the researcher to distinguish personal responses from the interpretations and construction of themes. The transcripts were also edited and proofread by a professional writer/editor, who is also a qualified and experienced teacher of English as a Second Language. After these initial edits, the editor worked closely with the researcher to decide finall wording, discussing at length and over a long period of time, the various implications for meaning

and interpretation that different linguistic choices could involve. As the researcher was writing in a language which is not her first, while at the same time trying to express for an English-speaking audience the truths that she had heard and had been expressed in a language that was foreign to the editor, who represented the general reader, this was valuable work. This feedback and translation and negotiation of linguistic and cultural meaning process also contributed to the credibility and representation of the participants' and the researcher's voices to those from a different linguistic and cultural background.

The above-mentioned stages in the research journey constituted an essential part of the process of decision-making. However, the researcher decided that due to the complexity and difficult issues involved in this study, and for ethical reasons, it would not be appropriate to allow for a so-called 'members check' (Patton, 2002) with a summary of the transcript being returned to the participants so they could check the validity of the interpretation. To offset this decision not to apply member checking, the researcher herself checked the validity of this study at different stages throughout the project: with regard to the study design, to the methods of data collection and the interpretation and modes of reflexivity. Validity checking was also ensured through various discussions with and feedback from the participants' community so that the work was not being interpreted only by an academic audience (Riessman, 2008). However, methods to establish facts and to ensure historical clarification were applied, and this process served as a basis for public recognition; that is, recognition that the data were genuine and that the researcher had acted responsibly regarding the revealed stories. The subjective philosophical and psychological elaboration of the stories at individual, family and collective level of this method for organizing memories and meaning, made this inquiry unique, not only in the perceived duty to reveal unrevealed realities, but in the perceived duty to remain vigilant to the danger of becoming an instrument for maintaining stereotypes and inadequate justifications (Poulingy, Chestermand & Schnabel, 2007).

3.7   Ethical considerations

Across time and continents, cultures and disciplines (e.g. history, political science, psychiatry, etc) people have constructed ethical systems founded on respect for human beings, alive and dead. Thus the researcher has undertaken this particular journey of research with a deep sense that ethics and research are inseparable
 (Poulingy, Chestermand & Schnabel, 2007)

This section travels down several avenues of applied ethics and rigour to explore predominant ethical issues pertinent to this journey; those concerned with participants' confidentiality, provision of informed consent, the role of the researcher and consideration of the participants' emotional state (psychological and social risks) given the delicate nature of this enquiry and the traumatic war and refugee experiences of the participants.

3.7.1 Consent, Confidentiality and Safety

The provision of informed consent is crucial to research that involves intimate and disturbing parts of people's lives. Thus, the researcher initially distributed a plain language statement, explicating the background and aims of the study and inviting the participants to make contact only if they were interested in participating. She also distributed these details in appropriate public meeting places. However, the researcher did not solicit potential participants' contact details herself. Her contact details were written on the printed plain language statements, and interested participants were able to make contact voluntarily and without any pressure whenever and however they wished. In this way nobody felt obligated to participate.

Participants were recruited through community groups and it should be recognised that in small communities there are often special ethical issues. For example, members are more likely to know one another. It was considered that people from the territory of the former Yugoslavia living in Melbourne who were known to the researcher might feel socially pressured to participate in the study, thus the researcher took particular care to invite such people to carefully consider whether they wanted to take part in the study and to make contact only if they wish to participate. The recruitment process included information about confidentiality, and the specific explanation that all data would be coded

and no real names would be used in any write up of data. In addition, it was emphasised clearly throughout the recruitment process that the research would be confidential and was independent of government or any other organization.

While it was recognised that because of her place of origin and experience the researcher might be able to develop trust in the interview process, it was also taken into account that some risks might arise due to the complexity of the ethnic categorizations within this population of immigrants. There was a perceived risk of social upset to a participant when being approached by the researcher, who might not identify with a participant's ethnic group. Thus in approaching potential participants for interview the researcher emphasized the scientific nature of the research, provided the plain language statement and revealed the content of the interview schedule.

Each family that participated in this study was contacted twice. The first approach was made before commencement of the interview. The purpose of this initial meeting with all family members was to ascertain whether all family members agreed to participate. At this stage, the researcher again provided the rationale for the research (using the participants' native language) and arrangements for the interview were explained. Furthermore, she invited children to participate in the study and emphasized that the children were not be interviewed separately. If participants were willing to participate, they were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix E). Thus, each and every informant was asked to give his/her individual consent. This included consent from children (see Appendix F) and parents' permission for the children to be present during the family interview (Appendix G). However, the researcher did seek the consent of parents for their children's participations before providing an opportunity for the children to choose whether or not they wanted to participate. While interacting with children, she maintained a positive attitude, a neutral expression and emphasized their rights to assent or to veto research participation. Since children's ability to assent meaningfully depends on their cognitive and emotional maturity, the researcher used clear, comprehensive, age-

appropriate language when explaining their rights and inviting them to participate in the study. The children were given time to consider their involvement and under no circumstances was their dissent to be overruled. If any discrepancy occurred between children's and parental consent, the family interviews were not conducted.

Some participants experienced distress when relating thoughts and feelings about war and refugee experiences. When this occurred, this was discussed with them. However, the theoretical findings suggest that the participants (with war and refugee background) had been used to dealing with such emotions on a regular basis as part of their war and refugee-related trauma (Newman & Kaloupek, 2004). Furthermore, it has been well recognised that in qualitative research a sensitive listener with empathy and professional training in interviewing skills can often provide validation of the worth of the story being told and thereby of the storyteller themselves. Such validation served in this study to normalise any suffering of the storytellers and to contribute to the elimination of their feelings of guilt and loss.

3.7.1 Commitment, Truths and Cautions

Drawing upon her own personal experiences as a refugee and a war survivor, the researcher had a profound understanding of the complexity of similar experiences in participants' lives. In particular, being the mother of two children who experienced the horror of war and its aftermath, the researcher was able to be especially sensitive and cautious in avoiding any possible harm to a child/children. Indeed, many of these children had suffered trauma or lived through serious or harmful past events. However, an awareness of their vulnerability did not overshadow an awareness of their potential resilience and strength as a result of their suffering. Regardless of the belief in the power of this resilience to counteract past suffering, however, the researcher maintained a constant vigil to ensure no gratuitous harm was done to any child or parent. Indeed, she listened quietly, knowing when to probe and when to reflect upon all participants' words during the interview process. She cried and shared emotions with her participants.

It should also be noted that despite the peer-like relationship between researcher and participants, some of these participants experienced a strong emotional response during the interview process, particularly considering the wide range of ages included in this sample. For example, when parents evaluated trauma-related thoughts, feelings and experiences in front of their children, this increased the likelihood of unexpected distress for the whole family. Therefore, even before commencing the interview, the researcher had to ensure that children were aware of the possibility that strong emotions could emerge during the interview process. Moreover, even if the children did not directly participate in the interview, the researcher endeavoured to be attentive to their feelings. For example, it was considered to be appropriate to ask a question such as 'How do you feel about us having this discussion?' In addition to this kind of gentle probing, the use of open-ended questions throughout the interview process provided a framework of support, empathy and respect for all participants in this study. In addition, all participants were advised that if at any stage they felt uncomfortable they could choose not to answer a certain question or they could ask for the interview to be suspended. Similarly, if at any time during a personal interview a participant expressed a wish that information revealed to the researcher should not be passed on to other family members, or that it not be included in the final interview report, this wish would be treated with the utmost respect. Information about the Migrant Resource Centre, where counselling was available, was also supplied on the informed consent form.

The decision to draw consciously and deliberately upon participants' reflexivity, and the skills necessary to this sprang not only from the researcher's background but also from her experience in conducting similar research for her Honours degree thesis and her work as a family counsellor. She learned throughout her work and in her previous studies to be conscious of her attitudes and the biases that she might bring to the project and she also learned to try to be non-judgemental and to listen more attentively and less reactively. However, it was recognised that as the researcher had undergone similar experiences to

those of many of the participants in the study, she could become emotionally overwhelmed when reliving these experiences. In order to minimise such a risk, debriefing sessions were provided through supervision and this process was an essential part of all decision-making throughout the research. Therefore the researcher's direct involvement in the study and her self-monitoring to prevent any potential harm or bias was maintained throughout by the supervision, as she sought and received advice and support and continued to write a reflective journal. Indeed, the researcher's genuine interest in the study helped her to establish a delicate balance between the attempt to understand different needs and feelings of participants and the desire to contribute to academic knowledge.

Overall, although the participants obviously had to deal with sensitive issues and need to confront experiences when recounting the story of their war and refugee experience, as mentioned above, reliving these experiences had often been part of their daily life, and therefore it was believed that participation in this study would involve them in relatively little risk of psychological harm.

During the interview process the researcher was careful to ensure that the research was conducted with maximum responsibility. Indeed, it was previously decided that if at any stage during the interview process it appeared that participants might be attempting to reveal specific information regarding serious crimes, the researcher would immediately stop the interview and explain that she was not able to accept such information as part of the research. The researcher would then ask the family members whether they wished to continue without discussing that aspect or whether they would prefer to terminate the interview. In such circumstances the family would also be advised to seek help from relevant community organizations. It was considered that only in this way, would the researcher be able to act as a sensitive insider so that participation in this study would involve relatively little risk of social harm.

In sum, the risks associated with this project were considered to be essentially the same risks as those faced by the participants in their everyday lives – risks of distress

associated with their past, and perhaps their present, experiences. As identified in this section, this project aimed to expand an understanding of the impact of trauma on family functioning and the nature of healing and resilience in families. Moreover, the potential benefits of participating in the research included 'self-identified insights or improvement in well-being that result from reflecting on traumatic life events in a safe context, or even simple diversion from life challenges and emotional pain' (Newman & Kaloupek, 2004, p. 385). Thus, overall, methodological and ethical considerations were applied to this study, starting from preparation of fieldwork, and encompassing the perceived ontology, as well as the assessment and management of situations of risk to the safety of the participants, who were given the opportunity for support after the interviews.

3.8 The view from the bridge

At the beginning of this chapter we found ourselves overlooking a deep ravine over which we needed to construct a strong bridge to reach further knowledge and to connect the previous chapters with those that would ensue. Indeed, this metaphorical bridge, this connecting chapter, has been necessary to link each inter-related chapter or story. The structural function of the bridge then represents the growth of human thought over centuries which has indicated the direction this expedition has taken. The static nature of this construction also provides balance between epistemological assumptions drawn from phenomenological perspectives and methodological attitudes, procedural dimensions, various reflections and the process of writing. Furthermore, the coherence of this construction is derived from a common heritage of experience, memories and meanings, shared by the researcher and the families who participated in this study. Thus, the bridge can be seen to be rooted in history itself, which is omnipresent in this psychological inquiry; in the same way this research project can be seen to have been constructed out of culture and the collective work of memory. Memory was constructed and analysed by the interweaving of individual and family memories, which reflected more distant memory involving the long-term history of the Balkans.

There was no easy way to explore how family members have rebuilt their lives in the aftermath of systematic political violence, displacement and the refugee experience. There was no single method or tool available to the researcher, no bridge that could pass through the gate of knowledge that would allow us to understand how families assessed and managed changes after the experience of war and refugee trauma. Therefore, the researcher brought together and adapted various methodological elements in order to continue travelling along the road of understanding that would eventually enable her to give voice to these families. In this process prudence, patience and a non-judgmental approach were essential, and in adopting such an approach the researcher demonstrated how a multidisciplinary approach (bits and pieces of knowledge from various disciplines) seems to be particularly important in such an inquiry. Applied methodology enabled a comprehensive approach to deriving multiple meanings from traumatic experiences.

The personal responsibility of the researcher increased the level of accountability in these matters: methodological adequacy, ethics, exploration of potential policy implication, etc. Reference was constantly made to common human ethics and a deep respect for human beings (alive and dead) was maintained while listening and constructing the narratives. This chapter demonstrates that philosophical concepts, ethics and research methods are inseparable (Pouligny, Doray & Martin, 2007). It provides philosophical, methodological and ethical tools for the analysis, based on the researcher's knowledge and experiences. Openness, curiosity and integrity were the moral principles giving credibility to this journey. Thus this chapter enables us to move towards valuable insights about refugee families and to reflect on their situation – to interpret this information within the historical, social, political and moral context of their experience. This process should therefore enable further travel down the road to public understanding and recognition of the gravity of what has happened to the families – our fellow Australian citizens. So now the researcher invites the reader to move forward to the other side of the bridge so as to hear clearly the tales of these refugees, to listen to their stories and to their realities, to

listen to the voices and to hear the echoes of the Other. The very act of interpreting what one hears by creating a narrative can enable one to re-introduce a person or a family to their full humanity and restore to them possession of their individuality (Poligny, Doray & Martin, 2007).

CHAPTER 4: THE MOUNTAIN OF TRUTH: FINDINGS & INTERPRETATION

4.0 Above the plateau of dignity

The mountain is an omnipresent metaphor across cultures, representing the point where the sky and earth meet, a point of connection, the place where the four compass directions coincide. The mountain can be seen as the meeting point for different human truths, as expressed in stories told, and as such it represents the locus of revelation. Every step on this journey towards the mountain that represents the locus of a refugee's realities has been crucial. Now only one ritual is required to complete this journey; now the traveller needs to pay very careful attention to the words that have been uttered, through tears and whispers, to the researcher.

In this thesis, the concept of the mountain symbolises the components of the thematic account that have been derived from the analysis of the data. A super ordinate theme – Dignity – represents the mountain plateau, the inner altar of the refugees. Indeed, dignity is a central feature of this chapter as it is a central feature of human existence. According to Sartre (2005) dignity refers to awareness of one's self and ultimately to awareness of the other. Such awareness or intersubjectivity is recognition of the inescapable relationship between the self and the other. Thus, the notion of dignity used in this thesis refers to 'the acknowledgment of the uniquely human possibilities for self-determination and self-definition of the other and an attitude of respect, care and concern for this humanness'. As such, it is seen as 'a value that upholds the integrity, character and irreplaceability of humanness as fundamental to the structure of existence' (Iuculano & Burkum, 1996, p.23).

This chapter then comprises five conceptually relevant master themes at two different vantage points: 1.) Stages of trauma, and 2.) Stages of trauma recovery. Each of these two points encompasses master themes and each master theme introduces different

subcategories followed by a verbatim extract. The underlying thematic structure of the results is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4 The themes that emerged through analysis

Thematic level	Code	Themes
Super-ordinate theme	4.0.	Dignity
Master Theme	4.1.	The river of indignity
Sub category	4.1.2.	Graveyards of justice
Master theme	4.2.	Interlocking trust
Master theme	4.3.	Testimony
Master theme	4.4.	Self-determination
Master theme	4.5.	Development of new family identity

Note: Code indicates thematic hierarchy of theme and corresponds to the relevant section of the thesis

The above themes were gradually discovered at each new vantage point in climbing the mountain. The main routes towards the exploration were created by two cartographers, Herman (1997) with the concept of trauma recovery and Walsh (2003) with the resilience framework. However, there were many paths, views/insights not previously marked in the literature that were exclusively discovered by this expedition. Thus, before embarking on this part of the journey, the traveller is encouraged to read Table 5, which illustrates the process of creating the themes.

Table 5 Relationships and Interactions analysis

THEMES		
DIGNITY	SUPER ORDINATE THEME – THE LINE OF CONTINUITY	
	STAGES OF TRAUMA	RESILIANCE PROCESSES (Walsh, 2003)
Indignity	War trauma & refugee trauma	Belief system; family cultural worldview: no meaning making, but master the possible; dignity-the line of continuity- ethical compass;
Gender difference in attachment		Flexibility, Connectedness, Support
Perceived injustice	Historical trauma	Historical trauma response
Gender difference in perceived injustice		Organizational patterns; leadership & nurturing

STAGES OF RECOVERY		
Interlocking trust	stage 1: establishing safety and support (Herman, 1997)	Organizational patterns: trust, support commitment & financial stability in the families
Testimony	stage 2: Remembrance, mourning, reconstructing & telling trauma story (Herman, 1997)	Communication: clarity, sharing collaborative problem solving
Self-determination	stage 3: Reconnection with ordinary life/resources	Organizational Patterns: social. & economic
Same-minded people/community	integration of losses (Herman, 1997)	relational reliance and community ties-enhanced future
Interaction	stage 4: Development of new family identity	Transitions and values inherited in relationships

Note- Relationships refer to family ties, trauma &loss, resources and values. Interactions refer to boundaries, coalitions, exclusions, prevalent affects

4.1 The river of indignity

During the war life consisted of constant fear of the worst. It was all about how to survive. Everything was limited; the territory and space were limited, we could not move freely. We coped in all possible ways, by conversations with children and the feeling that I always had someone next to me I could trust.
And then ... (deep sigh and long silence,) we had to leave our village. The entire village was forced into exile. So, we left our home with two suitcases and with two little children, not knowing why we have to go and where we were heading – going into uncertainty. The whispers could be heard across the columns: 'We are going to a better place. We'll have everything we need'. My husband stayed behind to ensure that everybody had left the village ... then he joined us as we travelled. We travelled four days and nights in a column made up of tractors, trucks, buses, private cars ...
So, we reached a river bank, the border with Serbia, and we had to wait as it was impossible to cross the border without endless waiting. All of a sudden, my grandma felt unwell. She fell into my arms and died, just there ... (silence). So, we left her on her side of the river.
(Mother, 40 years old).

Escape from war, destruction and torture resulted in refugee status for all participants in this study, and erosion of self-worth or loss of social worth featured in the narratives of all these refugees. The most common emotional reactions reported, usually in the initial stage of the refugee experience, were shock, denial, fear and a sense of powerlessness. Being a refugee meant for them loss of control over their lives and gave rise to a profound feeling of uncertainty. As one of the participants revealed:

It was dawn and the whole town, everybody from the town, left their homes. It was huge; a long miserable column of people, and somewhere in the middle of the exodus we stopped to have a rest and someone was saying that we would go back eventually. Then I realised how long, how miserably long, our column was: whole villages, towns, the whole region was moving somewhere. Nobody knew where we were going, but I knew one thing: I felt deeply that we were never going to come back.
Researcher: Can you tell me how you felt at that moment?
I realised that I had lost everything. I had lost my roots, my foundations. I felt emptiness, as if I was in a vacuum. I was in the middle of an empty space.
Researcher: How long did you feel like that?
I felt that way for a long time. A month later I gave a birth to our son, so when I left our home I was eight months pregnant. (Silence, laughing) I am going to cry now, do not let me cry.
Researcher: Do cry please, we'll cry together. (We cry together).
I remember, when I took our baby son in my hands for the very first time, I washed his face with my tears, my tears covered his face. I was in hospital and there was no one to come and visit. I did not know anything about my parents. I did not know anything about family members. I did not know anything any more. (laughing and crying). So, I gave birth to our son in the hospital. I spent three days without any visit or any contact with any family member; nobody asked for me, nobody talked to me. That is unexplainable. Then we left the hospital for the refugee shelter and nobody asked anything. My husband and I did not talk at all; everyone was in their own world. That was in the middle of the exodus. Nothing. I felt like an alien. That was the most difficult time of my life ... It was horrible, we were completely lost in space and time, we did not have our foundations. You know, we lost our foundations; there was nothing to

hang on to. When you have your fundamentals, no matter how hard life is or how little you have, everything is much easier. But we were completely disorientated, and without any solution or possibility for a prosperous future.
(Mother, 38 years old)

Later, the participants experienced further disturbance, after they found that the label of refugee that was imposed on them by the host society carried a stigma. For many of them this negative 'refugee' experience began in the country of first asylum, before they arrived in Australia. The time spent in transition (in the country of first asylum, which was often on territory belonging to those of their own ethnic origin) had completely obliterated their identity. Thus, when talking about the experience of survival, many participants in this study reported that having managed to survive torture or the perils of living in a war zone, and once they had become a refugee in a 'safe' zone, they then experienced much greater humiliation, degradation and rejection in every aspect of their emotional, social and professional lives. For the purpose of this study, 'safe zone' refers not only to exile in a foreign country but also to exile within one's own country of origin. The following excerpts make this clear:

I did not know where or how to go. And we were moving around (from Bosnia to Serbia and back) every year from 1994 until we came to Australia in 2003. One of the most difficult things to deal with was other people's intolerance and inability to understand our position. For example, I was frequently asked why I had come to their place. People did not like refugees. I am not saying that all people are the same, indeed, there were nice and helpful people. At the same time there were many who made our life miserable. We escaped to Serbia and in Serbia there was no war at the time, but we could not survive there, there was no support, so we went back to Bosnia to some part of the so-called free territory. It was very hard for all of us, very hard.
(Mother, 41 years old).

In the words of another participant:

With Serbian background, married to a Croatian wife, and with two little children in Croatia at the beginning of the war, we had to run away. So we went to Serbia and I believed I was going home. However, we were not welcome in Serbia. So from bullets and bombs or persecution in Croatia we ran into bullying, verbal and physical abuse and humiliation in Serbia. We experienced deepest uncertainty; it was psychological, physical and material insecurity.
(Father, 50 years old)

Another participant recounted:

I think that the refugee experience would be very hard for anyone. Firstly, when we arrived the people there, the citizens, did not like the fact that we refugees were coming. They stared at us and they treated us as if we were guilty of something, they treated us as less worthy; it is so hard to be a refugee. Everywhere we went we had that dirty look and cold shoulder for being a refugee.
(Mother, 43 years old).

Similarly:

It was horrible. I wouldn't wish anybody to experience such a thing. I was humiliated, hurt, hopeless and desperate. It was horrible. It was impossible to see the future, to have hope.
(Father, 40 years old)

These excerpts from the participants' stories suggest then that when talking about a refugee's traumatic experiences it is necessary to talk about a process of prolonged and/or sequential trauma, rather than about a particular traumatic episode. This process includes not only pre-traumatic life, traumatic memories and post-traumatic processes but also adaptation to the current social and political context of the host society.

The following segment of translated transcript was selected from a long family narrative. This story was told by a 45-year-old farmer, husband and father, who had lived with his family in a small village in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the beginning of the war, in 1991, he was taken from his home and tortured by Bosnian Muslims because of his ethnic background (Serbian). The torture took place in his own village in the primary school that he had attended as a child, and was carried out by his neighbours. When this participant was asked by the researcher, in the presence of his children, to describe the difference between being in the war zone and being a refugee, he replied:

There was not a big difference between being a prisoner in the local school and being a registered refugee. There was not much difference, I am sorry to say. I mean, I can't say anything but the truth (pause, silence)
Researcher: Yes, please I would really like to hear how you felt? There is no right or wrong answers in this interview. So, can you please continue to freely express your thoughts and feelings?

Participant: I mean, in the war it was horrible. But what happened to me, I realized that I had to put up with that in order to survive. However, when I came to Serbia as a refugee, I used to load up a truck with detergent, I mean boxes, and then at the end of the day I could take home a sack of that detergent. So that was my pay for the whole day's work. So I would work hungry and dusty all day for that detergent, and then I would take that detergent with me on the bus on my way home and people in the bus would bully me and tell me how privileged refugees are and how we get everything for free in this country. I would just look in front of me, silent. I was nobody, a peasant with detergent in my tired hands. I would not treat a dog like that. I will remember all these humiliations until I die.

The extract presented above shows the complexity of the experience of those refugees who were exiled in their country of origin. The moment of hesitation in this participant's story reflects his years of struggles and a consequent identity crisis – because this man has finally had to admit that his own people – Serbian people – discriminated against him and humiliated him. The fact that one's own people are the oppressors makes a huge impact on psychological wellbeing.

The literature on war trauma usually recognises that living with the memory of torture must be difficult (e.g. Ajdukovic, 2005; Herman, 1997; Mollica, 2006, Weine, et al, 1998, etc). And it is often assumed in community welfare practice that psychological and physical pain from war and torture usually bring unbearable memories in the long-term, and can often lead to PTSD. This particular story quoted above reveals that the experience of war and torture may have less impact in the future for survivors than the humiliation suffered as a result of being treated as a refugee. The comment of this participant about his memory of humiliation as a refugee and its impact on his current life – 'I will remember all these humiliations until I die' – suggests that trauma has to be approached from a perspective of humiliation. According to Statman (2000), humiliation makes sense only as psychological concept; it is an injury to dignity. As such, humiliation produces painful feelings and causes suffering. Lindner (2010, p.18) confirmed that humiliation refers to violation of dignity; to 'the forced lowering of a person or a group', and as such produces the most powerful feelings which arise from social pain or destructive oppressive circles and

decreases self -awareness and self-regulation, thus leading to prejudice and stigmatisations.

This participant's exclamation that 'I would not treat a dog like this' reveals that he is focused on his own values rather than directly finding fault with or accusing his tormentors – in this case, his own countrymen, who, in his eyes, tortured him psychologically. Through this observation and his declaration that he would remember this all his life, he distances himself from these people and their behaviour. These utterances suggest that he has no survival guilt or any characteristics that have been traditionally associated with PTSD. Rather than seeking revenge, he defends his values, and in that way he moves on, not only maintaining his belief system but also creating and rebuilding a new life. Basic human values or a participant's belief system, for the purpose of this journey, refers to a state of the human mind which determines the choice of behaviour for any person of human community (Sagatovsky, 1996). Gradually, over the course of this research, it emerged that a distinction was being made between war trauma and refugee trauma in all these interviews, and this recognition forced itself into the researcher's consciousness, demanding to be noticed and understood – the trauma of having been a refugee had made a greater impact on the participant's dignity, self-esteem and belief system than the experience they had undergone and survived during war and torture. Furthermore, the experience of humiliation was the foundation of a whole range of further traumas experienced by the participants. As Mollica (2006) pointed out, the toxic nature of humiliation springs from an environment of oppression and creates feelings of embarrassment, disgrace, shame and public degradation, which may cause further mental damage. Humiliation occurred on a grand scale during the refugee experience of the participants in this study and quite often they were persecuted by their own people. According to Mollica,

the most destructive kind of humiliation is that which occurs within the social

sanctions of one's own community and family and such humiliation rapidly

transforms into emotions of anger, grief and despair. Thus, when exploring war

trauma and its aftermath it seems that one has first to take a step backwards, to explore

the concept of refugeehood, and to consider the feelings of being humiliated, voiceless

-psychologically and (some of them) physically wounded. For example:

I was a refugee, my child was a refugee and we had a number. Instead of identity we had a number, instead of shelter we had a number, instead of a job I had a number, instead of a future, I had a number
 (Mother, 42 years old).

Similarly,

It is horrible because you are not worthy as a human being, you do not have any value at all. You are nobody. I felt humiliated, oppressed, not knowing what would come the next day (pause) ... That would be it
 (Father, 56 years old)

Another participant:

When you are a refugee you do not feel human, you are nothing
 (Father, 40 years old)

And yet another participant:

And then we did not feel like human beings, we were refugees. To be a prisoner held by a war gang or to be a refugee, it is same to me, because the humanity is destroyed in both cases. I did not feel like a human being
(Father, 61 years old.)

The participants in this study, as refugees, have experienced what the

philosopher Agamben (1995) has described as a 'bare life' – a kind of living death.

This state of being 'undead' refers here to a process of subconscious self-reduction. A

refugee has to reduce him or herself to a state of being less than human in order to feel

no pain and therefore to survive mere existence. Agamben's (1995) notion of a bare

life refers to the gap between civilized human living and mere biological existence, or

an existence outside the context of human life. It means banishment into an alien

status wherein one is carefully denied all fellowship and protection. As Agamben emphasized, and according to the stories of the participants in this study, a refugee's life is separated from the concept of the rights of man as much by his separation from human rights as by the boundaries of a nation-state. In the context of this study, people who had survived exodus subsequently had to live in a nation that was created on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, where they were poor, homeless, in exile and received as an unexpected burden, and therefore a problem without solution.

4.1.1. Coping with exile and dignity – one story for women, another for men

All the participants in this study reported that, after fleeing the war, their experience as refugees injured their dignity and destroyed their identities. However, this research reveals a difference in how men and women were able to access inner resources and to survive, while living in agonizing psychological states. The findings show that women and men were at different stages of trauma during their refugee experience and that there were gender differences in coping styles, with females coping much better than males.

The men interviewed for this study reported coping well with traumatic experiences of war and torture, but were vulnerable in exile. On the other hand, women reported being resilient when their husbands were vulnerable – compensatory family dynamics. Such dynamics occurred due to the participants inherited values as, regardless of all devastation and destruction of meaning around them, all men and women maintained their family belief system. Women continued to belong to their families and to care for their children, as such a belief system was rooted in their upbringing and cultural worldview. The men reflected a fragmentation, with damaged self-respect and lack of inner freedom during their period as refugees. Their sense of personal responsibility was also damaged due to their feelings of failure about not

being a proper provider for and protector of the family. Throughout huge suffering, experienced differently by men and women, preserved family values determined organizational and communication patterns as well as resilience level within the families.

In the refugee situation, all the women expressed their loss by crying and verbally expressing their sadness and agony as about being refugees. An example;

Every day was full of tears, I used to cry every day and listen to different news. Everyday was living hell. God forbid us from experiencing that again. I wish nobody to experience something like that. I wish I had someone to talk to so I could find consolation, but that was very rare (Mother, 43 years old)

The trauma reconciliation stages outlined by Herman (1997) comprise mourning and loss – where a person actively expresses his or her feelings – as a recovery stage. Ekman (2003) further suggested that experiences of loss trigger a number of feelings in an individual (e.g. discouragement, disappointment, distress, helplessness, depression, etc) and that such feelings form two distinct clusters; sadness and agony. As Ekman explained a person in an emotional state of agony protests and seeks help, he/she attempts to deal in an active way with the source of loss as feelings of agony have no purpose when there is nothing that can be done to recover what has been lost. The revealed and expressed – sadness and agony as a part of suffering – represent a call for help and/or might help to heal the losses. Thus, another function of expressed and shared agony is to allow one to explore available choices or to rebuild new resources. Sadness, on the other hand, is one of the longer-lasting emotions which manifests itself through resignation, helplessness and passivity. Both of these feelings are usually followed by outbursts of occasional anger which can be directed and expressed by a person towards somebody else (externalised towards someone or internalised towards oneself). Such a circle of mood swings and emotions expressed fades away once the grief process is over (Ekman, 2003). The wives/mothers were

able to express their emotions, both negative and positive, to care for their family members and to promote emotional closeness. The mothers' emotional closeness as a perception of unity and demonstration of love between the mothers and other family members appeared to be successful in crisis/affect regulation. These findings are in accord with Lindner's (2010) suggestion that love and humiliation are among the strongest feelings and in diametrical opposition to each other, thus the love of wives and mothers helped to make up for their husbands' feelings of decreased self-awareness and self-regulation - the destructed self. For instance, when one wife was asked how the refugee experience had affected her marriage she replied:

It affected us because my husband became very anxious, he was really nervous, but we maintained a good relationship because I was very patient and calm. I think that our marriage has worked out because we are so different ... And when my husband was nervous or struggling with his emotions, I would calm him down.

Another woman answered:

Somehow, I did not worry about myself. I was not concerned about myself. I was not depressed. I mean, stress and shock were constantly present, but I had to take care of our children. I had to worry about survival, every-day survival (laughing). There was no time for postnatal depression, for example. (Laughing).

The women also took on a leadership role within their families in care-taking and emotional nurturing of family members. The data from this research indicate that the refugee experience would have had a much more negative effect on family life had it not been for the strength of the mothers and wives. Without this strength, the entire family structure might have crumbled. Women's endless compassion and caring gave them strength and the energy to continue to fight for survival and, later, to begin to construct a new life. When asked: 'How did you cope?' they answered: 'I didn't have a choice. I had to take care of my children'.

Another women explained:

To be a refugee and to experience what I experienced was definitely the most horrifying experience in my life ... Everything was lost, my life, my youth, the most beautiful years of our lives were destroyed.

Researcher: So, how did you cope at these times?
Participant: Well, I could not surrender, I had to live because of our children. For example, our daughter, who was five-and-a-half years old then, she had a high body temperature every night. Every night at 7 o'clock she would have a body temperature of 37.5 C. She was scared. I did not talk much, ... and then I realised that I had to fight for us, and our daughter got better. She started to play with other children in the camp and we moved on.
(Mother, 38 years old).

And here is another story:

The first thing that I was thinking at the time was how to save our children and to take them out of the war zone. Then the second thing was to save my husband and myself and not to be captured in the city. The fear was great. I was a sportswoman for many years. I was a famous archer and referee in the city ... .I wanted to run away as soon as possible, but again my husband did not want to leave our house. I was stuck, but throughout that time I managed to save our children, so I thought that whatever would be, would be.
Researcher: Can you please tell me what you thought and felt at that time when you said that you were stuck?
Participant: I just felt I had to pull my husband out of that situation. I tried to present him with the reality of our situation, telling him what exactly was going on in Croatia and that war was escalating and spreading to Bosnia. He said to me that in Bosnia it was different and that nobody wanted war in Bosnia; he really believed that. He said: "Croatia is different, the majority are Croatians and they wanted to have this war. Bosnia is different, we are all ethnically mixed here, we are three nations and religions living together'. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there were 25% of ethnically mixed marriages. That was a great percentage and because of that my husband was blind. So despite everything he did not want to go anywhere and in our biggest arguments when I said that we should run away to Croatia to my relatives he said to me that if I wished to live in Croatia that I could go forever. I answered him that if I had wished to be anywhere without him that I would not have come back to him, leaving our children. Then I turned to him and asked him: "do you have the right to decide and make your children orphans, do you have the right to leave them, so that they grow up without their father? I came to get you because I do not want our children to ask me 'what is going on with Daddy?' I do not want our children to hear about war brutality and ask themselves if it is possible that out dad has been killed in this or that way. Who gives you the power to take your children's right to have a father? I came to get you so we could go together to our children. If you do not want to go with me then I'll say so and our children will not only be without a father but without a mother as well! I am not going to leave you here and our children will eventually live with their uncle and aunty"
So after my speech to him, he said to me, 'O.K., we will leave today, but we will come back tomorrow'. So, we left, and there was no way back.
(Mother, 59 years old)

The courage revealed in stories of the women in this study was not supported by their husbands nor by their devastated communities, but it was motivated by family survival and the power of their love.. The behaviour of these women went beyond heroic moral principles, family dynamics and sibling constellations. These women developed the energy and mobility to help repair their husbands' severely damaged sense of self and courage served as a bridge for family transitions. This phenomenon

is well explained by Froma Walsh (2006), who noted that courage arises from one's belief system and mirrors the quality of the person's spirit, enabling him or her to face uncertainty, danger and fear. As such courage affirms a person's strength, active initiative and perseverance are core components of the person's resilience.

The notion of courage, as Tumarkin (2007) noted, springs from dignity as a core concept of individual autonomy. Tumarkin refers to the notion of dignity or inner freedom, as proposed by Todorov (1996), as the only freedom that can be preserved, even under the most traumatic and humiliating circumstances. The women interviewed in this study revealed that a woman from the Balkans identifies herself within the domestic, family sphere, through caring, or ordinary virtues, according to Todorov, and through 'the morality of sympathy'(p.294).

A man (from the Balkans) defines himself within the public sphere, politics and work – by heroic virtues – and, as Todorov (1996) highlighted, 'the morality of principles'(p.203). For males who participated in this study, the most powerful influences in determining their identity and psychological wellbeing were i) their sense of belonging to their homeland (and their perception of themselves as being a link in a chain of historical continuity directly related to their belonging to this physical territory), ii) the sense of importance assigned to the notion of historical continuity, and of belonging, and iii) adaptation to a new country.

All the husbands and fathers interviewed in this study suggested that during their experience of being refugees, their way of coping was denial. Regardless of ethnic or religious background, the males who participated in this study were dejected, suffering unrevealed sadness during the refugee experience. In the refugee situation these men didn't belong to anything – anywhere, their sense of responsibility and/or masculine values were damaged.

For example:

Everything would be bearable if I could have stayed at my home. I never even dreamed about being forced to leave my home. So, when I was forced to leave my hearthstone, I found a truck and I put all the elderly people from my town in that bus, I convinced myself that we were going on holiday. I believed I would come back in a week or a fortnight ... (long silence).
(Father, 42 years old)

Another participant described the following:

I can tell you an example to illustrate the situation that we were in. When we escaped we went to Red Cross Headquarter to receive help. The help was in food supplies. So, we arrived there without anything at all and I was told to go to the headquarters to ask for food supplies like every other refugee. So, I went once to wait for the food. I went that time and never again. I said that it would be much better for me to be dead than to wait in that line ever again. It is horrible to wait for mercy. It is horrifying to wait for help when you cannot help yourself
(Father, 56 years old).

Another participant said:

I felt that I was a burden for others while being a refugee ... I found myself without anything. I mean, I succeeded in taking some savings from the bank and I gave them to my wife to keep it for food and stuff. But, despite the fact that my parents-in-law were more than polite, kind and generous, I felt a burden on them ... that feeling of being without a job, not receiving a salary at all ...(long silence).
(Father, 58 years old)

And yet another participant:

I feel very bad when thinking about the refugee experience. I was a refugee in a military camp in Germany. There were limitations in terms of where we could go and what to do. We did not have the right to any work. It was horrible because before the war I had visited Germany at least 50 times as a businessman. I told the authorities in the camp that if they wished to check up on me to contact German hotels in different cities and they could find my name as a guest. I told them I did not come to Germany because I love Germany, but because I had to come, I was forced to come. So, the bottom line was the safety of the children and to enable them to have proper schooling. My wife and I, we even found jobs in our profession in Germany, but the Government would not allow us to have work visas or any other status.
(Father, 56 years old)

In this study, there was only one instance of a male participant having succeeded in preserving his self-respect, and his sense of meaning and connection with others throughout the most chaotic refugee conditions. During his exile this man had continued to hold a successful job and had been able to maintain a protective role within his family. The testimony of this man, in contrast with that of the other male

participants in this study, shows that the ability of such men to preserve a measure of self-respect, pleasure and pride in being protector and provider for their family affected their capacity to satisfy their internal values and criteria – their dignity.

When I came to Croatia to safety, I took my wife and children to Germany; everybody told me, including my immediate family, relatives neighbours, all of them told me that I was clever and lucky that I had succeeded in gaining a working visa and to be in Germany .. .I felt that I had won Tattslotto! I mean, we rented an apartment in Germany, So we had secure shelter.... I felt safe.

Overall, there was gender difference in the attitude to emotional engagement of spouses. The women/mothers pursued emotional engagement with their husbands and children while the men were emotionally withdrawn from their family members. The data across all interviews indicated that the husbands were in psychological and emotional crisis at the different stages of traumatic experience while the wives possessed the ability to cope and communicate effectively with all family members.

Gender difference in attachment styles or in emotional engagement before the war also seemed to affect the way the partners/parents coped with the traumatic experiences. The stories gathered indicate that family roles were rigidly structured by the spouses' values, belief systems and family/community traditions. The women's adaptive coping process helped them not only to cope throughout the whole experience of trauma; it also helped them to maintain a sense of continuity within the family. For instance, one woman revealed the following:

There was a fight for our family that was a struggle for our children and marriage. There was a fight for preservation of everything we valued and I was in a better position to fight at the beginning. My husband fought later as well, especially when he learnt the German language, but at the beginning I fought as much as I could. However, when he joined us in the camp we finally embraced and I let him lead us, so there was some kind of balance established between us. You know, he was in charge again of his family and that was how we moved on ...

The data gathered for this study suggests that the danger and horror experienced during the war merely transformed these women's pre-existing nurturing and caring roles into protective attachments within the family and thus expanded their already well-established role. However, the husbands/fathers were reluctant to engage in emotional closeness, and often unable to openly communicate with their family

members. The men/fathers were torn apart by conflict between their inner

values/belief systems and outer atrocities, to the point or state of radical insecurity.

Overall, the families made changes in their way of communicating, in their

obligations and in the levels of intimacy through different attachment/coping styles.

The women felt humiliated and stigmatized as unwanted refugees within their

communities; however their sense of self was not negative, though it was certainly not

entirely positive. It was fragile but strong enough for them to find meaning and

belonging within their own immediate families. These women succeeded in

maintaining their role as accepting attachment figures. This finding is in accord with

the suggestion of Fallot and Harris (2002) that gender roles are important in trauma

recovery, with women tending to use more emotion-focused strategies to reduce their

stress level, for example by engaging themselves in nurturing, social networking

activities and re -establishing trust.

On the other hand, the husbands' values and sense of belonging to the land,

the community, their tradition and/or their profession were rigidly maintained, which

led them to feel further humiliation when these were damaged or removed. Thus, the

husbands were not able to maintain or develop a positive model of self and they

continued to develop interpersonal withdrawal or avoidant-dismissing strategies of

attachment while their families were living as refugees. This psychological stage

appears to have been a further violation of their human connection, as Herman (1992)

calls it, and as such produced further trauma. Such family dynamics activated the

pursue (for women) - withdraw(for men) pattern of emotional engagement as a key

relationship behaviour. However, the men's insecurity, avoidance of attachment and

numbness should not be perceived through a pathological lens, but should be seen

primarily as a reflection of their values, belief systems and as an ongoing adaptive

coping process, which has protected these men from enormous pain inflicted within a violence-ravaged community. For example, when one of the husbands was asked to describe the effect of war and exile on his marriage he revealed the following:

Sometimes I prefer to be by myself, sometimes I simply prefer solitude. I wish to be by myself, I do not want anybody to touch me, just to be within myself. So, in that sense the marriage has been affected. I mean, such a need does not exist all the time, but it happens from time to time. I mean, in some things regarding the war and our refugee experience we are in disagreement. My wife is keen to get over it, to get rid of all of it much more easily than I am. She is more practical than I am. She is more connected and committed to everyday life. I mean dinner must be on the table, etc. I am not like that, I am connected in a different way, I am still connected to everything. I think about everything and have my journeys in memory; for me nothing is far away.

This kind of dynamics was intensified with all couples when dealing with trauma or this particular gender difference in attachment in the couples created conditions for survival. There was a great sense of belonging and closeness within the families, and an increased level of trust and flexibility. These findings are in accord with Johnson's (2002) argument that traumatic events, fear and uncertainty activate attachment needs and create proximity. The proximity then serves as an emotional regulator or effective dependency within the relationship. The dynamics of the couples interviewed in this study enabled them to build responsiveness, or emotional engagement (including anger) and this served as a connection or communication tool between family members. Thus, the marital relationship was preserved, as were the family roles and values, and thus this effective dependency or compensatory dynamics seems to be a key to trauma recovery and the nest for nurturing resilience and healing. Thus the findings of this study indicate that the level of individual and family resilience is not determined by the degree of trauma but by family membership (defined by family belief system, organization and communication patterns).

4.1.2. Graveyards of justice

Justice is buried three meters under the ground, all our graveyards are graveyards of justice.
(Father, 58 years-old)

The majority of the participants in this study were unable to reconstruct a coherent system of meaning that encompassed their storytelling/the story of the war trauma. They were unable to reinterpret or contextualize their traumatic experiences and/or atrocities they had witnessed within their framework of universal human relations and basic human values. Many of them had suspended validation of trauma experience, despite their ability for open emotional sharing between each other. Many of them felt aversion or were unable to talk about atrocities and humiliation throughout the war and refugee experience. Langer (1991) suggested that such a person suffers from anguish memory; the divided self and humiliated self. According to Langer, the besieged self is too honest to conceal its wounds , the person is confused and unable to find connection between agency and the events, between the experienced loss and the assignation of responsibility for that loss.

The first step in the resilience process is to be able to create meaning from past troubles (Walsh, 2006). Resilience, according to Walsh, is an active process which involves not only the ability to be open to past experiences and interdependence with others, but also interplay between historical, political, social and economic contexts. For the majority of participants in this study, memories of suffering and atrocities were not reinterpreted and they remained anguished, and thus these participants were locked in a circle of confusion and unrest. They created two ways of coping with such a situation: a) some participants avoided any information about and denied any insight into the current politics of their homeland, b) others were intensely engaged in following the political processes of their homeland, but find there a lack of solutions for long-term stability of the region. For example:

I do not know how to explain these events, the war. I can only ask and I ask myself frequently: Why? Why did the war have to happen to us, to all of us? I do not know. I mean, we were all the same, the same people, the same skin colour, very similar languages. So we could understand each other and communicate well. Firstly, we used to work together and understand each other at work. So, nobody asked about your ethnic background at work, we knew each other's families and backgrounds, but we never talked about ethnicity or religion and indeed everything was more than good. So suddenly, everything went upside down, and then I did not watch TV much nor did I read newspapers, and suddenly we started to shoot each other. The biggest concern for me is my people overseas. Every day I think about our people, nothing is resolved yet, everything hangs in the air. When I drive back from work, when I work, I think about unresolved issues in our country and the possibilities of new conflicts.

The notions of justice, truth and manipulation were addressed in this way by

another participant :

On one occasion during the war ... I was already a refugee with my family, I mean I was living in that village on the Serbian territory. So, I remember, Croatian soldiers started bombing, it was exactly midnight. Twelve bombs fell on the village that night, one fell on the primary school where refugees had taken shelter, luckily nobody died, and other bombs fell on nearby houses. So the UN headquarters reacted straight away, announcing over the radio that some drunk Croatian soldier had shot grenades into the village and that the shooting was coming from the village. The UN soldiers gave an official apology to the village with the promise that nothing like that would happen again. However, three hours after midnight, another bombing started. I was outside in the field at three o'clock. I could not sleep and when the first bomb exploded I was completely shaken and covered by soil.
The most dangerous thing is the very first detonation; you may not hear when the first bomb is coming, but when the first detonation occurs then you may find shelter and hide somewhere. So, I was looking at the light in the night and the shooting that was coming, I mean, I would usually go outside in the night and I would wait for detonations in different villages and that was my game, my hobby, to detect which village was going to be attacked each night. So, anyway, that very night there were three separate bombing attacks and Serbian soldiers went to their first line positions waiting for further attacks. When Serbian soldiers took up the positions, UN headquarters made a second apology. However, at 6 a.m. bombing started again. That night I videotaped all these attacks and I have that tape. The whole night was lit up: rockets, detonations, lights, explosions, bombs, heavy artillery, so there was storm light in the middle of the winter night, where I could see the contours of the nearest city on the horizon. The lights, rockets, bombs and detonations were coming from the Croatian side. A few hours later, that very morning, I was listening to Croatian radio broadcast from the city of Zadar, and it informed us that Chetniks, which is a 'decorative' word they used to refer to Serbian soldiers, while Serbs used to call Croatian soldiers Ustashe (those names have their origins from World War II: Chetniks were Serbian soldiers on the Fascists side and Ustashe was the name of Croatian soldiers on the Fascist side), so they said how Chetniks were bombing the city of Zadar the whole night and how the Croatian side had put in a few protest notes to the UN. And the radio was saying that because the Serbs were ignoring the Croatian protests they had to attack back and therefore they had bombarded the Serbian side on three occasions throughout the night.
Later on I asked my mum about this event, (she was residing in the city of Zadar at the time), and I also asked other people from Zadar about that night and they all believed that story from the Croatian radio. So, that is ... [silence, long silence], I mean, I was thinking, well I have a radio too, so my radio is also lying, lying well. So, what is my opinion? If I am not able to trust my opinion how then can I have justice? So, the same thing is happening in Kosovo today, around Slovenia and Croatia, all these territories are in fact occupied and have been looted by

others. And all of us, we all talk about justice, but all information that we listen to and have is manipulated and controlled by huge corporations and powers. So, I do not believe much in such justice; if we could have justice then we could resolve all our problems in the world. Since we do not have justice, everything is manipulation. The just is one who wins, the winner always holds justice..

Thus, according to the participants in the study, every regime in the former republics of Yugoslavia was in denial when talking about crimes committed and atrocities perpetrated during the last war in the Balkans. The participants reported that they also had to face similar denial on the part of all the ethnic communities from the Balkans in Australia. Thus, the <u>participants</u> felt that they have had to face not only collective denial but also to develop ways of coping with continuing forms of trauma. These included, according to the participants, political manipulations, and justification for genocide, or 'other-party blame' for enforced nationalism, and religious hatred. Such circumstances or every-day socio-political realities in Australia have an impact on their process of resilience.

These every-day socio-political realities are in accord with Volkan's (2000) notion of chosen trauma where families and communities are unable to mourn past losses. According to Volkan, a chosen trauma refers to the sub-conscious choice by an ethnic group to construct their identity as victims due to past loss and humiliation. Such a group chooses psychological losses and transforms them into powerful cultural narratives which become an integral part of their social identity and create a trans-generational burden of the need for revenge.

For the majority of the participants in the study, justice seemed only to have been achieved when perpetrators of suffering themselves suffered unjustly or in a similar way to their victims – 'an eye for an eye'. Such a perception of justice indicates a continuing need for revenge and the possibility of new conflicts and further fragmentation of the personal and social world in which they live. These findings are in line with Lindner's (2010) suggestion that perceived injustice and manipulations

lead to a deep sense of humiliation as the strongest force to create anger, rage, violence and carefully planned revenge. For example, when the participants were asked how they would punish war criminals, the following comments were made:

I would do to them the same thing; return to them the same measure, nothing else (silence, pause).
(Father, 56 years old)

Whatever they did to innocent people I would return to them in the same measure but multiplied by ten, I would return them ten times more. I would not only punish war criminals, but their children as well, so that they can feel the crime they committed
(Father, 41 years old).

All those who killed, raped and tortured, I would put them among mothers of those victims, and the mothers could finish with them
(40 year old father).

So for me, to be a war criminal and to have a comfortable room in the Hague is not punishment. That is nothing. I would sit them all on the electric chair. Yes indeed, all those who used to snatch hungry, crying infants from their mothers and then smash them against trees, yes those monsters deserve the electric chair. So that is my opinion and I do not like to talk about politics ... I do not like to sit and talk to them about these things. My husband also avoids such gatherings and discussions regarding politics in the Balkans
(Mother, 33 years old).

I would keep such people behind bars for the rest of their lives and I would provide them only soup to eat for the rest of their life. Seriously, I would punish every person who committed crimes, even if it were my own father. I would even ask for the death sentence for some of them.

In contrast to the views expressed above, it is important to note that the participants who had experienced torture or severe combat during the war or who had succeeded in framing their traumatic experience within their own system of inner values and ethics, values sustained before, during and after trauma, tended to find a historical explanation for the trauma instead of seeing a need for revenge. Revenge and torture are actions and results of hatred, ignorance, immorality, annihilation and dehumanisation. The tortured participants had experienced the force of hatred and made their own choice not to hate anybody, including their tormentors. Since every choice represents the evaluation of human activity (its aims, means, conditions and results) and makes distinction between one's needs and one's values (Sagatovsky,

1996; Sartre 2001) the participants' choice not to hate but to understand became their most powerful coping mechanism during and in the aftermath of the atrocities. More specifically, the participants' stories suggested that their needs were severely repressed during the experience of imprisonment and torture. With repressed needs and in the midst of the torturers' attempt to dehumanise and destroy the surviving participants, they chose humanity, their value system, as the only light in the middle of a living nightmare. By making that choice not to hate, the tortured participants opened up a process of evaluation and interpretation of their experiences of torture and suffering (from historical, cultural, religious and/or political perspectives). Thus, the participants' values served as their measurement of reality and provided reconstruction of meaning for their experiences. For example:

I always think that there were circumstances or that something or someone triggered such an urge in other people to become war criminals. Politicians and all leaders in peace and war are responsible for war crimes. That is what I think. A war criminal is not going to exist if there are no circumstances to become one, or if somebody does not elicit such behaviour. So when war starts then many people have a chance to accomplish their dirty ambitions and passions. Indeed, many war criminals in our country carry on a legacy from 60 years ago, from their fathers and grandfathers. In the concentration camp my Muslim friends from school would come and ask me what I was doing there. I would not say a word. I did not know how I was going to survive. Some of them would have liked to help me, but they were fearful of others. Some of them wanted to kill me, they would put a knife under my neck, some of my Muslim friends used to hit me with stones and I had to stand and be quiet. They would spit on me. I felt joy like a child on seeing the UN forces coming into the village, I liked strangers, while my friends and neighbours became my torturers.
(Father, 45 years old)

There is a Court for murders and life sentences. The most important thing is to arrest the warlords and masterminds of crimes committed. I was imprisoned and tortured throughout the war. There was a group of torturers who would force ordinary prison guards to torture us prisoners. These leaders should be punished by the most difficult prison conditions.
(Father, 51 year-old)

The participants have demonstrated an awareness of time and history in the way they have revitalized the values and ideas that they held before and after the war and refugee experience. For instance, the following story depicts such an awareness of time and history:

Others try to quarrel with us so that they can conquer and dominate us. I was amazed when I found a book on Slavic tribes breaking through the Balkans, which was 1600 years ago, when Slavic people arrived in the Balkans. At that time the ancient Romans were controlling the border over the main rivers and they were not interested in the Balkan peninsula at the time. So Slavic tribes were moving towards the Balkan Peninsula and they met the Romans. The Romans, as members of a well organized state, were sending their missionaries to meet those Slavic tribes and to take notes and to record what they had seen while being with them. So, they were writing books about the Slavs. The title of the book is "Strategy" and the author is unknown. And the author explained the following: 'Slavs live in tribes and every tribe has its own king and dukes. The tribes are very often at odds with each other and this inevitably results in conflict. These tribes who reside on the borders of the Roman Empire have their dukes and kings who are very easily flattered by nice words and presents'. Can you imagine that?, That was written 1600 years ago! And then the author further elaborates that it would be extremely dangerous for the Roman Empire to allow those tribes to be united under one king or kingdom. In that case, according to the author, the Roman Empire would have been directly endangered. So, that was written 1600 years ago and whatever you read after that has been based on that assessment. So, "strategy" is still relevant and the Slavic tribes are still the biggest population in that part of the world. So they live in the biggest number of states and they are the weakest, except for Russia and the Ukraine. So, they still divide us with nice presents and kind words. If you have a look at our politics and politicians today (in the Balkans) nothing has changed. So how naïve or whatever are we that if we haven't managed to learn in 1600 years what has been going on with us? So we cannot afford to hate each other, I mean, even if we hate each other we should stick together, because that is the only way to survive. Therefore, the former Yugoslavia was a thorn in the eye of everyone.
 (Father, 58 years old)

All participants had no trust in a just society at the system level, in the international community and in any system of justice. There was general consensus across the different backgrounds of the participants in the study that the notion of equal human rights was an ideology or merely an empty phrase , as they believed that there was no real genuine global commitment and /or movement to ensure equal, just and free societies in the world .. The participants revealed bitterness and sarcasm when talking about justice:

Whoever seeks justice goes nowhere. Such a person kills everything around them. Unfortunately, I am one of those who was chasing justice.
 (Father, 56 years old)

Another father, aged 61, had this to say:

There is no justice, except in heaven; there is no justice on earth. Everybody interprets justice in their own way. If there is justice, we would see it in the same way

Similarly

Justice does not exist, there are rich and powerful people, but there is no justice

(Father 51 years-old*)*

        and:

There is not much justice in the world. There is always someone who suffers more than others. There is no justice. I do not really know; if you do not know how to manage things, nobody really cares.
 (Mother 40 years old)

        There was a difference across genders in the perception or interpretation of injustice in the world, with women tending to report that there was some justice while every man reported that there was no justice at all. These different gender perceptions of justice could be explained by the participants' way of dealing with losses and/or representation of their grief. Theidon (2007, p.116) suggests that justice is not gendered, but it has gendered administration as 'a form of memory specialization' in the community, and this is in accord with the description of injustice for the participants in this study. The men interviewed in this study narrated stories about injustice at the macro level or public domain (as a moral imperative, ethics of rights and principles of the truth, etc). As such, injustice described by these men was in line with Theidon's notion of 'patriarchal justice and conflict resolution', which refers to 'maintenance of community rather than satisfaction of individual plaintiffs' (p.117). The women participants in this study had ambiguous feelings and perceptions about justice. They tended to describe justice with reference to the family, at the micro level or private domain of their lives. They also tended to describe injustice through revealed memories of their suffering and unaddressed wrongs done to their families. In doing so they were marking and dignifying the family losses – the graveyard of injustice. For example:

I am not disappointed in life, I am really not. Thanks to God we are all healthy and well. But I cannot go back and visit my father's grave. I've heard that the grave has become a ruin and that hurts me a lot. That is injustice. But I cannot go back, because nobody can guarantee my safety if I go back to our village, despite the fact that the war is over. My dead father is not

guilty of anything to anyone, so why did they destroy his grave. What for? That is injustice, which is pain to my soul.
(Mother, 43 years old)

Another woman, when asked about the concept of justice, replied:

(Sigh) It is very hard to attain justice. Somebody is always damaged. I believe that it is extremely hard to attain justice. For example, someone who has experienced loss, they are never going to be able to reclaim or regain what they have lost. So, what kind of justice is that? (Sigh and silence, silence and sigh again). What is justice? What is justice? Justice is the way we live. So how do we live? Life goes on, life has a new stream. So, is it just to change everything, to lose everything, to live far away from your extended family? Is justice to be without long-term friendship, to be on your own? Is that just? I long for my family. I go overseas for funerals. I would like to go to family weddings not funerals. In the last three years I have lost my sister, who was like a second mother to me, then her son died a year after and then the son of our oldest sister, he died too. Do you know what that means? I go to funerals only. So, I cannot say that I have achieved or accomplished a sense of justice in my life. I cannot say that I have overcome such loss and that justice has come back to my life. Justice cannot come to my life any more

Overall, the gender differences in perception of injustice in this study highlighted different layers, aspects and domains of injustice and suggested revision of already existing assumptions regarding conflict resolution and reconstructions of war torn society, communities as well as family recovery.

In reply to the researcher's request for their opinion about war criminals, none of the participants said they approved of the work that had been done by The International Crime Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. The ICTY was organised by the United Nations (UN) in order to prosecute serious violations of human rights law committed by all sides in the conflicts in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The establishment of 'The Hague' (as it is referred to by the communities and families) was an attempt to seek justice for the war and genocide that tore apart a section of Europe. According to Goldstone (1995), the purpose of the tribunal was to recognize crimes against humanity and to acknowledge individual and group guilt as well as the victims' suffering. As Goldstone argued, there could be no sustainable peace without justice and therefore the core concept of the tribunal was to name injustice as part of the healing and peace-making processes in the territory of the

Former Yugoslavia. Goldstone further elaborated that such an intention generated great hopes and expectations for reconciliation within the population of the former Yugoslavia, as well as within the world community at large. It was an attempt and a hope to reclaim the rights on and principles of human dignity, equality, justice and respect.

According to all participants in this study and regardless of their experience of war, not only did 'The Hague' fail to represent the quest for justice, rather it has been a symbol for corrupt international law, representing injustice orchestrated by the United States of America and NATO. Thus, regardless of the participants' ethnicity, age or gender, none of them recognized nor mentioned respect for the tribunal's mandate to extend international humanitarian law when prosecuting internal ethnic conflicts and/or gender-based war crimes (e.g. rape and murder). All the participants expressed a sense of mistrust and lack of respect and a feeling that there was no moral credibility to international legal relations. They emphasized the unfairness of the Tribunal's inability to bring all warlords and leaders to justice and its failure to remove major obstacles to the establishment of peace and democracy in the region. The following example may serve to illustrate the inadequacy of some Western assumptions about the notions of justice, reconciliation and psychological trauma:

We have our atrocities over there, we have our own wretchedness, our criminals and our murderers, so there is no way that The Hague or any other foreign court could bring us justice. I would not send any Albanian, any Croatian, any Bosnian Muslim or any Serbian war criminal to The Hague. That is all orchestrated, those courts have a particular goal. How come Serbians, Albanians, Croatians and Bosnians are the only guilty ones in this war? How about Clinton's soldiers, who killed columns of refugees during this war etc? How come they cannot be investigated? They are not investigated because Carla DuPont (the chief prosecutor) claims that she believes every American statement and that therefore they are valid. I mean, it is one thing to believe in something and another thing to explore and investigate in the name of justice. So, there is probably no justice with such people in charge. I mean, every crime committed should be processed and investigated between ourselves.
I mean if we do not name injustice ourselves, then nobody else is going to do it for us. If somebody has committed crimes, then we have to recognize and name them ourselves. I mean, there is no point in making up stories or in interpreting what happened...

So, we do not need those outside courts, we need to resolve our past by ourselves, if we wish to. We have to heal all by ourselves; if not then there is no help. The International Court in The Hague is the most unjust institution that exists in the world, and it serves the Big Powers The most powerful forces in the world today have established this court and it is they who have provided the way of measuring justice and we, the peoples from the Balkans, we are their servants today.
(Father, 58 years old)

The following segment from a family interview reflects the perceived

manipulation of international justice in defence of the political aims of the Western

democracies:

Daughter: For me, a war criminal is every person who committed a crime without mercy and who does not care.
Son: It is very sad.
Mother: (Laughing) I do not know – are you allowed to record this?
Researcher: I am allowed and keen to record everything you say.
Mother: Modern war criminals are those who declare themselves to be big democrats but at the same time they make plans and create politics in order to destroy other countries and to exploit them. Those are modern war criminals. I am not talking about Hitler and that profile. I am talking about our situation in the Balkans. I am talking about our pain. Unfortunately, they are ... I mean the pain comes from the way the West uses and abuses information about us. They talk about Milosevic as a war criminal; Sadam Hussein is also a war criminal; Fidel Castro is also a war criminal. That is what they represent in the name of democracy. But I believe that war criminals are those who have invested their enormous knowledge and hard work to create such a world order. They have created millions of refugees, they are the cause of all these murders and destroyed families. Only their own interest is important; their strategies, economy, political interests are the only things that matter.
Father: People who destroy ...
Mother: War criminals were those who dropped bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki where, after the bombs, generations of Japanese people suffered, even today their children suffer the consequences of it.
Father: War criminals are those people who destroy others, not thinking about the consequences.

The above segments underline an argument expressed by Polugny,

Chesterman and Schnabel (2007) that the first step in any intervention regarding the

effects of humiliation and war trauma is to analyse local forms of violence and their

historical roots and to understand how they have been woven into the social imagery

of the individuals, families and communities.

All the participants remarked on the nationalist propaganda issued by the

media of each newly-created nation-state in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

They also showed evidence of a prolonged and strong sense of anger and sense of

injustice, about what they perceived as intentional political errors and a distortion of the facts in favour of the particular political point of view. The stories of these participants suggest that they have still not come to terms with adversity, that they continued to live in uncertainty regarding political violence or oppression whenever they read or watch the news from their country or engage with their ethnic community. Thus they have continued to live in the midst of ethnic conflict even though the guns have fallen silent and the former battlefields are covered once more in green grass. According to the testimony of these participants, each ethnic community feels stigmatized and discriminated against not only by other ethnic communities in Australia but also by the wider Australian society. According to the participants, the news, reports and TV documentaries also indicate that the political violence and ethnic cleansing continues in the region to this day. For instance:

Yes, I read different ethnic papers. I watch documentaries and I have stress all the time. You can feel nervous just reading/listening to all of that. I feel injustice because the media are showing only one side or perspective of the war. Even my Australian friends tend to be judgmental and they behave as if they know what actually happened there. My friends usually say ... "oh you Serbs you were this and that in the war". That hurts me a lot ... We are what we are, and we are not able to change our background. Nobody talks about WWII, when 60% of Serbian people in Bosnia and Croatia were executed in concentration camps and disposed of in massive graves. Nobody talks about 1941–42.

Another participant revealed that she avoided reading newspapers and watching TV, not because it was a reminder of torture, but primarily because of what she perceived as judgmental and untruthful commentaries about the war, the suffering and the legacy of a turbulent past:

I read ethnic papers regularly, but only pages about music and fashion. I refuse to read about horrible things in our country. I cannot read it, I do not wish to read it. I do not care, I could not be bothered reading or watching anything connected with our politicians. I can absorb it. I do not know what is the truth, every single politician creates his own truth and historical fact. It is enough to listen to what these politicians talk about us. It is unacceptable to hear how the media describe us as that we know only about stabbing and killing and nothing else. There is no positive aspect from the news and newspapers. We would like to be informed and to listen and to be empathic with our people in the homeland, but you can see just pure politics. So sometimes a person feels much better when they do not know anything, and are informed about nothing. We feel for our people, and we wish to be informed, but there is nothing in the media about our people except politics.

Another participant, a 51 year-old father, commented:

The TV news reports are all filled with lies and somehow, all of it is about business; to earn money from someone's misery. That is painful, it causes a lot of emotions and unrest. I was there witnessing these events and now I listen to all these lies about them.

Here is another segment from a family conversation regarding documentaries and news about the war that occurred in their country:

I know how it was for real. I mean, I was there in the middle of it. Too many of these documentaries do not present real, truthful situations. Even our community radio station in Melbourne, like each ethnic radio station, is full of religious and national hatred and they spread that to the listeners. Sometimes I listen to all of them (Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian radio in Melbourne) and then I do not listen for a while because I become sick of it. They are full of nationalist propaganda and they do not reflect the truth. The second element of these media is constant criticism, but without providing any constructive solution for our people. There is neither proper help, nor support for our communities and our people back in our homeland; all is just selfishness and reckless politics.

Historical trauma complex, identified by Denham (2008), is a relatively new concept in psychology, and the responses of these participants seem to correspond with this perspective. This complex, according to Denham (2008; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1999), consists of: i) Historical trauma and ii) Historical trauma response, with the concept of historical trauma referring to:

cumulative and collective emotional and psychological injury both over the life span and across generations, resulting from a cataclysmic history of genocide. It is analogous to other massive generational group trauma features and is grounded in the trauma literature (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1999, p.2).

On the other hand, historical trauma response refers to a pattern of diverse responses resulting from historical trauma, including transmission of resilience strategies (Denham, 2008). Such trauma has been integrated into the community and family foundation as well as into individual identity. Thus, Denham recognises a distinction between historical trauma and historical trauma response, with historical trauma referring only to:

the conditions, experiences and events that have the potential to contribute to or trigger a response, rather than referring to both the events and the response. Accordingly, the subsequent manifestations of or reactions to historical trauma, which may wary from

expression of suffering to expressions of resilience and resistance, are appropriately recognized as the historical trauma response
(Denham, 2008, p.411).

Historical trauma, as outlined in Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1999) consists of, but is not limited to, experiences of traumatic groups, massive loss, historical unresolved grief, intergenerational and multigenerational trauma. It goes beyond the proposal by Herman (1993) of complex PTSD. In addition, historical trauma incorporates related reactions or trauma response features. These features may be manifested through psychological symptoms such as various forms of anxiety, depression, anger, substance abuse, guilt behaviour, victim identity, and suicidal ideation and behaviour. In this view, historical trauma has an enormous impact on interpersonal relationships and these difficulties are reflected through: exaggerated dependency or independence, pathological expression of mourning, concerns over betraying ancestors by being excluded from suffering – a kind of intergenerational survivor guilt and social isolation (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1999; Denham, 2008). Moreover, the literature on PTSD and/or combat and Holocaust trauma in particular, also recognizes mechanisms and various psychological models involved in the transmission of historical trauma. These models include psychodynamic, socio-cultural and social aspects, including the family system and biological component of trauma transmission.

As Denham (2008) highlighted, such variations are closely connected with geo-political factors, the culture and traditions of a region and its people, and they also indicate a range of different resilience responses to the construct of historical trauma. The family and community members construct their sense of self through their stories and, according to Denham, (2008), they link their personality traits with narrated trauma from the past. These links, Denham argues, are fundamental sources of

resilience. It could also be argued that this resilience and resistance have been fundamental characteristics of survival skills in the Balkans. In order for the people of the Balkans to survive internal conflicts, wars and various occupations throughout the centuries, an intergenerational narrative about resilience and resistance had to exist. While resistance indicates lack of reconciliation, the stories of the participants in this study are linked to a long tradition of orally inherited injustice and traumatic experiences that do not necessarily result in victimhood or the intergenerational transmission of pathology.

If at this stage of our journey we glance towards the mountain summit, we may be able to observe that our survivors of war and exile have had to pass through three stages of trauma in the course of their search for healing and recovery: i) war trauma, ii) refugee trauma, iii) historical trauma. From the next vantage point we will be able to look in more detail at the stories of struggles towards different stages of trauma recovery.

4.2. Interlocking trust – stage one in trauma recovery

The data gathered in this study suggest that these families do not trust the wider society or their ethnic communities; however family members have deep trust in each other. The first step towards trauma recovery is to be in a safe place; to establish safety, support and trust (Herman, 1997; Walsh, 2006), and these participants had left their country of origin which was no longer a safe place to travel to Australia, where they found safety in as much as their lives were not physically threatened. Nevertheless, the participants experienced a continuing circle of oppression in both places and therefore for them the only genuinely safe zone for them was their family. To build trust is an extremely complex process, as each family member has different

emotional problems regarding their experiences of war and being refugees (Catherall, 2004; Weine, et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the participants in this study have been able to create their own circle of trust. The following excerpt shows how trust and family connectedness among family members can be a crucial method of coping, protecting and empowering each other:

Trust means a lot. The first thing that I associate with the word trust is our parents. There are different levels and kinds of trust in life. People use that word a lot in this country, they ask to be trusted.
(Daughter, 20 years old)

Another participant described trust in the following way:

Our children mostly value the possibility of talking to me at any time about anything. My children value the security I offer and their confidence in me.
(Mother, 45 years old)

Similarly:

I believe that we have a very good relationship, we are open to each other, we talk about everything. Our children know that whatever they do, wrong or right, that we/parents, we should be the first to find out. They can tell us everything, absolutely everything, and I believe that our children trust us, they believe in us, there is trust between us.
(Mother, 38 year s old)

When another family was asked how they would describe the word trust, this was how they responded:

Trust means a lot, if you have someone to believe in. It means a lot, and I believe in my family. (Daughters nod their heads). If we do not believe each other then how we can believe anybody else. So, trust is the most important thing in our family. However, many people in this society do not trust me when I talk about my war experiences. For example, my co-workers here in Australia said that my story is part of some movie, not my real life.
(Father 45 years old f)

Another segment from a family interview further illustrates what family members understand by trust:

Son: It means freedom to tell your parents whatever you want or need and not to trust others outside of the family. Yes, that would be it.
Mother: Trust is to believe in someone who is going to have an understanding for your concerns and then is going to be capable of keeping that secret; I mean, to keep conversation confidential. (younger children are playing in the room).

Father: Trust is when we can laugh together.

Regardless of different emotional problems, due to past humiliation and

trauma, or regardless of the different coping style of each family member, trust had

been strengthened within these families. In essence, the only resort of trust for each of

the participants in this study had been shown to be their own family, which also

represented for them the only place of safety. These families may not necessarily be

doing so well in every aspect of their lives, they may not agree upon everything, but in

the aftermath of trauma they have certainly felt themselves to be connected as a family

As one participant reported:

We always trust each other and that is our relationship. In fact, the deep trust between us
helped us to stay sane. If we did not have a healthy family (relationship) we would probably be
in a much worse psychological condition that we are now. I mean, the family is a basic cell,
fundamental for everything, so if the family is healthy then many things can be corrected and
healed.
(50 year-old father)

On the other hand, trust of those outside the family had almost vanished:

When talking about trust, the first people I think of are my parents and my brother. I know that
I can trust them and that they are always going to help me, everything else is ... (silence).
(18 year-old son)

Trust is an extremely beautiful thing but it is very rare. Simply, a man is a wolf to another man,
it is like in the animal world, people lie in wait for each other. I do not know much, but I do
know that to have trustworthy friends is the most powerful thing in the world. There are not
many friends that you can trust
(58 year-old father)

Another segment from a family interview, where the spouses were asked to

describe their relationship with each other and their children, illustrates not only a

strong sense of trust within the family, but also how pleasurable interaction, humour

and open emotional sharing were powerful forces for recovery and progress, key

processes for family resilience (Walsh, 2006). For example:

Mother: We are very open to each other; there are neither secrets nor unspoken things between us. Our children have learnt that whatever happens, and it does not matter how horrible it is, we (parents), we have to find out first, we have to be informed first and then we (as a family) can deal with that. We are parents and we are able to take it on our shoulders. For example, our daughter said once:" Mum I feel so safe because whatever I do in my life I know that you are always there for me". Actually, we have been building such a relationship with our children, that has been our endeavour. For example, even before the war, when our son was a little boy, he would come, he would run from the playground or neighbourhood and he would say: "Mum, listen, I made a mistake", etc. So that has been my attempt, to make an honest relationship between us. I would always say: 'A lie has short legs and nowhere to go.'

Father: We live as a family, which means that we support and help each other and we confer all the time. I mean, that is the most important thing.

Mother: I think that we succeed in having an open, trustworthy relationship, we are always there for each other.

Researcher: How would you describe your relationship (I mean as husband and wife)?

Mother: We are like "Tuto and Mato"

(We all laughed for a while at these funny names, and then I asked: "How am I going to translate this?" We laughed again.)

Father: That means that we rely on each other more than ever, we are closer to each other than ever before.

Researcher: How do you make decisions in the family?

Mother: Agreement is everything.

Father: We tend to have a plan and to talk about everything.

Daughter: We all have a say and sometimes we have quite different perspectives; sometimes we have arguments over which solution is workable and why and then at the end the best solution wins, the best solution for all of us.

Father: That is right, even when they are away. Like on holidays and we communicate via internet and everyone is equally informed and involved in decision-making.

Researcher: How would each of you describe the word 'trust'?

Mother: Can you please ask them (the children) first?

Daughter: Trust means strength.

Son; You cannot trust my sister when it comes to chocolate.

They all laugh.

Father: We trust each other without limits. Such a level of trust includes every single aspect of life, from emotions to bank accounts. We do not have secrets from each other and everything that goes on in our family we do not share with others outside the family. I mean, the main decisions are made and kept within the family.

Daughter: I think that we have enormous trust in each other, especially between me and my brother. My brother and I are very close and we rely on each other.

Son: Yes, we have enormous trust in each other but we have lost trust in the community and some relatives in Australia.

Daughter: I still believe in other people, I trust others but I am more cautious than before. So I measure first and then talk, I have to estimate situations more than before, especially now when I go to Switzerland on my own, I have to be very careful about people and situations. So I believe in people, but I am rather careful.

Daughter: When talking about trust outside the house, we have only two families that we socialise with and interact with and trust. That is all.

Mother: That is a consequence of an unhealthy atmosphere in our community. So we keep contact with similar-minded people who do not put (ethnic) pressure on us. I do not want to be among people who put such pressure on me.

This particular phenomenon of trust could be described as a sense of belonging, since a need to belong to or to be connected with a family, the neighbourhood, to friends (and community) has been a core concept of these people's psyche, history and upbringing This need has been deeply rooted in their collectivistic culture and it has not been met outside the family circle in Australia. This gap between the needs and circumstances creates a very specific connectedness between family members, and it is directly connected to the perception of safety.

This way of looking at how protection is assured and safety created between family members could be seen as analogous to Herman's (1997) exploration of safety among soldiers in combat. Herman pointed out that soldiers who have been together in prolonged conditions of danger develop a common fantasy about how their mutual loyalty and devotion can protect them from harm. Thus, when the war or danger is over the soldiers tend to preserve the attachment and to recover. Thus, according to Herman, members of such a combat group are usually more fearful of being separated than they were of death.

Similarly, this data suggested that regardless of the family dynamics or the participants' quality of life, or the levels of family communication, the interviewed families tended to preserve an already created attachment as a resource of basic family and individual safety. This confirms that there is resilience at the family level but not necessarily at the individual level for the participants interviewed in this study. As Harms (2005) pointed out, the relational dimensions of resilience include supportive relationships: a secure attachment with at least one significant other and a close relationship with competent others who are available as mentors and role models. The notion of trust for the families who participated in this study arises from their belief system and survival mode and as such it represents a way of interlocking or a means to

coordinate communication and organizational patterns within the family. Therefore, regardless of the parents experiences of trauma and memories of humiliation, both parents were still able to create powerful closeness with their children and partner.

The following patterns or key processes in family resilience were evident throughout each family interview: a) unconditional acceptance as an enormous resource of intimacy and closeness and a basis for conflict resolution, b) open dialogue about problems; recognition of family losses as well as achievements, c) shared humour and pleasurable interaction

While there is no trust outside family for these people, the family represents the nest of basic trust, the only resource for an inner world of self-esteem and self-worth. Thus there exists a psychological division between public and domestic life, with clear boundaries between the inner and outer world of the participants. The following passage in this journey illustrates how these inner and outer worlds interact.

4.3 Testimony – stage two in trauma recovery

There was shooting every day, every day people were killed (war had now come to the small town ...). But at that moment I realized not only that the war had started but also what it meant, when I heard a rumour in the town that a man, a very famous and respected Croatian man from the town, had been killed. He was a very famous geologist. The whole town loved this man. An enormous number of Serbian people went to the funeral of that man. I mean, when war started he did not want to leave his town. The day when he was killed he was on his land, in his field doing some work and somebody killed him on his own property. And so the war had begun, and the wretchedness had already started.
At the funeral, people were asking where this old man had been killed. I was listening carefully. The answer was that he had been killed in the field, on his own land. Then people asked when he had been killed, and the answer was that the murder had happened in the morning around 10 o'clock. And further on, countless questions were asked about every single detail. But nobody asked who had killed the man.
From that day I thought, anybody could kill me, and I could kill anyone. There was no law any more, there was nothing any more. The only thing that one needed to think about was how to keep one's own head on one's shoulders. So, that was the real beginning of the war for me.

Throughout these family interviews, parents, fathers in particular, gave testimonies and these were the main way of interacting throughout the family

interviews. Testimony in this context refers to remembrance, mourning and reconstruction of a trauma story and is a process of empowerment and encouragement for survivors during the second stage of recovery (Herman, 1997). Truth-telling/testimony, according to Herman, is a ritual of healing consisting of two dimensions: i) 'private, which is confessional and spiritual, and ii) a public aspect, which is political and judicial' (p.181). This need for truth-telling/testimony in front of the children (and in this case the researcher) has been a core concept of oral cultural heritages in families from the Balkans and has provided a way of family coping over the centuries. Unfortunately, wars and genocide have been a historical certainty for the communities in the Balkans and also unfortunately they have been a constitutive feature of family history; every family in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, regardless of religious and cultural background, has a history of participating in, witnessing or being part of the first generation that listens to accounts of events and experiences of war, oppression and terror. Thus, the notion of testimony within the Balkans milieu represents a process of coping, but is also a means for social and cultural resilience, which is necessary for the ethical recovery of the community. Walsh (2006) has emphasized that the seeking of reconnection and reconciliation has been one of the crucial family shock absorbers throughout resilience processes. According to the participants in this study, there is no possibility of ethical community recovery in Australia: there had been no truth telling and naming injustice at the community level. In other words, the participants believe deeply that due to lack of testimony or truth telling, they cannot rebuild or reconcile their ethnic communities and in that way reclaim their communities as resources of folklore, tradition, relations, feelings, care and common identity. Therefore for the families in Australia, testimony as a confessional, spiritual, political and judicial process is restricted and for the purposes of this study, the term is used to refer to a shared emotional insight and/or to

family lore. Such emotional insight represents a way of learning, a recognition and reconstruction of events, allowing the family members to grasp a relationship that allows them new solutions or ways of living in the host society. The parents applied this healing and resilience building process to express their moral demands and to transform their stories of trauma and humiliation into stories of dignity and integrity and stories of every-day virtue. The following excerpt is a segment of testimony, an introspective examination of past circumstances related in front of the children and illustrates that family values and ethics have been lived intensively and inherited through storytelling:

Father: I spent seven months in a concentration camp in my village. I was a prisoner without any charges or guilt; I was a prisoner because of my ethnic background and there was a knife under my neck many times. However, thanks to God and some good people, I survived. After liberation from the prison, at the Red Cross Headquarters, I was asked if I would like to go to Australia. My answer was yes, the further away the better.
I talk to my daughters about my experience and there are no secrets about that. In the camp, while I was tortured, the only thing that kept my sanity was the fact that I knew that my girls were in a safe place. I was thinking about them all the time...
(The younger daughter put her head and hand on father's shoulder, the older was still and silent, and both of them did not say anything).

The following story illustrates an introspective examination of the past circumstances; it involves a way of coping and maintaining family values. This story was told by 42 year old father in front of his family (the wife and three children). At the core, this story illustrates how the brothers were enemies and enemies were like brothers. More importantly, it emphasizes how individual and family trauma recovery as well as mandate for community reconciliation has to be reconsidered from perspective of small and large scale circumstances (historical, geopolitical, economical and cultural). The following segment from family interview reflects the parents' determination to create family-lore as the core of recovery and reconciliation for families in this study.

There was a Croatian man who used to live in Australia and he was a crocodile hunter. He worked very hard in such a dangerous profession, but he also earned a lot of money. All the money he used to send to his brother in Croatia with agreement that the brother would buy a property and build a house for him. After many years he quit the job in Australia and went to Croatia, only to find out that his brother had taken all his money and bought a property just for himself. So he realized that had worked all those years for nothing and that his brother had become his biggest enemy. The man had a nervous breakdown and he never recovered again. So he had serious mental illness and he used to walk 20 km every day through different villages, and he would talk to himself aloud. So when war started, he used to walk over the new borders that now crossed Croatian and Serbian territory. There was no war or border for this poor man. Soldiers used to stop him and ask him where he was going to. He would just bow with his hands, repeating: "You came to my country I did not come to yours."
So, there was a captain who was in charge of the Serbian soldiers and he said that nobody was allowed to harm this man as long as he commanded that territory. This commander was an educated man and he said that whoever touched the poor man would be responsible for a crime. And so the poor man used to walk around freely until the Serbian commander had to leave his position, in fact he was transferred to another location. Very soon after that, the first Chetnik (the name attached to war criminals and paramilitary soldiers of Serbian background in the last conflict) stabbed the poor man. So that is an example of a war crime, and the captain did not order the killing of the poor man. A real soldier would never do that

Thus, each testimony in this study, regardless of the degree of the traumatic experiences, was a process of re-creating a whole self, a husband, a father and a citizen. The fathers told their stories in front of the children and they appeared keen to expose their children to the abyss of atrocities they had experienced. The fathers offered their children a never-ending story of disruptive memories, their storytelling included expressions of pain, blanks, and silences and comparisons between 'here – life in Australia and there – life before and throughout the war and refugee'. As indicated by Strejilevic (2006), 'the truth told in testimony, even if it cannot stop the reiteration of such crimes, is one of the reservoirs of dignity left for humanity'. (p. 706). Indeed, by describing terror and various humiliations, the fathers emphasized the cruel, nihilistic, amoral methods cultivated by the torturers and/or the betrayal of humanity by neighbours and communities, at the same time pointing out their own ethical superiority when faced with torture and or systematic degradation by their enemies. So, by exposing the children to these re-experiences of their own losses, the fathers were not attempting to create a saga or an epic/heroic version of family

suffering. Rather their actions were more part of a long process of protecting the children by creating an ethical legacy within the family for future generations. In this way, fathers attempted to reclaim and sustain their well-established roles, roles that were part of the very fabric of the pre-war society. This process of depicting annihilation contained nothing that was idealized; there was nothing epic or heroic in these people's stories of survival. Rather, they expressed various ambiguous feelings and different levels of divided selves. These stories impacted on the children, as for many of them, their memories and feelings about the war derived from their parents' stories rather than from their own experiences:

For example:

Father: At the beginning of the war we lived in Sarajevo and I was kidnapped by my neighbours and imprisoned for six months. It was a so-called private prison and it was in the basement of a building in the city. You have probably heard of the famous war lord J.P.
Researcher: Yes, I know of him.
Father: So, J.P.'s uncle was our next-door neighbour and his son was murdered on the barricades at the beginning of the war.
Mother interrupts: That day I experienced the greatest fear in my entire life. On the day of the murder, the uncle was completely mad and we did not sleep all night, we were afraid to go to sleep as we believed that we could all be slaughtered in revenge. (J.P.'s family is Bosnian Muslim and the interviewed family is of Serbian background.).
Father: So, I was arrested immediately after the murder and I was forced to dig trenches at the enemy line. We were forced to labour and exposed to death at any time. It was like that for six months until there was one opportunity during cross fire and we prisoners succeeded in running away. Then I found my family and we became refugees.
Mother: Your grandmother was imprisoned as well. She was 86 at the time, she was beaten every day.
Silence
Father: We suffered a lot and we lost a lot because we could not even dream that our neighbours could become our enemies. We could not imagine war in Sarajevo, the city of all nationalities, ethnically-mixed marriages. The war was unthinkable to a common man. Then, one day, the suburb was attacked and I was arrested, my neighbours turned against me ... (silence). many, many people were killed that day and I persisted in believing that the worst thing was not going to happen, but ... (silence) .. My father survived the Second World War and I know stories from that time, when many family members were also killed. But my father never judged people according to their religion or ethnicity. He also used to teach us to judge people according to their character. And that is the legacy for my children, to respect people because of their humanity, not because of their nationality. This is the legacy to my children, regardless of all our suffering; this is the only way to live and to be.
Daughter is crying, mother and father are crying, son is quiet.
Researcher asks daughter: Why are you crying?
Daughter: Because of my parents, I feel for them. (Silence, interrupted by crying)
(long silence)

While listening to these testimonies the children, regardless of age and gender, tended to take the role of active listener and resolution seeker by asking questions or challenging the testimony. Thus the children and mothers were able to assist the fathers and each other in reframing their survival story. Such named, specified and challenged perceptions of losses/truth-telling within the family dynamic enables the family members to have a deeper awareness of each other's worlds and needs. For example:

Researcher: Could you describe how the refugee experiences affected your family?
Mother: While we were in the war zone, there was a hail of bombs and grenades and during that time there was only a rescue agenda and the constant question of shall we see our children ever again?. There was a lot of fear and many other feelings. Later on we became refugees and we found ourselves in collective camps, close to slums, drug dealers and the bottom line of society. That was an environment, or in other words a ghetto (in Germany), of uneducated people from the whole world, people who were dirty physically and morally; indeed, criminals, drug dealers, prostitutes, smugglers, etc. So, then again there was a struggle for survival in terms of how to protect our children from such influences.
Father: There is a saying, or a curse: "May you have everything in life and then lose it all".
Mother: That is a horrible curse, that is an old Jewish saying, and we experienced it...
Father: We had a high quality of life, a high level of life, and then we were pushed right down to the depths. And now, we have been trying to rise up again, to reach some level of life, and we know who we are, but it is hard to prove, or to make people around us believe in us.
Mother: Anyhow, we fought for our children and we succeeded. Our children swam to the shore of their future and we also swam out with them
Daughter: I felt like a refugee in Germany for the very first time. That feeling of being a refugee I felt strongly at the beginning and at the end of life in Germany. In the meantime, or in the middle, we made friends, went to school and life seemed to be somehow normal. So at the beginning we had problems with language, and it was hard until we integrated into the society. In the end, the German government wanted us to be out of the country and we had a due date to leave the country, so that was horrible.
Father: I think that your brother suffered even more than you. He had a horrible experience, he did not have the right to go to school. There was enormous pressure on him to be an apprentice instead of attending school. And then we succeeded in enrolling him in school and the school would not allow him to go on excursions/trips with other children. Then when he finished high school he did not have the right to further studies, so he would attend engineering classes illegally, and so on.
Son: But you forgot that we could not even attend primary school in Croatia. (They all laugh)
Daughter: Yes, it is true, during the war the Croatian Government made a policy where Bosnian children, refugees with Muslim background, were allowed only to attend classes and to listen, but they were not allowed to participate in any way or to do their homework or to be marked for their work. That is what we have been through.
Father: However, there are always some good individuals who are keen to help.

These families, with their active roles, have stable relationships, with mothers perceiving themselves as protectors of their families, while the fathers worked on the process of recovering the families' dignity and unity. Thus, according to the participants, each family represents a cell, with strong coalitions and cooperation among family members. The families were able to create their life/family history, to reconstruct rituals in the new country, and to advance along the path of recovery, accepting new challenges and regaining a satisfactory way to function. The testimonies were an attempt to convert unconscious anxiety, instinctive choices and the survival drive of the families into a conscious commitment of family members to each other. This process is a way of dignifying their relationship, so that life can go on without the need to seek -revenge.

On the other hand, there were families where fathers did not provide testimonies for, nor in front of, their children or their partners. In these families personal, one-on one interviews were opportunities to give a testimony of great personal loss, experienced during the war and refugee experiences. For these parents/partners testimonies were an interpretation of intimate, subjective and deep experience of horror (Strejilevic, 2006). These personal testimonies were told not only by fathers but also by mothers. The partners respectively told stories about their loneliness and isolation, but also about betrayal by their non-responsive partners. These perceptions of betrayal and despair were not expressed in front of the children, nor in front of partners. On the contrary, the parents had a common platform or dyadic level of story-telling in front of their children and would hide each other's disappointments, thus protecting each other, so there was an expressive-performance role of the couple at the family interaction level.

In these families, mothers performed the role of interpreter and facilitator for family members across the interviews. They acted as emotional gatekeepers, enabling the emotional communication between family members. This enormous drive to facilitate communication and emotional exchange was deeply driven by a sense of isolation, loneliness between partners and deep regret for not being able to provide an adequate development and support for their children during the war and refugee experience as well as throughout the adjustment process in Australia. A perceived sense of guilt in mothers influenced family interactions. The following extract may support the above interpretation:

During the war and refugeehood we had a crisis in our marriage. ... while I was fighting for life and our survival my husband would spend hours and hours daily, listening to Radio Europe and thinking about political, war and strategic situations . . I am a fighter for life and he withdraws when faced with problems and crisis ... (silence) So, I believe that I saved my family, that I was an icebreaker for everything and anything, which was the way to survive.
Researcher: How would you describe the relationship with your children?
I was studying, working, and my husband was not much help, staying at home, and I believe that was the most difficult time in my life. I mean, I worked hard and nobody helped me, nobody helped me, and then I would fall apart, from time to time being frustrated with the children. And I regret that, I would never repeat that, but this is how it used to be, it was horrifying

The husbands, on the other hand, talked about a deep sense of personal disappointment, hopelessness in their own capacity to defend themselves, their families and their values. The analysis revealed a deep sense of isolation, silence and embarrassment throughout these testimonies, where frozen sadness finally started to melt during these confessionals. For instance:

At the beginning of the war we (the family) escaped from Croatia to Serbia and I started to work there and we rented a house and somehow it was O.K. And then the forceful military recruitment started. The soldiers were picking up men in the middle of the night; that night 20 000 people were forcefully taken from their homes. I was one of them. As a refugee registered by the UN I protested and refused to go into to combat. That very night I was beaten and pushed into the truck and transferred back to Croatia to fight. I refused to fight, I told them that I could not possibly shoot anybody, that I grew up in Croatia and that my brother lived on the other side and I could not fight that war. I was imprisoned again and beaten and tortured ... All the time during the war until the end of the conflict I was a prisoner in a Serbian military prison ... there were many, many harassments and hard moments in the prison ... and I was not the only one. Many people were imprisoned, everything was a big political game, that was my point of view ... we were just pawns in the big games; beaten and tortured pawns ... I was in

that military prison where Croatians prisoners of war were also imprisoned and Serbian soldiers treated them much better and with more respect than us Serbian men who refused to fight .. .It was hard for me to imagine, at the beginning of the war, that we could do this to each other. We Serbians and Croatians, we grew up together in that city, we all lived by and believed in equality and brotherhood ... (silence). I could not believe that you can be beaten or killed by your schoolmate, I could not comprehend that a man could be so low in his actions and values ... and in all this experience I was weak ... (silence)
Researcher: What do you mean by being weak? Please tell me about it.
I was raised and educated by heroic stories and literature about strong men. As a young man I had leadership skills and I was always a leader among my friends and I was also a very successful sportsman, so I believed that I was strong and unbreakable until I faced myself in prison, until I got to know myself, ...(silence) if one ever gets to know oneself completely ... there is no defence mechanism for such experience ... (silence)...
(Father, 56 years old)

The main theme of these families' stories was uncertainty and fear. Indeed, while facing uncertainty was a common theme across the interviews, the couples with a 'performance role' expressed a high degree of fear in the past as well as in the present and about the future. These families tended to be less flexible and less democratic in their interaction and decision-making processes. These families were very interdependent, but without communication affective responses. Children were passive participants in conversation but very alert listeners throughout interviews. The belief system and traditional values were imposed on the children. This segment from personal testimony serves as an example:

My husband still has the final say in our family, even today. Our son is married, but my husband decides about everything. However, our son is patient, he has my calm temperament and when my son wants to explain something to my husband, he finds a way to persuade his father. My husband has a very short temper and the children usually withdraw and they never go against their father's will. Sometimes, I might be angry because I would like to say to my son :'You live your own life, do not worry what your father has to say'.
(Mother 53 years old)

When another participant was asked how he would describe the relationship between himself and his children he answered in the following way:

Well, [silence], well, [silence], there is some misunderstanding between us., I mean, we are already in two different worlds. They are far more relaxed that me. I see unhappiness in life as well as the other side of it. My children do not see both sides of life. I do not know, I mean it is better for them not to know. The conflict starts from the fact that I do not understand this society, this system. My compass doesn't work here
Well, I try to explain to them my point of view, but that seems to be overwhelming for them. All the attempts usually end up with me giving in to their requests and plans. And then gradually, I

start to think and correct my harsh decisions and then I become aware of the emotional tensions that are so intensely present in me.

I feel fear in me because of the children; they are here in a different culture, and I am fearful that they may forget some things which were important over there. So maybe I have some negative presumptions in terms of what is normal here. There is a more negative load in me from fear for the children. There is more fear. I heard a saying from our people that here this culture sucks your blood even though you have no open wound. I was told when I came to Australia that everything would be given to me here in Australia, but my children will be taken away from me. And that is true. So, the relationship with my children is different than it would have been without the war. So, my children go down this road and that is catastrophe to me, not because I do not like them to be Australians, but I do not like them not to know who they are and where they come from. So, how will they be able to turn back and see where they are? There is a Serbian author who writes about our youth as that of a young man who thinks only about today, but as he gets older he turns back more and more to the past. So in my case I do not think about what I am going to have for lunch today, but I think about what happened twenty, thirty years ago. So, that probably has an impact on the children. That is my role, that is sometimes negative, so if I repeat something every day, eventually it will be accepted, just as people accept these American lies from the media
(Father, 58 years old).

Another parent:

I want our children not to lose connection with their roots., I do not want them to be influenced by this mass media. I would like them to read books in our language and they refuse to do so .. I would like them to go to concerts with our music, to talk to our relatives by phone and they rarely do that ... and when I realize all of that I feel pain; that is my wound ... our children are taken away from us as they live in accordance with these values here, not in accordance with our parents' values and principles.
(Mother, 54 years old)

In sum, testimony was a second stage of trauma recovery for the participants in this study. Two kinds of testimony processes occurred: family lore testimony and intimate/confessional testimonies. Families with the family lore tended to openly talk about the past, indicated flexibility as a core concept of resilience and primarily an ability to change and to meet new challenges (Walsh, 2003). These families revealed resilience at personal/individual level as well as at family unit level. These families reached clarity in roles, obligations and communication patterns. These findings are in accord with notion of recovery as an opportunity to grieve, to focus on marital and familial relationship, to deal with losses caused not only by war but also by the experience of being a refugee and of resettlement and by naming those losses, atrocities and injustices (Fishman, 1998; Gonsalves, et al, 1993; Herman, 1997).

Families with intimate/confessional story telling patterns, whose parents/partners testified in front of the researcher only, expressed feelings of despair and for them testimony was not so much an empowerment process as a coping mechanism with sustained feelings of betrayal, and guilt with no ethical recovery. These families were mourning individually rather than sharing and reconstructing their memories together. Their interaction was covered by a lot of secrecy, denial and distortion. Thus the family members did not communicate effectively, had less intimacy and flexibility in their interaction and had no democratic decision-making process. In these families there was resilience at the family unit level, but not necessarily at the personal/individual level. These finding confirmed Fischman's (1998) suggestion that in order to build a new life or meaning system, it is absolutely vital for survivors to learn how to frame their experience within their system of inner values and ethic. Further recovery has to include the family sphere, the relationship between men and women, parents and children in the aftermath of the war and refugee experience (Polugny, Chedterm & Schnabel, 2007).

4.4. Self-determination – stage three in trauma recovery

Although the participants had experienced economic, cultural and political changes in Australia, and were in the process of recovery and reconstruction of their trauma story, cultural and psychological oppression was still present in this marginalized group in Australia. As revealed through their storytelling, the participants perceived that freedom or safety in their new country had been constrained by a legacy of exclusion, memories from the past, fear of the unknown, as well as by their new social and political conditions. This is evident in the following segment:

Son: It does not matter how hard you try to forgive, memories come back, or not even memories, but situations come back. It does not matter that I was little; I still hold in my memory many things that happened to us. For example, a few days ago at work, I was working in a shop, a woman came to the shop and she started a conversation with me. She said that she was a tourist from Germany and then suddenly she asked for my nationality. I answered that I was Serbian. She asked me immediately: "How many Albanians did you kill?
(Silence, long silence.)
Researcher: How did you feel after such a question?
Son: I was literarily terrified. I did not expect such a question at all. How could she even think that I would do that? I was a child at the time. I asked her simply to leave the shop, but I've been struggling since then, I've been hurt deeply.
Mother interrupts: She pulled you back into those days … .(Silence, sighs)

A segment from another story also illustrates perceived oppression and struggles in adapting to the new culture after experiencing and reflecting upon refugee trauma:

In Australia, everyone has the same Centrelink payment, regardless of whether you are a refugee or a drug addict: we are all the same to the Government. There is no difference in treatment for drug addict and refugee, so it's very similar to the treatment we had in the refugee camp in Germany, but we also had to reside or live together in a camp there.
 (Father, 56 years old)

Even if the participants were not able to explore opportunities within the public sphere of their lives (especially in the wider Australian society), due to their cultural, socio-economic, educational and language barriers, they have been able to create their own measure of choice within the private sphere of their lives. Such choices enable them to influence or to gain a sense of control in their lives. But such a strong division between the public and private domain of living has not helped to support the participants' efforts to recover and escape from traumatic memories, from their devaluated sense of self, economic exploitation, and/or cultural isolation. They have been involved in a constant struggle for consistency in their lives, and to recover or reclaim their values and meaning system. This process has shaped a new way and created the participants' particular ability to interpret, to adapt and to adjust to new circumstances in Australia. This process, according to Herman (1997) refers to the third stage of trauma recovery and comprises reconnection with ordinary life and integration of losses. The same process, according to Walsh, (2006) refers to

resilience, which is in accord with Bulhan's (1985) concept of self-determination, which refers to *the process and capacity to choose among alternatives, to determine one's behaviour, and to affect one's destiny. As such, self-determination assumes a consciousness of human possibilities, an awareness of necessary constraints, and a willed, self-motivated engagement with one's world... .Self-determination is also both a means of fulfilling other human needs and an end unto itself* (Bulhan, 1985, pp.265, 266).

The participants' self-determination, or a measure of choice, was manifested by their reconnection with ordinary life and creation of relational communities. Indeed, the participants were able to revitalize their values and ideas within their newly-created community. These communities seem to be alliances between same-minded people, regardless of the participants' experiences of torture, imprisonment and/or refugee trauma and 'ghetto'-like mentality in the suburbs of Melbourne; there was no expression of ethnic intolerance or xenophobia throughout these interviews. All the participants expressed the need for social connectedness between all people from all ethnic backgrounds from the territory of the former Yugoslavia who were now residing in Australia. For example:

In the company where I work here in Australia, I have colleagues who are Serbians, Macedonians, Croatians and Bosnian Muslims, and we all stick together. And the relationship that we have, for example, with the Macedonian and Muslim guys, is how it was in the former Yugoslavia.[when everyone got on well together before the war]. That is a special pleasure in my life, I mean to have such relationships. I do not like working in that company, but the friendships that I have there are the only pleasure in my social life in Australia.
(Father 58 years old)

Similarly:

We have lots of friends, our friends are Croatians and Bosnian Muslims and we socialize with our people. We visit each other often and we spend time together. We value the humanity and the character of a person, we do not value ethnicity.
(Father, 43 years old)

Another participant:

I have two very close friends; with one of them I spend most of my time. I mean I have one family friend that I see very frequently and another one I meet twice monthly.
Researcher: By coincidence, I know that your best family friend has a Serbian background.
Yes, that is correct and I would exchange him for all Croatian friends. He is an honest and decent person, he is my best friend. So, nationality is not important, but the character of a person is certainly very important. Honesty is what I value the most.
(Father, 40 years old)

Similarly:

We have a few couples that we socialize with. We also go to a club which is not an ethnic club. The club that we joined was established by people who are from ethnically mixed backgrounds, urban people from the former Bosnia. So these are the people that we tend to socialize with. We travel a lot with our club and that is the way we prefer it. We prefer people who do not have nationalistic prejudice and are without the burden of ethnic background.. So we laugh a lot, we tell each other jokes and anecdotes and that is what we do. Can you believe that we do not socialize with my brothers-in-law?
Researcher: I can understand that … (pause)
Actually, my husband does not socialize with his brothers; he cannot stand their nationalistic beliefs.
 (Mother, 59 years old)

These participants, the fathers in particular, revealed feelings of having re-established control over their lives as their succeeded in creating a like-minded circle of friends. In this way they recovered and reclaimed their meaning system and a sense of achievement, which further created a sense of consistency and continuity in the participants' lives.

The participants' newly created relational communities and their abilities to build reliance on informal, close-knit networks in their new country refers to social and cultural resilience (Harms, 2005) or strong interconnection between the family's inner and outer world. This capacity derives from the participants' great need to make choices at the level of universal human characteristics and subsequently to have a sense of coherence, belonging and mattering. Thus, the participants' value system, their awareness of themselves and others, their dignity, led them to integrate their losses and strengthened their experiences in the inner world of self-esteem and self-worth. The participants were able to create a measure of choice-to be self-determined: to act responsibly and to profoundly contribute to their sense of well-being.

The context of the narratives in this study further suggested that the

participants' self-determination appeared through strong emotional connectedness

with their children. The participants claimed that their children were the purpose of

their lives or the core concept of their being. The participant's feelings, thoughts and

actions connected to their children represent their measure of choice and influence or

control over what happens in their lives under pressure of unforeseeable

circumstances. Such a measure of choice, as Herman (1997) highlighted, refers to the

'survivor mission': when there is no way to compensate for loss and atrocities, then

people transcend it, by making a gift for others. Herman's 'gift for other' refers to

social actions but in this study the parents' alliances and strong connection with their

children was that mission: a source of empowerment and further development in their

lives. The mission enabled the parents to be aware and connected with the best in

themselves and in the other people – to be dignified and benevolent:

It would be easier for me if I had been killed on my doorway at the beginning of the war than to survive all this. My life means nothing to me, and the only reason I live is because of my children and my brother's children. Yes, that is why I live. If my children are happy, I am happy too. That's it!
We have a beautiful house, both of us work, our daughters have good jobs, the younger one is at University, the older one has already finished University. They still live with us, which is quite rare in Australia. They are very supportive and helpful to us. They are saving money from their salaries because we do not want to take any money for food or anything else. I also told them to go and travel, to have a holiday and a nice life. I could not afford to go on holidays myself, never in my life, and now I live for them to go on holidays and to be happy. I work and live for them, their happiness is the most important thing to me.
(Father 45 years old)

Similarly:

The positive thing is that my children have a chance to prosper if they wish. They have a chance in this country to build their lives and future. That is the most important thing; it is all about our children. I do not intend going to school or building a career, I can earn enough money for us and the children, that is the most important thing ... My greatest challenge is my children's future. All my life is around our children (laughing).
(Mother, 40 years old).

Another participant responded in a similar way:

I would give everything for my children, I live for them.

(Father, 42 years-old)

Similarly:

We always try hard to make a better life for our children, we are happy to sacrifice ourselves for the future of our children.
(Father, 40 years-old).

We spend or our energy and time on our children. Our children are my whole life. My parents gave me everything they could and I believe that is my responsibility, duty and pleasure to do the same thing for my children. Nothing is difficult when it comes to our children: absolutely nothing is too difficult for them. Now, my daughter is going away to Europe to further her study. So we don't need to be physically connected for her to be near me, but we are emotionally very close and I am always available for my children, whatever happens, I am here for them
(Mother, 59 years old)

The participants' powerful stories resonate with passages from Gourevitch's (2008) book on Rwandan genocide: *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families – Stories from Rwanda*, where the survivor explained that 'survival was meaningless until one found a reason to survive again, a reason to look to tomorrow' (p.228) . According to Gourevitch, this was a common view in Rwanda, where depression was epidemic and where, as he further elaborates, survival instinct refers to an animal urge to preserve oneself.

But once the threat of bodily annihilation is relieved, the soul still requires preservation and a wounded soul becomes the source of its affliction; it cannot nurse itself directly
 (Gourtevitch p.228).

'So survival', Gourtevitch (2008) continues, 'can seem as a curse, for one of the dominant needs of the needy soul is to be needed. ...'

*As I came to know survivors, I found that, when it comes to soul preservation, the urge to look after others is often greater than the urge to look after oneself. All across the ghostly countryside, survivors sought each other out, assembling surrogate families and squatting together in abandoned shacks, in schoolyard shanties and burned-out shops, hoping for safety and comfort in a hastily assembled household.'
 (Gourtevitch p.228)

Miraculously, the survivor in Gourevitch's (2008) book still had his wife and children, yet he began to adopt more children, as he came to fear the idleness and

disengagement that he associated with his recent experience of being a victim. For him, to keep busy was essential – to do things, to help others, to look after as many orphaned children as possible, to choose not to be a victim, to be self-determined, future orientated.

The participants in this study were goal/future orientated, with the capacity to choose and to determine their behaviour by being able to fulfil their children's needs and to care and live for their children, as they expressed it. The parents' committed emotional connectedness enables them not only to adjust to Australia, but also to shift from adjustment to empowerment, from recovery and family flexibility to family resilience (connectedness, social and economic resources, mutual support, change and growth) (Walsh, 2006). For instance:

Well, we have our home again, both of us work, we have paid off this house, so we do not have a mortgage, and we achieved all of that in 12 years. If we had stayed there we could not have achieved anything like that, we could not have had such a life. For example, our children live with us. Our daughter works, she has her own car. Our son is married and he has already achieved something in his life ... I believe that it is much better for us and our children that we are living here; we have quality of life here, even if we are not fluent in English ...Whenever I go to do something in town, somebody has to go with me because of my English, so that is a big difference. So, whenever I go to the doctor's or something similar, I need help ... however, I think that my husband and I have achieved a lot and we are happy with what we have got. Now, we just wish to support our children. We do not need a bigger house. I would say that we need a smaller house. This house is too big, but it was a good investment. Anyway, my husband and I have to build quality in our life now. So, quite often we take short holidays, and then we go with our grandchildren to Queensland for holidays ... With good health we are going to support our children to achieve more and progress more. Now, we are trying to persuade our daughter to buy a house for herself, and we will help her financially. She works and she has money, and we wish her to buy a house and rent it if she still wishes to live together with us. I would like her to be with us until she gets married, if she ever marries.
(Mother 53 years old)

Overall, despite the participants' degree of strength or their constant struggles with a sense of coherence, belonging and mattering, their voices are loud and powerful. The voices of the participants represent an echo of their inner desire to embrace life, to heal their own suffering and to create a life worth living. The tools for developing or rebuilding such a life, or the strength to swim upstream against the

current, are found in parenthood or caring. The notion of caring, for the purpose of this study, includes compassionate love, great expectations, sacrifices and joy, loud discussions, humour, arguments and challenges between partners and their children. Indeed, all these have been evident throughout the constant dynamic between power, resources and authority that exists within a family unit in this study. Moreover, the analysis, at this stage, indicates that parenthood or caring has not been a role or a stage in the participants' lives but primarily a mode of being and existing in the world. Thus, parenthood and/or caring go beyond the notion of self-determination, beyond thoughts about rebuilding or building lives. Parenthood as such represents a contribution to life, Enhancing Future as a core concept of the participants' recovery and resilience. When participants were asked about their goals and dreams for the future, they answered in the following ways:

Son: To find peace in life, to live on a farm with my family or something like that.
Mother: I see my future embellished by grandchildren.
Father: I see myself among my children and grandchildren;

> Similarly:

In ten years time, I see myself as a grandmother (laughing). I wish my children to have their own families but to live close to me.

> Another parent:

To have good health so that we can pay off this house and to be able to support our children, to build a platform for them, to position them on the right track.

> and another:

Mother (laughing): We do not have plans, my husband and I have completed our plans.
Father: We have plans, we have plans. First and foremost to be healthy and maintain our closeness and connectedness with each other. We are one cell here in Australia, and if we do not stay close to each other, then how is it going to be? I mean friends are friends, but there are many things that you may not say to a friend; family is everything. So, we have plans to continue to be a normal family.
Son: Well, my plan is to have ten fully paid-off properties – that is my plan (we all laugh)
The mother asks her daughter to say something.
Daughter: My mum wants me to get married. I do not know what to say. I've been planning for a better future, a better job, and we will see.

When a 45 year-old father was asked if he felt he was still in the process of rebuilding his life, he answered:

I hope so; until we die we are always going to build our lives. We work hard, we pay off this house, we also bought an investment property, and all of that is for our children. I mean, my wife and I do not need all of that, we have enough, but we built more for our children's future.

4.5. Development of new family identity – the fourth stage in trauma recovery

Travellers are now asked to pay attention to family interactions during this guided tour. These interactions were not observed nor analysed by the researcher via clinical lenses or as strategy-based structural observations regarding healthy or pathological family organizations. Instead, attention was paid to the way the family members organized their stories, and to their perceptions of the self – as a family member, as well as their perceptions of the significant others – and how the family identity emerged from these interactions. Thus, the thirty-three interviews which were conducted with eleven families produced eleven family stories. These family stories reflected each family's identity.

And now, as we embark on the last stage of this journey , the researcher invites fellow travellers to read the following little story and to consider how well if might reflect the experiences of the participants whose own journeys and stories we have shared in part throughout this voyage of exploration.

There was a storm in the middle of the ocean and the heavy waves cast out a number of shells. The damaged shells were carried far, far away and eventually came to rest on an undiscovered shore. But though they were damaged, these shells still contained the echo of past storms and the sound of the ocean waves could also be heard deep inside them. As time passed, new shellfish arrived and took up residence in these old shells. Thus, a

new form of existence was created within the walls of original old 'unchanged' shells and finally these new creatures were ready to flow out again with the waves in the tumultuous and often stormy seas of the wide ocean that surrounds the world.

By offering this small story, the researcher hopes to direct explorers down a new path, towards new knowledge, by using the metaphor of a 'patriarchal shell' to illustrate a new notion of family identity. As Cigoli and Scabini (2006) suggested, a family identity is a way of nourishing the values inherited in family relational patterns. These relational patterns, according to Cigoli and Scabini, are based on three principles: i) organizational (gender, generation, family history), ii) symbolic (trust, hope, justice), and iii) dynamic (giving, receiving, and reciprocating). Research for this study has revealed that all the families interviewed had developed a new identity where family roles and dynamics were different from what they had been before the war and refugee experience. However, when the participants/partners were asked (on separate occasions) how their role in the family had changed, they all reported that their roles had not changed at all. For example:

Researcher: How has your role changed in the family since you came to Australia?
Father: It did not change at all. God forbid if it did change.

Similarly:

Mother: It hasn't.

Another mother answered in the following way:

 I do not think that my role has changed in the family.

And another father said:

I do not think that my role changed since I came to Australia. I worked hard in Germany and I used to have three jobs. So, there is no change.

The family made changes in their communication, intimacy, and obligations, but they tended to deny such changes and to present themselves as patriarchal families unchanged from those of the collectivist honour society that existed before the war.

Lindner (2010) highlights that fathers and husbands from collectivistic honour societies believe in a parenting style and family functioning as authoritarian moral duty, where the fathers' commands are to be obeyed and strict rules are to be followed. Such a strict patriarchal model or shell had actually changed inside each family who participated in this study. The fathers had changed or shifted their authoritarian parenting style into a nurturing parenting model and by doing so they enhanced each family member's dignity. The nurturing parenting model, according to Linden (2010), enables and cherishes equality and the dignity for all family members, and as such it creates conditions for children to act responsibly. In essence, the families who participated in this study changed their organizational patterns and dynamics (from an authoritarian patriarchal to a nurturing model), however, the symbolic principles of the families (trust, hope, justice) remained the same. Thus, the researcher uses the symbolic name – patriarchal shell – to illustrate a new development in family identity and represents the fourth stage of trauma recovery for the participants in this study.

The segments of this new development of family identity were revealed throughout the family interviews, where all families who participated in this study created a cohesive family story. The cohesive family story incorporated: i) individual interviews with partners as additions to the other partner's/parents'/children's story, and ii) flexibility, as the family members' ability to explore and accept new alternatives (Fiese, et al, 2001). All families showed evidence of honesty between partners and their children regarding mutual trust, hope and pursuit of justice. This honesty and accountability was also revealed when discussing family history and the generational gap between the parents and the children. For example:

Researcher: How would you describe the relationship between your spouse and child/children?
Father: We have never had any problems between us, nor have we had issues before or after the war. We actually do not talk much about it, we have always been clear since our wedding, when we promised each other commitment and many other things.
Mother: That is the truth, everything has always been O.K. between us.
Researcher: How do you and your parents get on together?
Daughter: We do not have problems with each other.
Son: Everything is normal, and normally one cannot have agreement about everything because of the generation gap. However, I do believe that our family is above average in terms of how much we help and support each other and how nicely we live together. I believe that the war and the subsequent exodus influenced our connectedness and our dependence on each other. How do you make decisions in the family?
Son: We always consult each other and sometimes we have completely opposite opinions.
Father: Sometimes we have completely different opinions but when they sit with me and explain things to me with proper argumentations then I am willing to accept it. For example, I was completely against my son's ambitions to buy a house and to develop his business, however, my son proved me wrong.
Son: It is not about being wrong, we can have different opinions, but I like to inform my father about my intentions and my future actions. But just because my father likes to be informed about our lives, this does not mean that I am going to obey his request.
Mother: But in such circumstances, there is no anger between them, they continue with conversations until we have agreements.
Father: There is no anger, no anger.
Mother: We talk and conversation is crucial.

However, it is important to note that the storytelling lacked a distinctive congruence. This congruence of affect and content, according to Fiese, et al (2001) refers to corresponding emotions or accordance between the participants' descriptions of events or affects expressed throughout the interviews. Tone of voice, facial expressions and emotional content are basic components of congruence while lack of congruence refers to nervous laughter, inappropriate intensity of affect, etc. The lack of corresponding emotions throughout the participants' storytelling or the lack of congruence between affect and content occurred only in women. While all the men allowed themselves to freely express their feelings of anger, bitterness and different opinions, all the women demonstrated nervous laughter and great personal strength and protectiveness throughout the family interviews (while during the personal interviews they allowed themselves to be weak and upset). For example, when a 40-year old mother was asked, in a personal (one-to-one) interview, to describe her feelings regarding her war experience, she revealed the following:

I do not really know what I feel, but whenever I think about it I feel some kind of unrest and I can always see how much we lost. We lost a lot of things in our lives. How can I explain that? It is very hard to explain such feelings. I do not know what to say (silence and tears).

When this women was asked the same question in front of her family she replied in the following way:

War is 'never-let-it-happen-again'.(pause) I do not like to talk about it or to hear about it. I do not think about it. (nervous laughter) I mean, I usually suppress those memories and try to move on (laughing).

And in another example of the mothers' restrained sadness in front of the family:

Researcher: How does each of you feel when thinking about war experiences?
Father: I feel that it was something that made an impact on us with consequences for our entire life.
Mother: Horrible (laughing with tears in her eyes)
Son: I do not remember
Daughter: I do not remember
Researcher: So, how did you feel back then?
Father: I felt like a refugee, I did not know what to expect and what was going to come next in my life
Mother: Uncertainty (laughing)

The mothers continued to be protectors of their families by regulating family members' affects, being emotional nurturer and carers. Women persisted in supporting their families, to serve as a pillar for their family structure. In Australia, they continued to fight, not for the family survival but for the quality of their family lives. As one of the mothers revealed:

I feel that I am a pillar of the house. I think that our relationship is so strong that nothing could possibly damage it. Family is the most important thing in life.

Throughout interactions family members listened, but also interrupted each other, and in doing so they created intense discussions throughout the interviews. These discussions revealed an interesting distribution of power between parents and children, where children seemed to be equal as interview participations as well as in decision-making. Thus the children, regardless of their age and gender, played the role of partners rather than dependants in the families. Such a partnership was evident through negotiations (making family decisions together) and accountability. The

partnerships also included economic alliances with teenage and adult children making

financial decisions together with their parents, ensuring that the whole family

benefited from such decisions. The way these families interacted during the family

interviews was in accord with Walsh's (2006) concept of resilience, where families'

organizational patterns include recruitment of joint emotional, social and economic

resources. For example,

Father: The only positive thing that has happened in Australia is that our children have completed university degrees, and nothing else.
Daughter and son laugh.
Son: How about the fact that we bought a house, that we have a nice car. We made new friends, how about that? We have friends now who are not only from our backgrounds, we have Australian friends. We have also developed a better view on the world; we comprehend the world in a better way. Our horizons are much wider now. We are far away in Australia, so for people who reside in Europe this is a far destination, however for us it is not that far, we travel easily now, and the world is not that big for us anymore. It is much smaller.
Mother: It is much easier for us to travel to visit our relatives than for them to visit us.

A segment from another family interview:

Father: The relationship is fine because even when it is not as I might have wished it, it is what the others want.
Son: Sometime we obey our parents, sometimes they obey us.
Father: There is no pressure put on anyone in this home. Sometimes there is a difference in opinions but such differences do not create problems in the house. We all monitor and correct each other, so if someone goes the wrong way, others are here to warn and help to correct them.
Researcher: How do you and your parents get on together?
Older Daughter : No comments whatsoever.[they all laugh]
Researcher: How do you make decisions in the family?
Mother: Depends on what kind of decisions need to be made.
Father: We already know what would annoy or worry each of us and we tend to avoid such things.
Son: We ask each other questions, I mean just informally, laughing.
Mother: My husband makes all decisions regarding the house in terms of work, renovations and stuff. That is his field.
Father: Our children have different plans from the plans we have. We think a lot about it.
Mother: We think about the children's path to their future, that is the most important thing to us.

The observed family interaction confirmed psychological division between the

participants' public and domestic life; clear boundaries between inner and outer worlds

of these families. All families had constructed their social world equally or in a very

similar way. All the participants expressed greater intimacy and trust with the

researcher during the individual interviews than in the family interviews. During the individual interviews the participants were open with their opinions and emotions, but they did not have any agenda or a message for the researcher; the individual interviews were perceived as an opportunity for therapeutic/healing relationship.

Throughout the family interviews the participants or the families performed as coherent units with an agenda for the researcher, who they perceived on these occasions as an insider and messenger to the 'outside world' or to the mainstream society. This openness to the community member, and the ability to share personal and affectively sensitive details from past experiences, was interpreted as an attempt to find the key that opens the door to healing from and clarification of the mysteries of community-historical trauma. This process enabled all family members, but the fathers in particular, to reach themselves by way of their wounds, and move beyond pure survival and victimhood to a radical transformation of their priorities and values. Thus, when considering recovery at the individual level (and including the gender differences), the recovery without community reconciliation appeared to be very difficult for the fathers. Thus, throughout the interviews families confirmed that they had affective interactions , preferring a higher degree of emotional closeness, good family involvement, strong loyalty to the family but not clear generational boundaries. By generational boundaries I refer to internal boundaries such as physical and emotional time and space as well as decision-making (Olson & Gorall, 2003). However, the participants' stories and interactions revealed very clear external boundaries. External boundaries here refer to friends, interests and activities (Olson & Gorall, 2003) and in this study became apparent when the researcher asked the participants to offer advice to a society that has not undergone war and exile

experiences. Each family acted as a team and was keen to give a message or to spread

the word. For example:

Son: I would say that we should be open-minded and not forejudge people because of their religion or colour of their skin. Indeed, we should think twice before we form opinions about someone or something. I would also advise people to travel as much as they can. A lot of people have not travelled at all and they have not seen anything. The third thing is to enjoy the life that you have, to appreciate what we have,
Daughter: The most difficult thing for our family to achieve was to have status or to be a citizen in a country. The most painful experience is to be a second-class citizen. So we fought against it and we succeeded. We are integrated. But what I am trying to say is that firstly we have to show respect and then we become respected as well. So we gain respect from others by giving it first.
Father: I would send a message to the government which is that the system nourishes its people. So poor schooling with tired and busy parents cannot create healthy and knowledgeable people. Secondly, how are we going to develop harmony or at least tolerance in this society if our children do not learn about different religions and histories? Secondly, sexual education is very poor in this country; I mean children in this country should learn ethics and moral values as compulsory subjects in school. The system is weak and horrible, in fact, I mean if parents work from 9 to 5 or 7pm how do children learn and from where? So, they have street, street education.

Another family:

Son: I would tell them that they are lucky not to have gone through it, that's about it.
Daughter: I do not know. Perhaps I would tell them not to judge people.
Son: Yes, it's dangerous for them to judge you because they do not know what you feel inside and they also do not understand what they tend to make judgements about.
Mother: Not to judge without knowing the real truth. I would tell them that before judging anyone, that they should try to be informed and to listen to different versions or sides of the story. I would definitely advise them not to completely trust their media. I would ask them to try to understand us, people from war circumstances, and not to create alliances with those who want to control the world. I would ask them to raise their voices against any war. In every war, the victims are innocent people.
Father: I do not know, but I would also suggest that they learn more before forming an opinion, because such opinion could create a refugee atmosphere again for all these people in Australia who have survived war. That's it.

And another family had this to say:

Father: When I look back to our experience, I would just say that people worry too much about things that seem to be very important, but when you compare with our suffering those things are irrelevant and they are not worthy of our anxiety and health. Therefore, we should live better and worry less.
Daughter: I do not know if this is going to sound like advice, but I would like to say that people should take care about their happiness. They should be happy.
Mother: Why can't we live like that after all the experience that we have had?
Why shouldn't we turn around and have more joy. I think that Australians should give us advice on how to be carefree and to tell us stop worrying, it was enough.
But we are not able to be like that because we continue to live as we used to. This means to try to achieve a lot and to have home and positions as we used to have. That is how we used to live.
Daughter: I am sorry that many people in this country take things for granted.

Son: I would advise every young Australian to live their youth fully and to feel joy, because we, young people from the Balkans, we did not have time to stop at each step on the staircase of life. We missed a lot.

All the families had consistent family stories with no clearly defined internal boundaries but very clearly defined external boundaries. In all the families, women's protective role integrated power of caring and love reflected through the remodelling of tradition and the creation of new values, whereas the men perceived that protecting family meant ensuring that the existing tradition and its values did not change. Such differences and connections were at the core of the new family identity of these families – the patriarchal shell, as the fourth stage in trauma recovery. This stage of recovery referred to the adjustment made to disrupted family continuity and renewed family values after the war and refugee trauma.

The new family identities in Australia consisted of the following: i) very firm internal boundaries before the war (fathers as authority figures had clear boundaries such as physical and emotional time and space and decision making) were replaced by loose emotional boundaries and democratic decision making in Australia. The loose external boundaries (between the families and communities) before the war were replaced by firm and clear boundaries after the war and refugee experience. ii) strong patriarchal hierarchy with clear roles established before the war   was replaced by adaptive roles, flexibility, strong coalitions and cooperation between partners and/or children after the war and iii) ,the mothers played an important role in creating family harmony or effective communication patterns balancing the affect in the family, where before the war the affects among family members was regulated by authoritarian patriarchal roles.

Overall, all families who participated in the study were in denial regarding changes in their families. This denial served the families as a tool to maintain a sense of stability and continuity in life transitions for each family member. The patriarchal

shell as a metaphor reflects the way in which the family interactions were encapsulated, with the duality of the container (the patriarchal family image from the Balkans) and the contained (the changed family in Australia). The contained/changed families in Australia included recruitment of joined emotional, social and economic resources. Such a transition or shift created a new values system within the families: a new level of awareness and consciousness in each family member and therefore recovery at the family level.

4.6. The view from the summit

At the beginning of this chapter we found ourselves at the foot of the mountain, at the meeting of different tributaries of human truths, revealed through the refugees' storytelling. The analogy of the mountain and its ascent represented the components and process of the thematic account that reached its climax in the form of superordinate theme – Dignity. Indeed, dignity as a theme symbolises the point where sky and earth meet or where the participants made a choice between their needs and their values. The participants' dignity comprised their integrity, self-determination and self-definition of their significant others. It reflected their value system or the level of their consciousness, their way of being in the world and understanding the war trauma and its aftermath. Indeed, throughout enormous suffering, the participants changed the conceptual form of their existence and therefore their feelings and choices. The suffering was caused by different kinds of trauma: war and refugee trauma. The trauma of having been a refugee made a greater impact on the participants' dignity, self-esteem and belief system than having undergone and survived war and torture. The experience of humiliation was the foundation of a whole range of further traumas experienced by the participants. Humiliation occurred on a grand scale and in the most destructive form, where the participants were often

persecuted by their own people. According to the stories of the participants in this study, a refugee life is separated from the rights of a person as much by his/her separation from human rights as by the separation outside the boundaries of the nation state.

The gender difference in attachment style before the war had an impact on the way partners/parents coped with traumatic experiences. The danger and horror experienced during the war merely transformed the women's pre-existing nurturing and caring roles into protective attachments within the family and thus expanded their already well-established role. However, the husbands/fathers were reluctant to engage in emotional closeness and often unable to openly communicate with their family members. The men/fathers were torn apart by conflict between their inner values/belief systems and outer atrocities, to the point of state of radical insecurity. However, the men who experienced torture or severe combat during the war or who had succeeded in framing their traumatic experience within their own system of values and ethics, values sustained before, during and after the trauma, tended to find a historical explanation for the trauma instead of seeing a need for revenge.

The men interviewed in this study reported coping well with traumatic experiences of war and torture, but were vulnerable in exile. On the other hand, women reported being resilient when their husbands were vulnerable – compensatory family dynamics. The story revealed in all interviews suggested that the husbands were in psychological and emotional crisis at different stages of the traumatic experience while the wives possessed the ability to cope and communicate effectively with all family members. The women also took a leadership role within their families in care-taking and emotional nurturing of family members.

There was a difference across genders in the perception of and/or representation of injustice, reflecting the participants' way of representing their losses and the way they dealt with the losses. The gendered representation of injustice reflected a culturally-specific construction of justice and requirement for repairing the social and moral fabric of the communities within which these families reside.

For every one of the participants in this study 'The Hague' represents corrupt international law , having proved unable to represent their quest for justice that they all believed had been orchestrated by the United States of America and NATO. Regardless of their ethnicity, age or gender, none of the participants recognized or mentioned The International Tribunal's mandate to extend international humanitarian law when prosecuting internal ethnic conflicts and/or gender-based war crime (e.g. rape and murder). There was a common sense of mistrust and lack of respect for this international justice and all expressed a feeling that there was no moral credibility in international legal relations. The stories of these participants suggest that they have not been able to come to terms with adversity. Whenever they read or watch the news from their country, whenever they engage with their ethnic community, they continue to experience uncertainty about political violence or oppression. Thus, they continue to live in the midst of ethnic conflict long after the physical battle is over. The participants revealed that each ethnic community feels stigmatised and discriminated against not only by other ethnic communities in Australia but also by the wider Australian society. According to the participants, the news reports and TV documentaries also indicate that political violence and ethnic cleansing continue in the region to this day. Furthermore, according to the participants in this study there is no ethical possibility of community recovery in Australia – nor a process of naming injustice. Thus, the participants' testimonies suggested that the participants were

affected by historical trauma which goes beyond Herman's (1993) proposal of complex PTSD and as such has an enormous impact on the participants' interpersonal relationships.

The stories revealed in this study suggested that the families do not trust the wider society or their ethnic communities, however, family members have deeper trust in each other. Regardless of different emotional problems, due to past humiliation and trauma, or regardless of the different coping style of each family member, trust has been strengthened within these families. The only resort of trust for each of the participants in this study has been shown to be their family, which also represents for them the only place of safety in the aftermath of trauma and therefore their first stage of trauma recovery. The truth told in testimony was the second stage of trauma recovery and the process served as a reservoir of dignity for the participants. The testimonies were an attempt to convert unconscious anxiety, instinctive choices and the survival drive of the families into a conscious commitment of family members to each other.

The participants' self-determination was the third stage in trauma recovery, appearing through the partners/parents' strong emotional connectedness with their children, reconnection with ordinary life and the creation of relational communities. The participants' testimonies' were an introspective examination of their past experiences in front of their children, which illustrated that family values and ethics were lived intensively and inherited through storytelling. Such a measure of choice for the parents in this study enabled them to be aware and connected with the best in themselves and in other people – to be dignified. While listening to the testimonies, children, regardless of age or gender, tended to take the role of active listeners and resolution-seekers by asking questions or challenging the testimony, Thus, the

children and mothers were able to assist the fathers and each other in reframing their survival story. Such named, specified and challenged perception of losses/truth-telling within the family dynamic enables the family members to have a deep awareness of each others' worlds and needs.

On the other hand, there were families where the father did not provide testimonies for, nor in front of their children or their partners. In these families, personal, one-on-one interviews were opportunities to give a testimony of great personal loss, experienced during the war and refugee experience. For these parents/partners, testimonies were interpretations of intimate, subjective and deep experiences of horror (Sterjilevic, 2006). These personal testimonies were told by both parents. The partners respectively told stories about their loneliness and isolation, but also about betrayal by their non-responsive partners. These perceptions of betrayal and despair were not expressed in front of their children, nor in front of partners. The parents had a common platform or dyadic level of story-telling in front of their children and would hide each other's disappointments, thus protecting each other.

The level of individual and family resilience was not determined by the degree of trauma but by family membership, defined by family belief system, organization and communication patterns There was resilience at the family level but not necessarily at an individual level for the participants in this study.

The fourth stage of trauma recovery included the development of a new family identity. This process involved development of new meaning or new segments in family history and had more flexible exchange between the genders and generations with constant and open dynamic between power, resources and authority. It included recruitment of emotional, social and economic resources together. All interviewed families developed new family identities in Australia that consisted of changes: i)

very firm internal boundaries before the war were replaced by loose emotional boundaries and democratic decision making after the war and refugee. The loose external boundaries (between the families and communities) before the war were replaced by firm and clear boundaries in the war aftermath, ii) strong patriarchal hierarchy with clear roles established before the war was replaced by adaptive roles, strong coalitions and cooperation between partners and/or children after the war, and iii) ,the mothers played an important role in creating family harmony or effective communication patterns, balancing the affect in the family, where before the war the affects among family members was regulated by authoritarian patriarchal roles. In all the families, the woman's protective role integrated the power of caring and love reflected through the remodelling of tradition and the creation of new values, whereas the men perceived that protecting family meant ensuring that the existing tradition and its values did not change. Such differences and connections were at the core of the new family identity of these families – the patriarchal shell. Overall, all families who participated in the study were in denial regarding changes in their families. This denial served the families as a tool to maintain a sense of stability and continuity in life transitions for each family member.

Finally, before descending from the mountain summit to explore new plateaus and horizons, the traveller is invited to contemplate everything that has been told so far, as well as that which has been left untold. Thus, the researcher is now asking the fellow-traveller to pause as

… here the Archangel paused
Betwixt the world destroyed and world restored,
(John Milton, Paradise Lost, Book XII: The Argument)

CHAPTER 5: Hidden plateau: Reflections and implications

This chapter retraces the territory covered on this voyage of discovery, pointing out not only the stages through which we have passed, but also the obstacles and limitations to the research encountered on the way. It also sketches out a map indicating implications and conceptual terrain for future research, interventions and practices. The insider position of the researcher, the specific demographic and cultural characteristic of the sample, the internal world, unique history and philosophy of the participants in this study serve as micro-world examples of the effects of a broad structure and represent a step towards a new level of awareness. Thus, the title of this chapter, Hidden Plateau, refers not to the map itself but to the place in the traveller's heart which has been affected by this whole journey. In this thesis, the analogy of the hidden plateau symbolizes the traveller's higher level of consciousness – a deeper understanding of the refugees' stories. It represents the place where the past and future meet, creating a new way of seeing psychological trauma and recovery. Thus, after reading the participants' stories, the traveller needs to reflect upon his/her own personal history and then to look thoroughly into the legacy of wounds that have been inflicted on the participants' minds and hearts. Therefore, for the final stage of this journey, the following guidelines are recommended:

The essential advice to give yourself – Heart-Spoon – Keep it deep within your heart. Don't be distracted; don't be distracted! Reflect upon the state of your life from the essential drop at your heart.
(Pabongka Rinpoche, *Heart-Spoon*, verse II)

Now the researcher will provide a short summary of the research findings – the final stage of this interpretative journey.

The major aim of this research was to explore the interconnection of the psychological, social and political dimensions of trauma and to provide an account of

the power of healing relationships, family strength, resilience and the recovery process of refugees from the former Yugoslavia in Australia. The first step on the road of discovery involved an iterative effort to identify themes that reflected dimensions that could help to articulate and understand the concept of trauma: the participants' wounds and the extent of their suffering following exposure to trauma. The themes were evident, but each of them went beyond the initial theoretical position of how war trauma had impacted on and influenced the participants' lives. Indeed, the stories told were exemplars of particular ways of experiencing and perceiving humiliation, the most destructive force throughout the war, and, especially, during the experience of being a refugee. Each participant's experience of humiliation was the deepest and the most severe injury to the core of their being, their identity, their self-worth, their self-esteem and belief system. Thus, the refugees' traumatic experiences consisted of at least three types of trauma: war trauma, refugee trauma and historical trauma. All three referred to prolonged and/or sequential trauma process, but also to the current and political context of the host society.

A further exploration of the transcripts identified the participants' internalization processes, where gender played a crucial role in their responses to traumatic events. The gender difference in the partners'/parents' attachment style of emotional engagement and the difference across genders in the perception/ interpretation or description of injustice in the world reflected the fundamental structure of the participants' existence – their value system. The participants' great need to maintain their belief system and values defined the range of coping mechanisms while they were dealing with prolonged and severe trauma, and revealed the different stages of recovery and the different aspects of resilience of these families. Indeed, the participants' recovery and resilience processes were indistinguishable from

their values, which were manifested as relational, family and community values (made evident through the master themes: Interlocking Trust and Testimony) and as personal values (Self-determination). All these values ensured the pursuit of survival, coping, recovery and resilience and were woven deeply into the participants' awareness and/or objectives regarding their significant others. Subsequently and subconsciously, the participants commenced development of a new family identity – a further stage in trauma recovery. At this stage of the analytic process, a delicate and more urgent voice connected all themes, aggregating a super-ordinate theme – Dignity.

5.1. The political, social and moral dimensions of open wounds

…each individual can be heard, not only as a 'victim', but also as a person capable of reflecting on his situation and commenting upon it. Listening to another put his story into words is to re-introduce him in his full humanity and restore him to the possession of his individuality
(Pouligny, Doray & Martin, 2007, p.33)

The stories told in this study appeal for a new individual and collective understanding of our own social and psychological boundaries and for a connection between socio-political reality and individual suffering. Though the past atrocities cannot be undone, they can be revealed, heard, understood and remembered. The emotional and intellectual understanding of our past leads us to a better future, which is not consistent with emotionally detached scientific research. Instead, listening, understanding and remembering leads us to an immediate and deeply felt way of relating ourselves to life in general, and to the refugees' perceptions in particular. Rather than attempting to articulate the refugees' needs on their behalf, further work needs to be done in defining their perceptions (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003; Fallot & Harris, 2002). Fellow travellers – be they academics, practitioners or policy-makers – are invited to read the refugees' stories with open minds and hearts, to see, feel and consider the vast difference between the realities revealed and the psychiatric

categories and psycho-social interventions and cultural strategies that are usually employed to deal with experiences of violence, death and mourning, as well as with symbolic and social change caused by long-term conflict itself (Beneduce, 2007).

It is hoped that reflection about the limits of the PTSD framework for the treatment of trauma, grief and recovery (Beneduce, 2007; Colic-Peisker, 2002; Keel & Drew, 2004;Pouligny, Chesterman & Shnabel, 2007; Rajam, 2002) will also raise questions about how effective such a framework is when dealing with the kinds of trauma that have been outlined in this study. More than a decade ago, Weine, et al (1998) argued that even Herman's (1997) notion of Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was too narrow, as it considered the experience of war and refugee trauma within the framework of existing diagnostic instruments and categories. Weine and his colleagues made an attempt to conceptualize broader post-mass trauma stress syndrome, but eventually they recommended extending the phenomenological focus beyond PTSD to emphasize the social, cultural and moral dilemmas embodied in these peoples' memories. A decade later, Beneduce (2007) defined memory and trauma as moral, rather than psychiatric issues, and argued that healing should occur within the traditional socio-cultural models and family systems, including geo-political and socio-economic issues. This is not to say that the role of clinical and psychological approaches should be discounted, nor do the discussions outlined above indicate any one effective solution in healing the wounds from long-term war and exile. However, traditional socio-cultural models, family values, socio-economic and geo-political factors in the healing process of a particular population or refugee group bring into question the universality of the PTSD framework and its applications.

Over ten years ago, Fischman (1998) argued that it was crucial that war and torture survivors learn how to frame their traumatic experiences within the socio-

political context in which they occurred. More specifically, at some point, survivors need to de-privatize and de-pathologise their trauma and, in order to complete this kind of work, they also require public recognition and acknowledgement of what has happened to them. It is argued with some passion here that people should not be expected to carry privately the burden of the violence that they have survived. This is a burden that society at large should help them to bear. Individual recovery can never be truly possible without the reversal of collective denial, forgetting, misrepresentation and without untangling a web of half-truths. In fact, it is argued, an emphasis on trauma as a private form of pathology can actually impede the possibility for recovery and psychic repair. Fischman (1998) has indicated that clinicians may be seen to collude in collective denial when they expect that individual therapy with survivors of violence will suffice to neutralize the social forces that create trauma.

It must be remembered that the trauma of having been a refugee made a much greater impact on the dignity, self-esteem and belief system of the participants in this study, than did their experience of war and torture. As Carlos et al (1993) suggested, and as has been confirmed in this study, the effect of refugeehood, of exile and uprooting can be seen to be part of a continuum of genocide and torture and refers to massive losses, together with a sense of depersonalization and helplessness. Indeed, the participants' experience of exodus was equivalent to psychological death and, as Malkki (2007) elaborated and the participants revealed, this experience of exodus transformed these people's meaning of history and belonging, which led to further disturbances for them.

Thus, the findings of this research indicate that it is now time to rethink trauma, to see it as something that does not fit easily into existing diagnostic categories. We need to be more open to human suffering and the stories of such

suffering, and the various domains, disciplines and discourses of the helping and

healing professions need to consider moral analysis as an appropriate approach in such

circumstances. Indeed, it is argued here that the notion of refugee trauma and/or

suffering goes beyond the notion of mental suffering manifested through subjectively

expressed painful emotions, distorted thoughts and/or objectively observed destructive

and irrational behaviour. As Grant (1996) and Milton (2009) pointed out, suffering

refers to an inherited part of the human condition or an inescapable part of conscious

life as integral to a search for meaning. Therefore, suffering was a normal response to

the process of the destruction of the participants' meaningful lives; it implied, as Grant

(1996) has explained, a sense of moral injury and violation of their mental, emotional,

ethical and spiritual dimensions. This was suffering caused by external trauma. As the

findings suggest, the notion of suffering refers to the perception of the refugees'

reality, arising from their understanding of the truth available to them. Thus, this paper

argues that the notion of suffering as being closely tied to one's sense of dignity or

experience of humiliations, as well as to one's internalized values, needs to be

endorsed by the discipline of psychology, which has tended to treat people primarily

by reference to clinical categorization and using psychiatric methods. It is maintained

here that rather than being offered a proliferation of psychosocial interventions

consistent with a framework of PTSD, refugees should be able to receive help for their

suffering within the framework of their own particular complexity of events, from a

perspective which is, for the participants in this study, very different from that which

might seem appropriate within the traditions of psychological trauma approach.

As much as it is vital to have diagnostic criteria for different disorders and to

consider, as Milton (2009) pointed out, that it is not unnatural that a survivor of war

and refugee trauma might produce a disorder that will exist alongside the

extraordinary suffering, it is also equally important to reintroduce to the psychology practice, the notion of suffering without 'symptomatology'. Those working with refugees need to have an informed understanding of the refugees' histories and to be able to recognise that their suffering may be an actual or perceived threat to their personal and family integrity. Therefore, researchers and clinicians need to develop an awareness of some of the more common environmental and historical factors that may influence an approach to and treatment of suffering and trauma. Ignorance of the vast historical, socio-political, spiritual and meaning disturbance of the effects of trauma, and use of checklists of easily identified symptoms for an individual can lead to merely labelling and generalization in medical and legal interventions and research (Harms, 2005). As revealed throughout this journey, this has been the experience for the peoples from the Balkans.

Listening to and reading the refugee stories makes it evident that the dimensions of refugee suffering are family and collective as much as individual and so recovery processes and interventions need to include these three levels. Thus, those working with a refugee and/or a family and community, would need to be familiar with these communities and their family resources, their strategies and systems of healing, remembering and forgiving (Beneduce, 2007). Indeed, those working with refugee families have to consider and explore family issues, family structure and processes such as communication patterns, power distribution, etc.

With this shared knowledge, individuals, families and communities can reach an understanding, and frustration at not having fundamental needs met can be reduced. This would enable the development of new and flexible psychological interventions and models rather than adaptations of the PTSD framework for the refugee context. Re-tracing the path along which the various wounds were inflicted will mean that many more wounded people can be discovered and assisted to full recovery.

5.1.1 Fragmented wounds

The participants' stories confirmed the findings of Colic-Peisker (2003) as well as Markovic and Manderson (2002) that fragmentation is an everyday experience in Australia's ethnic communities, reflecting, as Moan (2003) emphasized, division among these oppressed peoples and the realities that emerge from these divisions, as well as reliance on ideological lies and retrospective untruths. Indeed, the findings suggest that the invisible thread that usually binds the participants together has been broken because of the politics of their ethnic communities. The families who participated in this study also indicated fragmentation and marginalization from Australian society. Their stories revealed that marginalization had been exploited by three systems: social, economic and political. Marginalization and various forms of oppression are political tools, which are aimed not merely at individuals but at their families, friends, communities and the civic society at large.

Oppression, as postulated by Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996) and shown in this study, comes from political violence and affective cognitive, linguistic and cultural mechanisms of humiliation. Indeed, the findings of this research indicate that the voices of refugees have been heard through or presented within a predefined context and as stereotypes. These stereotypes are maintained throughout the various mainstream and community discourses, which ignore the critical importance of the refugees' wellbeing and personal future development. Such crippling and all-pervasive long-term oppression breaks a person and breaks his or her family and eventually breaks a community through the circle of humiliation, shame, implication, silence and dehumanization, paralysis and suspicion (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Griffiths, 2005; Lindner, 2010; Mollica, 2006). Therefore, the evidence from the literature (e.g.

Markovic & Manderson, 2002; Moan, 2003; Sonn & Fisher, 2005) together with these research findings suggests that the refugees' psychological acculturation and adjustment should be reconsidered, reconstructed and explored through the lenses of oppression.

For example, the historical, ethnographic and psychological aspects of this journey revealed many specific doctrines, patterns and traditions that are deeply embodied in these peoples' culture (e.g. communist-socialist milieu, ethnically-mixed marriages, strong sense of responsibility at a collective and family level, but not necessarily at the individual level, a betrayal complex regarding dishonouring and betraying the ancestors, etc. All these phenomena represent ways to move beyond a mere struggle for survival, and have been seen often throughout history, where these Slavic communities and their families have had to accept oppression and the religion and customs of the oppressors (Hodson, Sekulic & Massey, 1994; Kitromillides, 1996; Necak, 1995; Puhovski, 1995; Pupovac, 1995).

Furthermore, despite the participants' great need for locally-based and relational communities, they reported that their need was not fulfilled by any community group or service, and nationalist propaganda from the ethnic media deepened the wounds, creating, as Volkan (1999) has pointed out, chosen trauma. The notion of chosen trauma refers to mental representation of war and events related to exile, where each ethnic community faces drastic losses, feels victimized by another ethnic group, while they all share humiliating injury, which opens the gate to trans-generational transmission of these past atrocities. Chosen trauma was evident throughout the participants' stories, which revealed that families and communities have been unable to mourn past losses – all three ethnic groups live in the same suburbs of Melbourne and in these neighbourhoods each ethnic group has

subconsciously constructed their identity as the victims, due to past loss and humiliation. These losses have been transformed into powerful cultural narratives, which have become an integral part of each ethnic group's social identity.

Therefore, the participants' need for locally-based and relational communities and their failure to find this need fulfilled in Australian society are crucial factors that must be acknowledged and considered by policy-makers if they are not to develop into further oppression along several dimensions, creating second-class citizens, who suffer silently. Suffering, as Ekman (2003) highlighted, occurs within the circle of other people's suffering, where the whole community has been oppressed and treated as a ghetto. Thus, the suffering of the families in this study can be considered to be inseparable from psychological oppression. In this circle of oppression there is no self-examination, thus no possibility of exonerating a person's feelings of guilt (Langer, 1991: Volkan, 1999). Indeed, the processes of rehabilitation, recovery and reconciliation are impossible without this work of contextualization, without recognizing and integrating into the narratives of trauma the social, deliberate, systematic, political nature of the violence levelled at people.

As found by Fallot and Harris (2002) and confirmed in this study, the responses of others who abuse history and minimize or deny the reality of traumatic events greatly contribute to survivors' mistrust of their own perceptions, as well as affecting their trust in others. The participants' stories powerfully revealed the consequences and implications of strong feelings of mistrust, where the only resort of trust for each of the participants in this study was shown to be their families. These families did not trust society, the international community or the system of justice. They did not have trust in highly urbanized mainstream Australia, with its market-economy culture, and its emphasis on individualism, privacy and independence. The

participants felt unable to find resources that could help them to satisfy their needs. This perceived lack of resources from and the great sense of mistrust in the community and wider society deeply undermined the participants' sense of personal and/or community safety and wellbeing. As a consequence, an enormous vulnerability and anger was revealed in the participants, who also perceived injustice when considering many aspects of life outside the family, and this was true for all family members in each family interviewed. This perceived injustice was experienced differently across gender, and it was experienced in relation to: social structure, processes and conditions that the interviewees felt inhibited them from becoming full participants in society. The participants maintained a concept of patriarchal justice and conflict resolution (Theidon, 2007). It is hoped that recognition of this phenomenon will lead the traveller who has arrived at this point in the journey to seek deeper knowledge and understanding about different levels (macro and micro) and perceptions of justice, as they are crucial factors in the recovery and reconciliation processes of refugees. For example, as Pouligny, Chesterman and Schnabel (2007) highlighted, and as was evident from the participants' stories, in order to understand the capacity of ethnic communities or to understand the resilience of victims and capacities of perpetrators, and to reconstruct new forms of social ties, ethnographic micro-level research is required.

Learning from the refugee families will enable further exploration and eventually articulation of the relationship between the events that have happened at the individual, family and community level and what has happened at the socio-political level. Therefore, the helping professions should recognize the great need for interaction between the socio-economic or political context and individual symptoms, as well as the interaction between individual, family and collective recovery.

Indeed, rethinking trauma and its consequences and accepting culturally specific approaches to promoting recovery may lead to prevention of emotional instability and empowerment of vulnerable families and communities (transforming them from ghettos to valuable constituents of a complex social situation). It may also open up opportunities for these families and communities to reappraise priorities and strengthen their relationships. Such an approach would affirm the actual and potential resilience and strength of families and communities instead of focusing on the dysfunctional aspects (Walsh, 2002). These are the issues that touch upon the basic aspects of being a society:

Who are we as political and social community? Who are we to one another…What are the patterns of individual and collective mutual dependency. What mechanism of inclusion and exclusion are prevalent in our society?
(Salis Gross, 2004: p.163).

According to Agamben (1995) policies and regulations regarding migrants and refugees, implemented within the framework of a global economy, create a powerful separation between humanitarian organizations, economy and politics, which results in the readiness of the modern state to treat refugees as undesired people, modified by ethnicity, family, language, age, gender, etc. This is reflected in the Australian experience as reflected by the perceptions expressed by the participants in this study. Thus the findings of this study are in accord with a number of earlier studies which have appealed for a multidisciplinary approach to the aftermath of any war, as the only way to raise awareness and conceptualization of so many distinctive dimensions of war survival and refugee experiences (e.g. Alcock, 2003; Beneduce, 2007; Catherall, 2004; Mollica, 2006; Walsh, 2006; Weine, et al., 2004, etc).

5.1.2. Interaction of stories in pursuit of shared truth: reconciliation

Mollica (2006) has argued that the greatest contribution to deep humiliation could be the close relationship between aggressors, perpetrators and victims within the ethnic conflict, or among ethnic communities in the aftermath of war. Thus, Mollica questions the possibility of achieving any peaceful reconciliation under such circumstances. This thesis argues, however, that such reconciliation is possible, even in circumstances where brothers and enemies from the past, living in the same suburbs of our society, continually hear each other's victim-identity stories broadcast via the government-sponsored ethnic radio and TV stations. It is argued here that this reconciliation is possible if injustice is named in front of the perpetrators and the victims, if fathers, mothers and children are confronted with the inevitable inter-relation of their communities and society in general. It should be remembered that the survivors and their children have been listening to stories of war and torture from their parents (family story/micro level) for many years; however, they have never listened to collective stories from 'the other side' (macro level) .

Indeed, this thesis argues strongly that a shift in moral focus is necessary; a shift from a focus on the individual and/or family refugees' suffering and pathology to the experience of collective obligation to create and understand narratives. A decade ago, Weine (1999) empathized the importance of understanding narratives as inseparable connections between historical and personal memories in the war and genocide survivors. According to Weine, the survivors' stories; community and family narratives are mirror of the struggles over historical memory and identity, thus, society has to explore these stories in order to redefine these people identities.

The creation and maintenance of family and community narratives, as was revealed in this study and highlighted earlier by Denham (2008), not only negotiates to establish meaning for a misunderstood past or a recent historical experience, but also

provides for family teaching and thus maintains continuity of family and culture. In addition, the developed narratives or testimonies revealed in this study have served as the bridges for the journey of the next generation towards acquisition of greater knowledge and a sense of self. As Denham also pointed out, such strength-based narratives enable the development of a survival and coping approach. Denham's (2008) historical trauma complex approach is appropriate when considering the participants' stories or the context of the former Yugoslavia, where there were strong oral traditions and a culture of narratives, as a result of long-term, mass-trauma and genocide during the occupations of the Balkans peninsula over centuries. In this historical milieu there has been an ethic and legacy of sharing narratives, cycles of recital and listening, culminating in a sense of belonging to collective narratives with a strong sense of place and its history. Indeed, the collective narrative, testimonies or shared truths include not only acknowledgment of suffering or harm but also an understanding of the reality of those who inflicted the injuries. In this way, the next generation can be relieved of responsibility for the acts of the past generations. Therefore, it is argued here that it is our duty as a society , as individuals, parents, community members, travellers and/or professionals, to enable, to encourage, and to facilitate such testimonies and acknowledgments, not only at the interpersonal/family micro-level, but at the community and wider society level. The process of listening to such testimonies and creating shared truths about how one ethnic group or community acknowledges their acts and injuries against another community can enable the acceptance that humanity exists on all sides of a conflict and helps to develop next generation identity without vendetta, so that the future generations achieve a higher level of awareness of the past and therefore can attain a new quality of life in the future.

Such a specific environment of storytelling or, rather, interactive storytelling, is not only proposed on the basis of conceptual knowledge and mere enthusiasm, but with a conviction that comes from the researcher's own personal experiences. As a sessional lecturer at a university, the researcher introduced a class in cultural awareness, providing an opportunity to hear 'a story from the other side' for first-year Psychology students. The class included many students from Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian backgrounds as well as from Anglo-Celtic and many other ethnic backgrounds. Evaluation and feedback after these interactive classes indicated they had been extremely revealing, profound and 'eye-opening' experiences for these young people. Besides the fact that the session had been confronting, the students from the Balkans reported that prejudices had been raised and that the class had then had to challenge their beliefs that people of their ethnic background were all good and the 'others' were all negative. The students also reported that these interactive classes left them thinking about their own racially diverse experiences and how they were treated differently in Australian society. The students from the Anglo-Celtic background learned from the class discussion that many acts of racism and oppression are still occurring, despite the geographical and time distance from the origins of the conflict, and they heard how the realities of life for those who had arrived in Australia as refugees had been different from their own.

Therefore, collective narratives with a strong sense of place and history could lead to community reconciliation and education processes that are at the heart of the healing encounter between those who suffer and those who seek to meet such suffering. In this way, the new generation would not only continue to be narrators of their own stories, but they would become the authors of their own lives, without relying on a mystical past and/or a belief in bad faith. People who participated in this

study were found to be living in the mysteries of community-historical trauma, carrying a burden of bad faith which, as Sartre (2001) postulated, inevitably limits and diminishes the existential possibilities of self and/or other, reducing the peoples from the communities to being victims rather than the agents of their own lives. As revealed by the participants in this study, an acceptance of the bad faith and victimhood in ethnic communities from the Balkans in Australia has mainly been created and orchestrated by their own ethnic communities, which shape peoples' perspectives and experiences in this country. Thus, it is imperative to develop a tool for community education and community healing among ethnic groups from the Balkans in Australia. This process would involve using traditional features of the cultures (e.g. presentation of self) in conjunction with new perspectives and values from the Balkans region and from the Australian society.

This paper argues strongly that developing a process of interdependent storytelling will enable community education and community reconciliation among ethnic groups from the Balkans in Australia. Unless we create the circumstances where Serbian children can learn from Bosnian Muslims' mothers what happened to them and their husbands during the last war and period of exile, how are we going to reach any expression of regard by members of each community towards the other? Indeed, the basic level of regard and acknowledgment of humanity of those who inflicted the loss and injury is ultimately the first step towards reconciliation. When will Bosnian Muslim children and their families learn from Croatian and Serbian fathers how they suffered throughout the war? Why are we so fearful or even uninterested in opening up such a process? These processes require teamwork between community members, psychologists, social workers, historians and local government activists: we need each other. The participants' stories we have heard here, especially

those of the fathers, suggested powerfully that the notion of testimony within the Balkans milieu serves as a personal coping mechanism, but is also a key for ethical recovery of the communities.

Weine's (2008) suggestion that desire for story, or for a story plot, has been fundamental for trauma survivors was confirmed through the stories told here. The plot, or testimony for the participants in this study, represents the basic means by which specific events are connected into one meaningful whole. Testimony, as was evident throughout this journey, represents a desire for a story, a reservoir of dignity, family lore, an ethical legacy for the children as well as a process of coping and a means for social and cultural resilience. All these factors are necessary for the ethical recovery of communities (Walsh, 2003). The process of giving testimony is not yet complete for the people who participated in this study; now the families need guidance to help them take a further step on the journey so they can bring their family testimonies to the collective meeting point, where all families and individuals work together to produce a community storybook of collective testimonies. Therefore, further research could include work on how to promote people's ability to be story/truth tellers; on how to produce testimonies not limited to family lore but able to facilitate a truth sharing process in the assignment of responsibility for the losses and for a future life in Australian ethnic communities. As the arrival of refugees has been such a pervasive feature of Australia's history (Jupp, 2002) and relates in part to each family history in Australia (in a direct or indirect way), the researcher encourages reflection on this question: How do we care for refugees? Implicit in this question is another: how do we care for ourselves?

5.2 The Ground and the Path of Everyday Virtue: resilience

The stories told in the course of this journey shed light on ancient territory, the ground of courage and love that has often been neglected in clinical treatments and academic studies on war and refugee trauma. The courage of those who participated in this study and their dignity mirrors the quality of their spirit and awareness of themselves. Such awareness is at the core of love, which conquers the meaninglessness and the absurdity of the experienced and witnessed atrocities. The participants' ordinary virtues – caring, nurturing and compassion– provided strength and energy for family survival and later for the beginning of a new life. Such findings are in accord with the suggestion of Lindner (2010) that love and humiliation are among the strongest feelings and in diametrical opposition to each other.

Throughout war and exile, the participants' needs were severely repressed and some participants chose the only path sustainable before, during and after the trauma – that is, they chose to adhere to their internalized values, their humanity. Indeed, in the midst of the participants' greatest suffering their values served as the only measurement of reality and it was adherence to these values that allowed them to reconstruct meaning for their experiences. The participants' choice not to hate anybody enabled them to evaluate experienced and perceived hatred, and this reaction to the immorality and annihilation they had witnessed served as the most powerful coping mechanism, decreasing their emotional turmoil, their survivors' guilt and also helped them to come to terms with their grief. Consequently, the participants who were not able to sustain or reclaim their ethics and values were also not able to mourn their past losses, so they remained entrapped between anguished memories and a besieged self (Langer, 1991). While living with the unrest of the past and the possibility of future conflicts in their country of origins and within ethnic communities

in Australia, these participants expressed a need for revenge which, as Linder (2010) suggested, would deepen their sense of humiliation and empower anger, rage and revenge. Thus, they were not successful in reducing their emotional pain or in promoting greater harmony and peace within and around themselves. As Beneduce (2007) emphasized and as was revealed in this study, there is no possibility of overcoming the feelings of loss, humiliation and death without transforming feelings of anger or revenge, and this is the most difficult task in the process of war and refugee trauma recovery. Thus, survivors' internalized values are not distinct from psychological practice: there is no cure or recovery without a framework of values and philosophy of life (Harms, 2005). A well-established or reclaimed framework of values and philosophy of life is the core of resilience, and it is this that will enable survivors to be emotionally prepared to make contact with and to accept new realities, transitions and eventually to recover from long-term trauma due to a series of witnessed and experienced atrocities. The participants in this study had their own way of finding meaning in life and, as Gourevitch (1998) has made evident, such an urge to preserve their soul and to look after others proved to be greater that the urge to look after themselves.

Thus, the participants' great urge to look after others can be seen to represent their values and their needs, as well as demonstrating the dialectic between their personal and collective values. Such a relationship between the participants' needs and values can lead them to greater awareness of themselves and their definition of the significant other as well as to attitudes and concerns for them (Iuculano & Burkum, 1996). This was how these people held onto their integrity, which represents the fundamental structure of their existence and their recovery. The participants' great need to maintain their integrity resulted in gender differences in attachment style or

emotional engagement between partners as well as gender differences in parenting style. Parenthood for the participants in this study did not represent a stage of life, rather a contribution to life and enhancement of the future which, according to Herman (1997), represents the third stage of trauma recovery.

Moreover, sharing, personal relatedness and emotional connectedness within the family was the foundation of a new family identity, which represents a further stage in trauma recovery. This stage resulted from the participants' needs to nourish their values, inherited in family-relational patterns (Cigoli & Scabini, 2006). For example, the participants' authoritative parenting was replaced by a nurturing parenting model which enabled them, according to Lindner (2010), to cherish equality and dignity for all family members while the symbolic principles of the family (trust, hope, justice) remained the same. This finding is in contrast with previous research by the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST, 2002) which revealed that traumatized parents could not take care of their children. This study also found that the parents who survived war and refugee status were often unable to emotionally support and protect their children and the children quite often did not trust anyone, including their parents. However, the study did not tackle the issues of these parents' values and ethics and how tapping into their values and ethics would help the families to re-establish trust.

Weine et al's (2004) exploration of Bosnian refugee families' everyday virtues revealed 'the extraordinary intensity that is carried by the parent-child relationship' (p.157).This, according to Weine and colleagues, strongly suggests that existing interventions in refugee trauma have been fragmented and insufficient, focusing on consequences for either adults or children, neglecting interaction and power distribution within the families.

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The family interaction observed and listened to throughout this journey indicates there has been change in the distribution of power between the parents and their children after the war and refugee experience. Regardless of age and gender, the children played the role of partners rather than dependants in the families – ensuring wellbeing for the families. The participants discovered that their personal resources were not supported by social resources, so they found their own way to lighten up the dark roads throughout the war and exodus and their aftermath. Such a phenomenon explains the participants' resilience at a family level, but not necessarily at the individual level. Ultimately, this indicates the strength and resilience of the refugees who have come to Australia and portrays the weakness of the social structure and the system which supports them.

Thus, this study indicates, as does the vast literature covering decades that moral and personal values underpin resilience to trauma and recovery. Indeed, the relationship between refugees' needs and values has been undermined, neglected and quite often diminished. Therefore, this thesis appeals to those involved in different discourses and streams within the psychology discipline to include the role of values when considering the reality of human reactions, perceptions and responses after experience of atrocities. It also asks these professionals to advocate for the incorporation and actualization of values (e.g. self-determination, caring, acceptance, dignity, courage etc) in programs and policies . Thus, the feelings of love, and the role of values, and the indications of courageous actions would represent the crucial components of human health, resilience and wellbeing, which would ultimately provide indications for more adequate support throughout the recovery process.

5.3 Limitations of this journey

There is no ideal revelation or interpretation, thus this study has a number of limitations. For instance, the purposive information-rich sample was constructed through an informal network of people known to the researcher and, as noted, was not necessarily representative of the refugee population from the former Yugoslavia in Melbourne, Australia. The fact that the researcher was previously acquainted with some of the participants as well as the fact that these people might have drawn certain conclusions about the researcher's interactions based on her ethnicity might have led to under-reporting on some items. In addition, the interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, which might also have influenced the outcome to some extent.

Another possible limitation is that the participants in this study came from a wide range of age groups; however, the study did not address the issues of life stage. Further research could address this issue by comparing parents at different life stages. This study also did not tackle the single-parent families who survived war and exile. It would be important to conduct an additional study to further explore these findings with single-parent families.

A further possible limitation of this study is that many significant political events on and around the Balkans coincided with this journey. (For example the death of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic in the Hague at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the proclamation of Kosovo's independence, the arrest and trial of a former Bosnian Serb politician, Radovan Karadzic, accused of war crimes, etc). These events may have influenced the participants' emotional state and personal interest in answering the questions, or impacted on their storytelling about their war and refugee experiences. This could also have had a bearing on their perceptions and interpretations of social reality. All the

above considerations should be added to the fact that the student researcher herself comes from a background of war and has also been a refugee. The researcher's life experience has played a pivotal role in shaping the structure of this enquiry; further development of research design is required for qualitative family research studies in the field of war and refugee trauma.

5.4 A final note

This entire journey refers to

…the process of its own becoming, the circle which predisposes its end as its purpose, and has its end for its beginning; it becomes concrete and actual only by being carried out, and by the end it involves.
(Hegel, 1807)

In this chapter we retraced the stages of the entire journey and opened our hearts to everything known and unknown. Our openness helped us to reach the hidden plateau of deeper awareness about the power of human suffering. The suffering led to storytelling and further questioning regarding the survivors' needs, values and ethics regarding their dignity. The survivors' dignity is like a torch which lights up the accumulated darkness of trauma; it discards labels and refuses to be categorised. The survivors' dignity may also enlighten the travellers, who having been made aware of the narrowness of the psychological trauma approach, may nevertheless recognise the relative comfort of continuing to resort to such an approach.

Throughout this journey the participants' experience of war and refugee trauma has been shown to be a complex interplay between individual and collective stress responses and coping capacities – involving a delicate balancing act between remembering, forgetting emotional pain and reinventing moral questions. In addition, the participants indicated that resilience to such a difficult position refers to a

distinction between their regressed needs and aroused values in life, while their recovery refers to a dialogue between their needs and values. It was revealed that such a dialogue could be converted into a discussion only at family level, while there was silence at community and wider social level. Indeed, it was shown that there was no resilience and recovery at the community level. Moreover, the level of individual and family resilience was shown to be determined not by the degree of trauma, but by family membership, defined by the family belief system, organization and communication patterns. The values and belief system of the participants reflected their form of consciousness and represented the core of their resources for development of a new family identity in Australia. Thus, the family and community interpersonal relationships and their experiences need to be re-positioned, and seen as the central resource of trauma recovery. May it not be forgotten that these families are by no means maladjusted, dysfunctional or pathological. Rather, they are resilient and recovered, but at the same time fragmented from their un-reconciled communities and detached from mainstream society.

Prejudice, discrimination and ethnocentrism cannot be eradicated without a commitment to revealing their origins. This commitment needs to start with the fostering of learning, of political awareness and personal responsibility amongst those who work within both ethnic and mainstream communities. To ensure a new beginning, efforts also need to be made to develop caring, compassion, promotion and intervention for the wellbeing of those with a refugee background or experience of war and trauma. This process of interventions will require partnership and solidarity between oppressed people, interdisciplinary teams and different agencies within the communities. Such commitment has to be a two-way learning process, an exercise in power sharing, in order to support relationships and to mobilize resources

(Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Therefore, this is the place in our journey where the past and future meet, where a new way of seeing psychological trauma and recovery is created, one which acknowledges the humanity of the 'others' and accepts responsibility. So, now, let us embark together on our next journey, towards a future that will not repeat the mistakes of the past.

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APPENDIX A: *Segments from a reflective journal*

Note to the reader

The following journal segments do not represent a linear chronology of events, rather, these segments are like dimension in space. Truly, I do not look back to each of these events along a timeline, but down through them, as if looking at water. Sometimes an event rises to the surface, sometimes there is nothing.

March 22, 2007

Here I am, in the middle of the hermeneutic circle. Within this circle I question myself, reflect on my perceptions and values regarding the phenomena under study. I am opening myself willingly to the world of uncertainty and the unexpected, aware that meanings may change in a new situational context and I may gain new insights after I enter the world of the participants.

Before entering the world of the participants, I would like to reflect on my own feelings – mostly of anxiety and frustration, as I find myself caught in what seem to be a cultural gap – differing social norms and ethical values of my community on the one hand, and the concerns expressed by the Ethics Committee - EC. In order to carry out this project I have to meet their requirements, however it is hard to commence data collection by presenting to the participants what I and they will perceive as such a threatening 'plain language statement' - PLS.

I think there are too many details in this PLS – it's too qualified and too cautious, which gives the impression that I am not sincere, and that I am trying to hard to justify my genuine interest in the phenomena under study. So, following these required amendments, I feel that my document is now presenting me in an artificial way and that I might be perceived not to be accepting the values of my community.

The EC must understand and recognize at some point that some research projects are not possible without relying on a certain degree of trust and goodwill between researcher and the participants, who all share values of a community, and that these values may not reflect those of the institution.

The committee may well perceive that I could be in danger working with members of different ethnic background from myself. This perception would be encouraged by reports of violence and conflict between these ethnic groups, both on the territory of the former Yugoslavia and also in Australia. But perhaps the committee doesn't give enough attention to the things that bind these different ethnic groups together as a community, and makes them a distinct community, often having more in common with each other than with the wider Australian community. But at the same time, deep in my heart and my mind I feel that I am part of that community as a whole, because I have grown up with Bosnians, Serbs and Croats, so it is very hard for me to see anyone as an enemy. And my children, who have survived the war, were taught to appreciate the richness of the mosaic, and appreciate the strengths of all those people that we have. Therefore it's hard for me to think about any threat that I might experience during the interviews.

The most disturbing thing for me is that I feel that I have to comply with the requirements of the EC without putting any extra effort to try to convince them of my point of view. I have to do this because otherwise I am fearful that I will not be able to go ahead with the project but this makes me feel that I am compromising my values. This makes me wonder, as I stand on the threshold of my research, how many more comprises will I have to make further down the road.

 I am wondering if, by having to conform to the requirements as outlined in the PLS, am I going to be seen as an alien in my own community. If so, how will this affect the integrity of the data? I think that I will not only have to read the PLS but I will also have to explain why is it presented in such a way.

This is just one brief reflection of my present anxiety and frustration and I will explore these issues further as the work continues. I feel that I have to mention obstacles that I face during the Ethics application and before embarking on my data collection.

April 24, 07

 I am still waiting for the ethics application to be approved. In fact, the submitted document has been lost, so I've resubmitted it. It looks like one more day in vain, but instead of collecting data I am recalling memories while observing how my sons watch TV. I believe that the TV program has replaced some gaps for a refugee family in Australia. Indeed, I can hear my son's 'comment on what he is seeing on the box. 'Corporations rule the world, people are starving in Africa and we are watching this ongoing Hollywood show' – he said. "We are all sick and tired of injustice, people with plastic faces and artificial behaviour! What about global warming and petrol consumption?" – he asked angrily as he watched the program. I am quietly wondering: is this a normal reaction for a teenager or characteristic behaviour for a 16- year old war-survivor? I also wonder how far we are from a 'normal' family. By 'normal' I mean an average family from the territory of the former Yugoslavia before the war. As Walsh (2003) notes, 'definitions of normality are socially constructed, influenced by subjective worldviews and by the larger culture" (p.4). Indeed, everything was quite different back at home. The family was bigger and louder; grandparents, neighbours, aunties and teachers had an insight into very important family matters. We did not watch TV programs as much as we do here in Melbourne. Instead, we had our own 'programs' and gatherings, we would socialize with neighbours every evening after work and children would mainly play their games outside or go walking and shopping with their grandparents. It was not uncommon to watch news on television together with relatives and neighbours. Such collective listening, where each of us had slightly different perceptions of what they heard, taught us the art of "listening between the lines" and predicting political decisions or events. Interestingly, despite this tradition, many of us did not predict our own disaster – an ethnic and religious war that lasted for more than five years.

June 05, 07

I'll try to describe a segment from the war that may depict family and neighbourhood ties and particular emotional dependency within the Balkans mentality. This story starts from the moment when somebody knocked on my door, at the apartment in Pristina, in the middle of the summer – Kosovo, 1999. It was the beginning of the

June; the whole city was drilled by bombs and screams. Instead of flowers, fruits and homemade bread, it smelt of arson. Fear was everywhere, hidden in our hearts, thoughts and behaviour and hope was also somewhere around, trying to reach sunlight through buried memories of 'equality and brotherhood'.

So, there it was this long intensive knocking. I was waiting for a voice or a sigh, waiting with my children, for bad news, for an attack perhaps. Luka and Marko were grabbing at my knees, looking at me, while my shaking hands covered their lips and we were playing once again our "silence game". The knocking grew louder and louder but we did not respond, nor did we ask anything. We just stood there, waiting. Then we could hear a voice: 'Anita, it is me, please open!'

I opened the door to see Luka's teacher in the doorway. We cried and laughed at the same time. She had never visited us before, so this was her very first visit and we could not believe it. 'How did you get here?' I asked, and she just indicated with her hands: 'Don't ask, the most important thing is that I am here. I have Luka's report with me and I wanted to give him this report in person.' Then her tears replaced the words and we were quiet for a while. I can still hear that silence, silence without peace, and I see also the confused smiles on Luka's and Marko's faces. They were sitting on the floor, secretly listening to our conversation. The teacher started to cry, whispering, begging that I leave the city as soon as possible. She actually begged somehow in her whisper that I save the children, as she disclosed new information regarding possible escalations of the conflict. Then she cried for all her students that she said she may never see again. She sat close to Luka on the floor , gave him a hug, telling him how beautiful, brave and clever he had become and that she knew how he was going to help his mum with everything. "I want you to know that I am proud of you and that you are in my heart,' she said. Then she left in a hurry. We all left in a hurry after that, but we have always been together in our hearts and memories.

Luka was in second grade at the time, and school year was over. Indeed, schooling was over for everyone, normal life was over; everything had vanished and become unreal, including the suffering. And then, suddenly, a primary school teacher had brought a school report to my son. She gave to me a booklet with a record of his marks and achievements. I still keep that booklet in my 'memory box' here in Australia; that booklet was hidden in my undershirt during exile. The teacher came that day even though school achievements were not relevant anymore; she risked her life to see her student one more time in an attempt to protect us and to share love and pain. She came as a family member; teachers have always been treated and mentioned honourably in our home. She also mentioned that she might try to find others, to see them to say goodbye. She was risking her life in order to do this. It was what she had to do.

I did not recall this event for many years, but it came to me tonight when I opened my email and discovered that the ethics application has been approved! Maybe this is because I was thinking about how my supervisors had supported me through all the difficulties with research and much more. So now I know for certain that data collection may commence, and I am actually longing to do it!!!!!!!

So, am I prepared, enthusiastic, biased or what? I do not actually know, but I do know that I have to highlight or 'bracket' theories, memories, beliefs and assumptions before I enter 'the real world'.

So, the point of this story is that I do believe that sharing, personal relatedness and motional connectedness within the community and family actually helped us not only

to survive, but to develop strength and resilience in the host society. Even more, I believe that emotional dependency, particularly for our children, actually encouraged flexibility to flourish among family members, allowing roles exchange and the removal of patriarchal boundaries in refugee families when integrated into a new society.

September 05, 07

Three families have been interviewed so far, so it is a time for me to reflect on the process of data collection. In order to explore the relationship between the participants' experiences and my own previous account, I avoid reading my earlier journal writings so that I can later monitor how my reflections might change in the light of the new data I am encountering. I have to admit that I have not had any problems with recruitment so far. However, I am very slow in transcribing and translating and I've noticed that I need to spend a lot of time processing and reflecting upon the interview experience and trying to distance myself from it. It is hard. Nevertheless, this has not triggered crisis or distress in me so much as encourage me to contextualize such adversities by seeking reconnections and possibilities for reconciliations of troubled relationships and communities.

My eyes were full of tears after the third family interview, where I found I could not simply listen, without seeing pain and suffering on the participants' faces. The notion of genocide and torture has been present in my thoughts since then. Thus, I've decided to read more about these concepts and to try to find further explanations/understanding for the phenomenon within the conceptual framework of my research. The framework is indeed my ethical, cultural, methodological and healing nest. So, I spoke with Sartre again while reading his work and while trying to understand what actually happened to all of us in the Balkans.

Genocide, Sartre (1968) stressed, is a product of history and it is a deep scar of a contemporary, wounded society. Such a scar is usually covered and hidden by different political means and weapons, by different allies and intentions. For example, the former Yugoslavia overcame the communist and later socialist development only to replace them with totalitarian nationalist regime/s (Necak, 1995). The nationalist regime was like a sort of social cancer who destroyed a very fabric of the society. Thus, there was no more space for communities as alliances of working people and/or citizens of equal rights regardless of their ethnicity. The outcome was repression, fear, xenophobia, stupidity and genocide. Consequently, different justifications for genocides were established. The genocide was justified on the basis of 'solidarity' with people of the same ethnic background who were portrayed as victims of another ethic group (Pupovac, 1995). Furthermore, the war on the territory of the former Yugoslavia had many elements of international conflict in forms of strong influence of external governments/actors (e.g. Germany, US, Vatican, etc).

These characteristics of the Balkan conflicts are in line with Sartre's suggestions that competition between industrial nations makes genocide certain when workers become soldiers and the working class is torn between a desire for peace and for nationalism. Indeed, genocide would probably be impossible without propaganda that creates genocide as an ethically approved decision for the whole community (Sartre, 1968). Naturally, such decisions have a great impact after the war as the consequences remain implemented in culture, language, customs and poverty within communities. Hence,

there are no attempts at reconciliation within and between these communities. The consequences or phantoms of the past and new forms of colonization remain as a constant norm for new ethnically clean communities or states in the Balkans. With such interconnection of social, psychological and political dimensions within fragmented and poisoned communities, the family as a basic unit seems to be split and torn apart within circles of suffering and oppression. In this way, as Sartre claimed, the genocide is completed. 16/10/07

I did not collect data for a while. After the last supervision, it was concluded that is time to frame analysis. The framing includes, as my supervisor noted, reading, thinking and writing ideas in my journal as draft sections of my analysis. Such encouragement is crucial for the research and confirms that little paragraphs in my journal could be used as parts of the methodology section. The journal may also serve as a record of potential pre-conceptual theoretical contradictions between research design and actual findings. Indeed, I already identified contradictions and similarities between the key words from the verbatim and the paragraphs from the journal as a part of the initial interpretation. More specifically, the initial interpretation represents the first layer of the analysis which comprises of the annotation and coding of the verbatim, assessing the parts of the set transcript that is compared with the different paragraph from the journal. The second layer involves creation of comprehensive account of a family theme/s formally documented in a table. The table is clustered by research questions and represents a map of possible multiple interpretations for given narratives. This process named Establishing units of meaning will continue until the apparent absurdities, contradictions and oppositions in the organization no longer appear strange, but make sense.

October 18, 07

I was reading the third family interview again, in order to organize themes within the table. So, I was playing a game of to and from between my journal and the transcript and I felt that 'something' was missing. I felt trapped among the clusters and I felt a need to obtain greater openness within this circular journey of the analysis. Initially, I put the interviews aside and came back to read them again after a while. On this occasion, I exercised 'distance', applying detachment to the transcript and rereading the text rather as a document in which I was not emotionally involved. Indeed, such detachment was not suppression of my emotions; it was rather, as Sartre named it, a process of 'melting away' the emotions from the text. Such reading resulted in further clarity of the meaning hidden between the lines. Then, I left the transcript again to read a wider array of scholastic literature in order to confirm my 'insights'. This time the reading topics included journals on history and values of the Balkans as well as Bulhan's (1985) Psychology of oppression. Suddenly, while reading Bulhan's definition of self-determination, I was able to interpret the context of the narrative.

I have identified thus far the participants' self-determination which appears through strong emotional connectedness with their children. More specifically, the participants have claimed that their children have been the purpose of their lives or the core concept of their being. It seems that the participant's feelings, thoughts and actions connected to their children represent their measure of choice and influence or control over what happens in their lives under the pressure of the unforeseeable circumstances. Indeed, after a traumatic refugee and/or war experience, the participants felt free or safe in their new country. The perceived freedom or safety had

been constrained by memories from the past, fear from the unknown, as well as with their new social and political conditions.

Even if the participants could not explore opportunities within the wider Australian society, due to their cultural, socio-economic, educational and language barriers, they have been able to create their measure of choice. Such choices enable them to influence or to control what happens in their lives. Furthermore, despite the indications that they have not been able to interpret past events and to feel some closure in their lives, yet, they seem to be goal/future orientated with the capacity to choose and to determine their behavior in the way that they have been able to fulfil their children's needs and to care and live for them (as they say). Thus, it seems to me that such committed emotional connectedness, enables the participant not only to adjust in Australia, but to shift from adjustment to empowerment, from recovery and family flexibility to developing an effectively functioning family and stability.

November, 17, 2007

Notes:

- To distinguish between notion of epic and injustice and to explore how does perceived injustice link with the process of enhancing future
- When writing about epics include Fischman (1998) who highlighted that is absolutely vital for survivors to learn how to frame their traumatic experiences within historical and socio-economical context in which they occurred.
- Trust- to clarify that I actually asked questions about justice and trust, explore trust in more depth
- Narrow down the reading by following the categories
- Explore further war trauma vs. refugee humiliation:
- Explore further on age and gender regarding injustice as a sense of natural life circle that has been disrupted

February, 19, 2008

Only five families have been interviewed so far. Considering what is happening in the Balkans at the moment (with Kosovo independence and protests by many Serbs against this) I am assuming that this could severely affect the collection of further data. I really tried to conduct one more interview in the last two months but due to Christmas and school holidays my attempts were unsuccessful. I even mentioned to my supervisor Anne at the last supervision (back in December) that such a situation could happen – that a new conflict around Kosovo might arise.

However, right now, my intention is not to elaborate on the Kosovo independence and its pros and cons ….My urge for writing comes from a sense of moral obligation and unbearable emotional pain that provokes me to document uncertainty and fear: a new conflict is on the horizon and it smells of blood again. WHY?

In the last 1000 years in the Balkans and according to any source of history, religion and sociology, there has been no independence declaration of any state or territory, there have been no new borders created without war. So I do not have the strength for hope that this time could be different. - I hope that I am deeply wrong.

Secondly, the atmosphere in my home tonight is the atmosphere of despair. I have been trying to keep my balance amidst watching the news on TV, fielding the questions of curious friends and neighbours, observing my suddenly quiet husband and our deeply hurt son. Until a few months ago, when we lived in the ethnic community on the western side of Melbourne, our eldest son used to come home with the feelings of stigma and burden because of his parents' ethically mixed backgrounds on an ethnically divided basketball playground. We, as a family, worked hard on that, and we as parents tended to provide education and an understanding of the historical aspects and every other circumstance which had led to many adversities that we survived before we arrived in Australia. Most importantly, we have been trying to give to both of our children love, respect and kindness as the most powerful tools, as universal values in any relationship.

Today, my 17 year-old son came home from school pale, with tears in his eyes. He attends an eastern suburbs High school, since we now live on the opposite side of the city. However, he was quiet and devastated. He felt stigmatized again, but this time because of his Serbian background. He reported that one of the teachers asked him why he had not participated in demonstrations against Kosovo independence and how did all that genocide (reported on TV) happened? I hugged him, talked to him and then we were silent for many hours. Then tonight, our son asked me: 'Mum, why did Serbs have to do all those murders? Why mum, WHY???' A long storytelling started, a journey for all of us, because at the end of the evening the whole family was included in the discussion. The whole family spent a sleepless night. And here I am typing, while listening to my son's sighs …

February 29, 2008

Narrative workshop presentation

The purpose of the presentation is to illustrate the process of data analysis in two different ways, approaching this data from two completely different perspectives:

- Dialogic analysis

- Visual analysis

The core concept of this exercise is to provide greater complexity and depth of understanding of the phenomena under study. Hence:

Dialogic analysis: This depicts the researcher's voice and presence within the data gathering process and as such extends the phenomenological theoretical tradition

Visual analysis: My voice will be represented by images; in this way I am able to convey my feeling and personal involvement in this study, where personal becomes political and historical at the same time. To reflect my personal feelings against the backdrop of historical narrative I will select photographs from the internet. By choosing to present my personal reflections in a visual form, I am trying to make the point that individual stories often need to be seen in a larger context, in my particular case, I will be reflecting on events in my life and in the lives of those around me, which cannot really be comprehended until they are seen as part of a historical narrative.

For the purpose of this exercise, my visual narrative matches Lalor and Waletsky's (2005) notion of story, providing a beginning, a middle, and an end; more specifically, it has an abstract, an orientation, a complicity act, a resolution and a coda

Today, my major concern has been to illustrate how the relationship between the way in which data are analysed can influence the nature of the findings.

The notion of narrative for the purpose of this presentation does not refer to a chronological tale whose story has a moral point. Contrary, the notion of narrative refers to dialectical self-reflection of conscious experience and of unconscious cultural, social and individual processes. Such synthesis or combination of the opposing assertions supports exploration of the participants' inner and outer world - their individual, family and community-lived experiences.

March, 23 2008

Reflection on presentation given to Narrative conference on March 20 – debriefing and some analysis

The presentation went well. I received feedback such as 'this was very emotional as well as scholarly work.' A professional writing lecturer said that the extract of interview that I had presented was a piece counter-narrative, not only because of the political stereotypes accepted in today's media but it was also a powerful counter-narrative in terms of family concept. She said she was deeply moved with my analysis in terms of how this participant had found himself again in his family and in that way had maintained his values. My analysis, she said, provided a new voice, not in psychology only but also in this society.

On the other hand, another participant in the conference maintained that my definition of narrative and notion of dialectic did not correspond to the Baktian notion of dialectic. I replied that my notion of dialectic comes from Greek philosophy and there was no reason to frame this word within one philosophical concept.

However, I was very disappointed with some reaction to my presentation. I expected to go to the conference, present my data and interpretation and then, metaphorically speaking, be torn apart. From previous experience I have found that going to a conference to present your work means you will be challenged and therefore you will learn more. But on this occasion there was no criticism or challenges during the session. However, some academics did approach me later, during the break, when one of them told me that I hadn't chosen an adequate story for Labovian analysis and that the story I had presented contained a lot of 'would' words.

I countered that that firstly this was a translation, and secondly, this was a very short segment from a very complex interview and therefore my goal was not to accomplish further linguistic analysis but was an attempt to understand the phenomena under study within the discipline of psychology. I also said that to this person that I was surprised that she hadn't mentioned that this segment was a historical narrative when previously, when I talked about people from different ethnic group who suffered in the Balkans war in a previous session, she had suggested that that account constituted historical narrative. Her answer was that she would talk to me later on about this. That provoked a certain degree of uncertainty in me as to whether my presentation was

being looked at from a political angle rather than being seen as a purely academic exercise in qualitative research.

However, I also have to admit that I deliberately chose this piece of interview –with the participant from different ethnic background – in order to provide another side of the story and to introduce complexity into the situation, not only as regards the past but also as regards the current political and social situation within ethnic communities in Australia. I was also trying to illustrate the complex notion of cultural background as an ongoing social context in our lives, and how the media, and the current political and economic situation in which we live continually influence it. I had tried to provide a sense of importance for the notion of historical continuity, of belonging, and of adaptation to a new country, following the example of Walsh 2004, as absolutely powerful influences in determining identity and psychological wellbeing. I had also made an attempt to explain that naming injustice was not the same as lobbying for one particular side in a conflict.

My intention has never been to be politically active or partisan in my research. I am genuinely and deeply interested in the consequences and potential resilience of people who suffered enormous psychological and physical pain during the war and as refugees. Therefore, my final statement during the presentation was an emphasis on my psychology background and my insider position in this research rather than as an arbiter for one political side in this war. Overall, regarding the narrative course and my presentation, there is a degree of bitterness on my part, because I enrolled in this narrative course hungry for knowledge, and I feel cheated.

 Another important thing that I learned while analysing these extracts was, that of seven interviews conducted so far I have only one participant who survived torture during the war. That interview indicated a new way of coping and creating meaning in the world after the atrocities. So, in order to further explore this phenomenon, I need to have at least one more, preferably two, such interviews. This would shed new light on the findings. Therefore, I have decided to purposely seek and recruit families whose family members survived torture, regardless of from which side. More specifically, when I interviewed the last family, the father, who was a choreographer for folklore and multi-ethnic youth activities in Dandenong, promised to arrange contacts for me with torture survivors from all sides involved in the conflict. He pointed out that there was, in fact, a torture survivors group established in Dandenong. So tonight I am going to go to that group and see how I go.

By explaining this process of recruitment, I am actually trying to confirm that I indeed do have a snowballing purposive sampling method in my research.

I have been reading a book by Cosic (2004) a Serbian academic, who was president of the last manifestation of Yugoslavia, when it was made up of only two states - Montenegro and Serbia - between 1992-3. During that time, Milosevic became President of the state of Serbia and then forcibly took control of the parliament of the republic of Yugoslavia.

So, Cosic's (2004) book is actually his diary, kept during these years. One may wonder why this would be relevant to my research. But there are some insights that I think would help me understand today's position of young Serbs in Australia as well as other young people from different ethnic groups from the Balkans.

But before I say anything about Cosic's input I should say that during the interviews with the last two families– the parents said in front of their children that their children are embarrassed to be Serbs in Australia. When I related that experience to my own life, the alarm bells began to ring in my head. Exploration of this phenomenon could be very important for a deeper understanding of family dynamics and identity development of young ethnic Australians from the Balkans. Therefore, something that I have learned from that book was that even back in the Balkans in 1990s young people didn't know who they were any more.

Cosic also said that a national awareness of belonging to Serbia, Bosnia or Croatia is based on ideological lies and retrospective motives. I believe that this reliance on ideological lies and retrospective untruths may be getting worse, at least amongst youth in ethnic communities in Australia. This may be a fruitful area for future research as the notion of dealing with the perceived guilt of members of one's parents national background has not really been an issue when examining the identity of previous refugees or migrants and their families. (This needs to be checked – there has been some discussion about how this notion of 'guilt of the fathers' has affected the present generation of Germans, who were educated and brought up by people who had been part of Nazi Germany - but what research has been done in this area, with refugees in other countries is to be explored. This is especially important given the fact that so far I have not noticed in my research any expression of guilt by the survivors).

So I am asking myself before I turn to a new circle of analysis with new data how such young people survived their own and their parents' pain and how they have coped these days in Australia.

So, to conclude, so far, and unfortunately I don't have all transcripts translated yet, participants in the study perceived human rights as an ideology rather than a real genuine movement. Unfortunately, I have to say that the participants do not believe in the human rights movement or any human rights movement in general; they are bitter and sarcastic about the effect of these movements.

From the last interview that I conducted with a family of Serbian background whose parents reclaimed their professional life in Australia, the mother said that she believed in justice when she thought about her family life now and her profession because she had succeeded in working in Australia as a GP. However, when thinking about society and how she had been perceived as Serbian in Australia, as well as how her parents had been indefinitely displaced and uprooted from Croatia, (they are of Serbian background, who had lived in Croatia and were now living as refugees in the country of their ethnic background) she perceived there was no justice.

These different perceptions of justice give me an understanding that the participants, especially women, perceived justice on a micro level – i.e. within the family. However, in political terms they saw no world justice.

July, 03, 2008

While translating a taped interview (family 5)

 I stopped working on several occasions. This transcript has been too close to home. In constructing the transcript and translating the interviews for 'family 5', I have reached deeply troubling insights about what happened, not only to the participants in this

study, but also to my own family. So, I was not able to work on project for several weeks. In the meantime, I was teaching, marking, reading some books but not actually working on the PhD. However, after weeks of emotional turmoil, I felt that I was finally able to continue with the translations. This writing is my coping strategy, but it is also a record of the things that might affect my work at each stage and each level. This is an account of my own part in the construction of the project and its results. So, now, instead of restoring to silence followed by suppressed unrest as I have done previously, I am writing these lines because I think that might prove important when framing the final interpretation

So far, six interviews have been translated. As Riessman (2008) pointed out, each translation of the taped interview becomes an analytical engagement and an important step in understanding the nature and status of the findings. Indeed, in the process of translating I've recognized some silent themes and trends.

Every participant/parent, regardless of gender, age and education, did not believe that the war would happen. Such disbelief was persistent, even in extreme situations when economic depression, shooting, oppression or even siege were already in progress. So, how did such denial happen? How could such naivety exist in the individual thinking? These questions point to an analysis focused not just on the psychological but that also takes account of the socio-cultural factors.

October, 08, 2008

Notes:

Similar to 'opposite case' consider age group as that would be the difference between young and older children

Children have to roles: a) audience-witness, b) challengers-resolution seekers

Second stage of coping would be a testimony (shared activity, part of the second stage is the participants' attempt to gain perspective, to interpret the past).

Values seem to be the line of continuity (integrity, intensity)

To write a section on interaction between family members, interaction as a theme

Psychodynamics of interactive processes:

The interaction in this analysis represents a family entity rather than two parents and children as separate individuals

Parent's marital relationship and their children's inclusion or exclusion from the relationship.

To explore further:

-a poor sense of personal identity vs a strong sense of common loss and suffering

-anxiety is related to loss and grief or shame or guilt or combination of each

-capacity to defend against anxiety and promote growth

-with children interaction includes: parallel conversations, interrupting, mothers as interpreters

September, 11, 2008

Look at clues – how do father changed, are they struggling with changes

Look at the nature of mothers' interpretations

Family seemed survived – unit of meaning

Changes in barriers/boundaries in families

See differences in coping when considering personal loss

How does gender act as a vulnerability or resilience factor?

Resilience: humour and tolerance vs irritability

Explore further justice seeking process

January, 07, 2009

In some way, this project appears like a riddle to confuse and disoriented me and to break out my pattern of thinking. I've been approaching this riddle from many ways, struggled with the questions, sought my teachers for help, got lost, got found again and finally came up with some answers I never could have anticipated from the start.

APPENDIX B: *Ethics approval letter*

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY | **A NEW SCHOOL OF THOUGHT**

MEMO

TO	Dr. Jenny Sharples	DATE	5/06/2007
	School of Psychology		
	St. Albans Campus		

FROM   Professor Michael Polonsky
           Chair
           Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee

SUBJECT   Ethics Application - HRETH 06/265

Dear Dr. Sharples,

Thank you for submitting this application for ethical approval of the project:

HRETH06/265   From family damage to family change – Stories of rebuilding lives after war and refugee trauma: Australia after the Balkans conflicts (HREC07/028)

The proposed research project has been accepted by the Chair, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval for this application has been granted from 4 June 2007 to 31 March 2009.

Please note that the Human Research Ethics Committee must be informed of the following: any changes to the approved research protocol, project timelines, any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants, and unforeseen events that may effect continued ethical acceptability of the project. In these unlikely events, researchers must immediately cease all data collection until the Committee has approved the changes.

Continued approval of this research project by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) is conditional upon the provision of a report within 12 months of the above approval date (by **4 June 2008**) or upon the completion of the project (if earlier). A report proforma may be downloaded from the VUHREC web site at: http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9919 4625.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Professor Michael Polonsky
Chair
Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee

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APPENDIX C: *Plain Language Statement*

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

My name is Anita Milicevic, I would like to invite you and your family to participate in an interview as part of a research project. The project is called: "From family damage to family challenge – Stories of rebuilding lives after war and refugee trauma: Australia after the Balkans conflict." This project is part of my postgraduate study conducted through the Victoria University School of Psychology, St Albans Campus and is supervised by Dr. Jenny Sharples and Anne Graham.

The purpose of this research is to reveal how Melbourne's refugee families from the former Yugoslavia have managed changes following the turbulence of war and exile. The aim of this study is therefore to explore how these former refugees have rebuilt their lives and, in particular, how family resilience might be connected with community and family inter-relationships.

The interviews will take place on two separate occasions, and will last approximately one hour.
             The first round of interviews will be with parents, individually.
             The second round of questioning will involve the whole family where all family members will   be interviewed together. The same questions will be asked of all family members, one at a time.

For the purpose of this research, twelve families will be interviewed. With families' permission interviews will be recorded. The interviews will be strictly confidential, your name and details will not be used and I will not pass on any detail from that interview which might identify you.   All questions will allow each participant to express their own feelings and thoughts, but there is no obligation to answer any question if you do not wish to do so. You may stop the interview or withdraw from the study at any time and you may also request to withdraw any detail provided during the interview at any time.

To protect the anonymity of others, we encourage you not to refer to people by their real names when telling stories about the past. Furthermore, we wish to emphasise that the purpose of this research is to explore how refugee families have rebuilt their lives; we are definitely not seeking any information about perceived or experienced war crimes in the past. If you wish to talk about those issues, we would advise you to seek assistance from the Migrant Resource Centre (see details below) or from your community leaders.

We hope that you will carefully consider participation in this study since we acknowledge that talking about the past might make you feel upset, especially when you are talking in front of your children. If during the interview you do become upset or distressed, we would like to advise that you can find help and understanding from experienced counsellors, who understand your culture and language, at the Migrant Resource Centre(tel. 03 9367 6044). This centre, which has been working with your community for a long time, will also be able to provide you with contacts in other appropriate services and groups.

If you are interested in talking to me about participation in this study, please contact me on (03) 9919 2221.

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Principal researcher (Dr Jenny Sharples, 9919 2156). If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (telephone no: 03-9688 4710)

Appendix D: *Invitation for children*

FOR CHILDREN

INVITATION TO BE PART OF A PROJECT ON HOW FAMILIES WHO HAVE COME TO AUSTRALIA AFTER A WAR FEEL ABOUT BEING HERE.

I would like to learn how your family live in Australia after escaping from the war. I want to ask you some questions, in front of your parents, and they are going to be asked the same questions. If you don't want to talk with me, that is OK, I understand. But it would be great if you could stay and help me. I'd like to ask you about how your life has changed since your family came to Australia, and how you feel when thinking about or listening to others talking about war.

You don't need to worry about what you say. This is not a test. But I think it's important to hear what children think, not just what their parents think. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, you don't have to. Sometimes, parents get a bit upset when they tell some of these stories, so if you don't like to see that, you can ask us to stop. And we will. We don't want to make you feel bad. We just want to find out how we can help families like yours.

Appendix E: *Consent form*

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS
INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:
We would like to invite you to be a part of a study: "From family damage to family Challenge – Stories of rebuilding
lives after war and refugee trauma: Australia after the Balkans conflict."

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, _____

of _____

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: "From
 family damage to family Challenge – Stories of rebuilding lives after war and refugee trauma: Australia after the
Balkans conflict" being conducted at Victoria University by Anita Milicevic and supervised by Dr. Jenny Sharples and Anne Graham.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Anita Milicevic

and that I freely consent to participation involving the use of these procedures:

An individual interview where a series of questions relating to my war and refugee experiences and life in Australia will be explored. A family interview where the family will be asked to discuss our war experiences. I understand that these interviews will be audio-taped and the materials from the tapes transcribed and analysed. I understand that the researcher Anita Milicevic and Principal Investigator Dr. Jenny Sharples will ensure that no individual is identifiable in the final reporting of results.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date: / /

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Principal researcher (Dr Jenny Sharples, 9919 2156). If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (telephone no: 03-9688 4710)

APPENDIX F: *Consent by child*

CONSENT BY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE

I am happy to be part of the project about families escaping from war and Anita has explained it to me.

My Name: _____

Signature (child): _____

Signature (parents): _____ (mother)

_____ (father)

Date: /   /

APPENDIX G: *Parental Consent*

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN
INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:
We would like to invite you to be a part of a study: "From family damage to family challenge – Stories of rebuilding lives after war and refugee trauma: Australia after the Balkans conflict."

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANTS
I, _____

of _____

certify that I am the parent of _____
aged _____and that and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to my child's/children's participation in the study: "From family damage to family challenge – Stories of rebuilding lives after war and refugee trauma: Australia after the Balkans conflict", being conducted at Victoria University by Anita Milicevic and supervised by Dr. Jenny Sharples and Anne Graham.

I also certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by
 Anita Milicevic
and that I freely consent to my child's participation in the following procedures:

A family interview where a series of question relating to our war and refugee experiences and family life in Australia will be explored. I acknowledge that throughout the family interview, I will always be present and able to protect my child's interests at all times.

I also declare that my child has been informed of the possibility that strong emotions may emerge during the interview process. Having also been advised of the right to ask for suspension of the interview if any discomfort is experienced, my child has voluntarily agreed to participate in this study.
I understand that this interview will be audio-taped and the materials from the tapes transcribed and analysed. I understand that the researcher Anita Milicevic and Principal Investigator Dr. Jenny Sharples will ensure that no individual is identifiable in the final reporting of results.
I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: _____ (mother)

          _____ (father)

Date: /   /

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Principal researcher (Dr Jenny Sharples, 9919 2156). If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (telephone no: 03-9688 4710)

APPENDIX H: *Interview schedule*

I PERSONAL INTERVIEWS
Demographic questions:
1. How old are you?
2. Male or female?
3. What is the country of your birth?
4. What is your native language?
5. What language do you speak at home?
6. What is your ethnic background?
7. What is your religion?
8. How long have you been married?
9. Are your children boys/girls and how old are they?
10. How long have you been in Australia?
11. Did you have any other family here before you came?
12. What was your job or occupation before migration?
13. What is your job now?

Open-ended thematic questions:
1. Can you tell me something about how and why you came to Australia?
- Could you describe the events that led up to leaving your country?
2. How would you describe your family when you were settled in former Yugoslavia?
3. Could you describe your personal aspirations when you were settled in your country?
- How, if at all, have these aspirations changed?
- When did you become aware that there was a possibility of war in your country?
- How did you respond to the war events?
- Who was most helpful to you during this time?
- How was he/she helpful?
4. Do you often think about your war experience?
- How do you feel when you do think about your war experience?
- How have you learned to cope with any emotions connected with your war experience?
5. Do you think that the war has affected your marriage? If so, how?
6. How do you feel when thinking about your refugee experience?
7. Can you describe the difference between being in the war zone and being a refugee?
8. Do you think the experience of being a refugee has affected your marriage? If so, how?
9. How would you describe your relationship between you and your children?
- How do you handle conflicts within the family (if any)?
10. What is your idea of justice?
11. How do you feel when watching a documentary or reading newspaper reports about the war that occurred in your country?
- How would you characterize a war criminal?
- What is your idea of just punishment for war criminals?
12. Could you describe the most important lessons you have learned about life through experiencing the war and being a refugee?

13. How have you grown as a person since you came to Australia?
- What positive changes have occurred within your family since you came to Australia?
14. What do you most value about your family now?
15. What do your family members most value in you?
- How has your role changed in the family since you came to Australia?
- How would you compare your family before the war with the family you are now?
16. Do you feel that you are still in the process of rebuilding your life?
- At present, what are the greatest challenges you face?
17. Could you tell me something about your social life in Australia?
18. How do you see yourself and your family in ten years?
19. Is there anything that you would like to add or to ask me – anything that occurred to you during the interview that we haven't dealt with?

II FAMILY INTERVIEWS
1. Can each of you describe to me how you felt when you first arrived in Australia?
2. What positive changes have occurred in your family since you came to Australia?
3. How does each of you feel when thinking about your war experiences?
4. Do you talk to each other about the things that happened during the war?
5. How do you feel about describing these experiences now, with me present as well?
6. Could you describe how the refugee experiences affected your family?
7. How would you describe relationship between your spouse and child/children?
8. How do you and your parents get on together?
9. How do you make decisions in the family?
10. How would each of you describe the word 'trust'?
11. How does each of you feel when watching a documentary or reading newspapers about the former war in your country
12. How would you characterize a war criminal?
13. Having experienced war and exile, what advice could you offer a society that has not undergone such experiences.
14. What are your goals and dreams for the future?

Family members	Age	Education	Occupation	Ethnicity
Mother	33	Primary school	Cleaner	Serbian
Father	41	Primary School	Waiter	Croatian
Son	15	High School	Student	undecided
Son	8	Primary school	Student	not asked
Daughter	6	Primary school	Student	not asked
Mother	38	High School	Hairdresser	Serbian
Father	40	Primary School	Truck driver	Serbian
Daughter	18	High School	Student	Serbian
Son	14	High School	Student	Serbian
Mother	40	Primary School	Shop assistant	Serbian
Father	43	Primary School	Carpenter	Serbian
Daughter	22	Some tertiary	Student	Serbian
Son	20	Some tertiary	Student	Serbian
Daughter	12	Primary school	Student	not asked
Mother	59	Tertiary Graduate	Veterinary	Croatian
Father	56	Tertiary Graduate	Economist	Bosnian Muslim
Son	25	Tertiary Graduate	Civil Engineer	undecided
Daughter	23	Tertiary Graduate	Economist	undecided
Mother	43	Primary School	Factory worker	Serbian
Father	45	Primary School	Factory Worker	Serbian
Daughter	24	Tertiary Graduate	Teacher	Serbian
Daughter	21	Some Tertiary	Student	Serbian
Mother	53	PhD	General Practitioner	Serbian
Father	58	Tertiary Graduate	Electro-engineer	Serbian
Daughter	18	Some Tertiary	Student	Serbian
Son	15	High School	Student	Serbian
Mother	53	High School	Tailor	Croatian
Father	56	High School	Tailor	Serbian
Son	25	Some Tertiary	Developer	undecided
Daughter	22	High School	Factory worker	undecided
Mother	50	Tertiary Graduate	Midwife	Croatian
Father	51	Some tertiary	Personal Trainer	Serbian

Daughter	20	High School	Unemployed	undecided
Daughter	18	High School	Student	undecided
Mother	58	Primary School	Unemployed	Serbian
Father	61	Primary school	Carpenter	Serbian
Daughter	40	Tertiary Graduate	Social Worker	Serbian
Daughter	25	Some Tertiary	Student	Serbian
Son	23	Some Tertiary	Draftsman	Serbian
Mother	43	High School	Factory worker	Bosnian Muslim
Father	51	High School	Factory Worker	Bosnian Muslim
Daughter	21	Some Tertiary	Student	Bosnian Muslim
Son	17	High School	Student	Bosnian Muslim
Mother	40	High School	Cleaner	Serbian
Father	50	High School	Painter	Serbian
Daughter	16	High School	Student	Serbian
Son	13	High School	Student	not asked

APPENDIX J: *All the themes of the analysis*

THEMATIC LEVEL CODE		CLUSTERING OF THEMES	THEMES

Super-ordinate theme	**1.0.**		**DIGNITY - the line of continuity**
		Personal & family values/ethics;	
		Revitalization & epic;	
		Contribution to life:	

Master theme	**1.1.**		**THE RIVER OF INDIGNITY**
		Humiliation; Erosion of self-worth; stigma	
		Prolonged &/or sequential trauma;	
		Maintaining belief system & values;	
		War trauma & refugee trauma;	
		Bare life - a kind of living death	

Subcategory	**1.1.2.**	**Coping with exile & dignity**	
		- one story for women, another for men	
		Gender difference in coping/attachment styles;	
		Women- the morality of sympathy;	
		Men - the morality of principles;	
		Compensatory family dynamics;	
		Changes in the way of communicating, obligations & the levels of intimacy;	
		difference in a sense of belonging	

Subcategory	**1.1.3**	**Graveyards of justice**	
		Perceived injustice; lack of reconciliation	
		Different gender perception of justice - patriarchal justice;	
		Chosen trauma or awareness of time & history;	
		Historical trauma complex; historical trauma &/or historical trauma response;	

Master theme	**1.2.**		**INTERLOCKING TRUST**
		Continuing circle of oppression;	

Families do not trust the wider society;

Have deep trust in each other; family as a only resort of trust

Sense of belonging & safety;

Psychological division between public & domestic life;

Clear boundaries between the inner and outer world

Master theme   **1.3.**   **TESTIMONY**

Truth telling/testimony- healing - the reservoir of dignity;

lack of testimony - parents emotional gatekeepers; uncertainty & fear;

Family lore testimony & confessional testimony;

Master theme   **1.4.**   **SELF-DETERMINATION**

Reconnection with ordinary life; integration of losses;

Constant struggle for consistency;

A measure of choice;

Parenthood as a mode of being and existing in the world; to be dignified

Relational communities;

Master theme   **1.5.**   **NEW FAMILY IDENTITY**

Family interactions;

Patriarchal shell; denial regarding changes in family

Family identity; new distribution of power

Authoritarian parenting vs. nurturing parenting - equality & dignity

Family symbolic principles remained the same- trust, hope, justice;

No clear internal boundaries, clearly defined external boundaries;

New level of awareness and consciousness- recovery at the family level.

_____

APPENDIX K: *An example of family interaction coding system*

Family interview/Interaction extract

1.Father: The only positive thing that has happened in Australia is that our children have completed university degrees, and nothing else.

2.Daughter and son laugh.

3.Son: How about the fact that we bought a house, that we have a nice car. We made new friends, how about that? We have friends now who are not only from our backgrounds, we have Australian friends. We have also developed a better view on the world; we comprehend the world in a better way. Our horizons are much wider now. We are far away in Australia, so for people who reside in Europe this is a far destination, however for us it is not that far, we travel easily now, and the world is not that big for us anymore. It is much smaller.

4.Mother: It is much easier for us to travel to visit our relatives than for them to visit us.

Coding

1. Values/challenges

2. Intimacy/boundaries

3. Narrative interaction; distribution of power between parents and children

4. Roles/obligation; coordination

Interpretation