Asylum Seekers Views and Experiences from Different Types of Interviews

Alrazi Suliman

2015

Degree Project, 15 Cr.
Student Thesis
Programme in Social Work, Specialization International Social Work

Supervisor: Thomas Öhlund
Examiner: Pia Tham
Abstract:

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how asylum seekers may experience different interview methods in the asylum investigation in Sweden. An inductive qualitative data collection technique was used in this study, where semi-structured interviews were conducted with six asylum seekers in four different cities in Sweden. This study was influenced by the grounded theory approach in the way of creating codes, concepts and themes from the empirical data analyzed in thematic and constant comparison method. The results show three different themes, namely “the expressions of the feelings, possibilities to expressions and possibilities and difficulties.” as they present the asylum seekers views of different interview methods. The role theory was chosen in relation to the asylum seekers different behavior toward the interview methods. The results indicated the possibilities for different roles as: “psychological unbalanced role, technology skilled role, technology challenged role and the apprehensive role”

Keywords: Communication Tools Interviews, Face-to-face Interviews, Asylum seekers role, Asylum Investigation, Interview methods.
To...

“My Beloved Mother, Mahasin”

Your prayers for me, sustained me this far
May your soul rest in peace
Acknowledgment:

I would like to thanks all the professors and teachers at Gävle University for all the knowledge I gained from them through the last few years, and I would like to give special thanks and appreciation to supervisor Thomas Öhlund, PhD, I would have never been able to finish my thesis without his guidance.

I also would like to thank my supervisors during the ‘’field placement’’ in India, Prabha Tirmare PhD, and Ms. Nigama Mascarenhas for the support, guidance and warmth welcoming.

A special thanks to all the asylum seekers that participated in this study, without them this study would not have been possible. Also I would like to thank all my classmates, Friends and the Sudanese community in Gävle.

And last but not least a special thanks, love and appreciation to my Family, for everything they have done for me.
Table of Contents

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Background ....................................................................................................................................... 2
   1.2 Aim .................................................................................................................................................. 4
   1.3 Research questions ................................................................................................................................. 4
   1.4 Essay disposition ................................................................................................................................. 5
   1.5 Explanations of the concepts ................................................................................................................. 5

2. Previous Research .................................................................................................................................. 7
   2.1 Previous research related to Communication Tools ..................................................................................... 7
   2.2 Previous research related to Face-to-face method .................................................................................... 8

3. Methodology: ........................................................................................................................................ 11
   3.1: Data collection .................................................................................................................................. 11
   3.2 Interviews .......................................................................................................................................... 12
   3.3 Analysis method .................................................................................................................................. 13
   3.4 Creditability ...................................................................................................................................... 14
   3.5 Limitation of the study ........................................................................................................................ 16
   3.6 Preliminary understanding .................................................................................................................. 17
   3.7 Ethical considerations: ....................................................................................................................... 17

4. Theoretical points of departure ............................................................................................................. 18
   4.1 Background to Role Theory ............................................................................................................... 18

5. Results and Analysis ............................................................................................................................. 20
   5.1 Theme 1: The expressions of the feelings ............................................................................................. 20
   5.2 Theme 2: Possibilities to expressions .................................................................................................. 22
   5.3 Theme 3: Possibilities and difficulties .................................................................................................. 24
   5.4 Analysis ............................................................................................................................................ 26

6. Discussion: .......................................................................................................................................... 28

7. Conclusion: .......................................................................................................................................... 30

8. References .......................................................................................................................................... 31

9: Appendices: ........................................................................................................................................ 34
1. Introduction

The flow of asylum seekers and refugees has extremely increased lately. This in return has caused huge challenge for many destination countries around the world. According to the UNHCR Global trends (2009) the number has increased to approximately 15.2 million refugees, 983,000 asylum seekers internationally by the end of year 2009. (UNHCR, 2009). Sweden as one of these destination countries puts much effort to provide protection to high numbers of displaced people, where one of the major topics that the Swedish politicians are facing presently is questions about refugees and asylum seekers.

Many refugees had to escape from their countries for their own and their family’s survival and go through long and dangerous journeys; some have to travel for months with the help of human smugglers and so on. All of these factors and the emotional stress have made refugees vulnerable. Hence, this subject needs to be approached in a sensitive and sympathetic manner. In accordance to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, p.2) “Refugees are among the most vulnerable people in the world”.

Moreover, the reasons that led people to escape their families and countries and seek asylum and protection are many and may differ from each individual to another, although they might be from the same country. In addition, going through long and hard journeys and escaping from the country of origin to another country doesn’t classify that person as refugee. In accordance to the 1951 Refugees Convention, a refugee is defined as:

“a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there” (UNCHR, 1951, p.3).

To be able to understand problems that face refugees it requires an understanding and grasping of exact legal definitions and international laws. Whereby, it determines and qualifies the right of protection. National and international authorities have developed different strategies to process
refugees and asylum seekers applications. Sweden has signed on the UN Refugee Convention, has to take consideration of all refugees and asylum seekers applications been presented inside Sweden and also the re-settlement applications of the refugees that sought asylum through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The subject is interesting since it is a topic on the Swedish agenda. Of course it is of a great importance to understand the process of the investigation and the difficulties that may face asylum seekers. Interest from the media, human rights activists and different groups of the society towards refugees’ issues has been appearing more in the picture. Thus, this study emerged from personal involvement within the refugee’s groups and the debates occurring in the refugee and asylum seeker society in the media in the present time.

1.1 Background

For the last few years, the number of asylum seekers in Sweden has increased rapidly, most probably due to the recent revolutions waves and unstable situation in some Middle East countries: Currently the war in Syria has led to the exodus of many citizens of these countries, and led to high influx of asylum seekers in the European countries.

According to the Swedish Migration Board statistics, the number of asylum seekers has increased a lot from the year 2012 to 2015, from about approximately 45,000 asylum seeker per year to 180,000 as shown by the statistics depicted in the figure above. (Migrationsverket statistik, 2015), (Appendix 1).

This huge increase of the number of asylum seekers has led to a shortage of human resources to handle the huge amount of the asylum applications and added much workload on the Migration Board. This resulted in longer processing time, and a longer waiting period for asylum seekers, and a constant change of the asylum law and strategies.

Accordingly, the Migration Board has turned to use a new strategy, whereby it started to conduct many investigation interviews through different interviewing methods, as communication tools interviews such as “video conference” in order to facilitate the process of the huge number of
applications to lower or avoid adding extra expenses, regardless of the difficulties that might face
the asylum seekers. The Migration Board appoints any available case officers at any region in
Sweden regardless of their locations. The asylum seeker should go to the closest Migration
Board office in the region he/she is placed in, and the available case officer conducts the
interview through communication tools from distance.

On one hand, it is a very good strategy, where it saves much time and lowers the expenses for the
Migration Board, and making it much easier for the asylum seekers, instead of traveling for long
distances. On the other hand, communication is not only built on the spoken or written
languages, the expressions, body language and the surrounding environments play a key role in
the communication, in another way it can be called non-conversational communication. (Tager-
Flusberg, H. et al., 2009).

1.1.2 Process of asylum in Sweden

Once the asylum seekers have made an application at any Migration Board office they are
allowed to stay in Sweden while the Migration Board considers their applications. In normal
cases the process of the asylum in Sweden consists of two meetings with case officers at the
Migration Board. Some seekers might have more or less meetings depending on their case and
the request of the case officer (Migrationsverket, 2011).

The asylum seekers are called to do a reception unit enquiry meeting, which takes between 15 –
30 minutes approximately. The asylum seekers are asked to show a prove of identity such as an
ID-card, Passport, Birth certificate, and if possible other documents that support their case.
Hence, the Migration Board can ensure the asylum seeker identity and nationality and take the
correct decision (ibid).

The second meeting is the main asylum investigation interview which can take two to four hours
and it depends on how the asylum seekers express their cases.

In order to facilitate these meetings, the Swedish Migration Board provides an interpreter to all
the meetings in order to facilitate the communication between case officers and asylum seekers.
The interpreter should translate anything without adding or subtracting. The Swedish Migration
board provides a legal support in those cases that involve political or legal issues. Moreover, the Swedish Migration Board also provides accommodation for asylum seekers (Asylboende) in different regions in Sweden, either the seeker can arrange somewhere to live for him/her on their own way upon their request. Furthermore, the Swedish Migration Board provides a health care services, financial support and even psychological support if needed (Migrationsverket. 2011).

1.1.3 Asylum seeker role

The asylum seekers have many different responsibilities and role towards their actual given social position, where the asylum seeker as an individual person can have different roles to play in his life beside the role of the asylum seeker. However, the natural common roles of asylum seeker can be the ‘‘seekers role’’ or ‘‘ applicant role’’ where there are not many roles that asylum seeker can play according to their new social position, therefore they have no control over the process of the asylum application or the decision. Thus, their roles are only concerned on the invitation interview, where the asylum seeker should only provide the case officer of the Swedish Migration Board with all the information about his/her case and answer questions regarding their social position as an applicants, hence, they should be able to prove to the Swedish Migration Board the reasons to for seeking asylum and not to tell anything not related to the topic.

1.2 Aim

The driving objective of this study is to investigate how asylum seekers perceive different types of interviews used in asylum investigations in Sweden.

1.3 Research questions

- How do the asylum seekers express their feelings during the investigation interviews?
- How do the asylum seekers describe their possibility to express themselves and their emotions during the investigation interviews?
What possibilities and difficulties do the asylum seekers describe in the interview methods?

1.4 Essay disposition

The first chapter presented the introduction of the refugees and asylum seeker, to give the reader general knowledge about the asylum process in Sweden and the chosen field, followed by a background of the main issue of the study and how the study emerged, followed by a discussion on the role of the asylum seekers. Moreover, presented the aim of the study and the research question, followed by an explanation of terms and concepts used in this study. The second chapter presents the previous research in relation to communication tools and face-to-face interviews. The third chapter presents the methodology in details, with an explanation of the grounded theory approach used in this thesis and discussion of data collection and analysis methods, ethical considerations, credibility, reflections of previous researches, preconceptions and the limitations of study. The fourth chapter presents the role theory and it’s relation to the result and the study. The fifth chapter presents the result and the analysis of the study. The last chapter presents the discussion followed by the conclusion, and reflection about the used method of the study followed by suggestions for future research.

1.5 Explanations of the concepts

This section explains some of the concepts and terms been used in this study:

**The Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket):** is the responsible authority of application for asylum. It is the responsible authorities that approves or reject the application for asylum according to UN Refugee Convention and in Swedish law, The Aliens Act (Utlänningslagen).

**Asylum seeker:** A person who have migrated across borders and sought *shelter* and protection and waiting for a response of his/her asylum protection. In this study I used the term ‘’asylum seeker’’ as summarizing word for the ‘’refugee, asylum seeker, and immigrant’’. Therefore terms ‘’refugee’’ and ‘’immigrant’’ will not be mentioned every time.
Asylum investigation: after applying for asylum the migration will summon to a meeting with a case officer to explore and report the story and the reason for seeking asylum in details, so the Migration Board can decide according to that interview weather the asylum seeker should stay in the country or shall be deported to his/her country of origin.

Communication tools: It’s meant with that any type of online and video communication that can be accomplished through technology devices, which is used to facilitate the long distance communications such as Video conference, Skype and Adobe connect... etc.
2. Previous Research

This chapter presents previous research done in topics relevant to this study. According to the nature of the study and the high level of the novelty in the chosen area of the study, as well according to the best of the author’s knowledge, there have not been a high number of studies made on the area of comparison of the interview forms. However, some quite similar previous studies have been found within the similar area, these are presented below.

2.1 Previous research related to communication tools

2.1.1 Use of technology by asylum seekers

A study conducted in Australia, Leung, Lamb and Emrys (2009), examined the ability and the knowledge of asylum seekers on using technology as a method of communication with their families and friends in their origin countries, and what difficulties they faced on using technology. The Authors argued that most of the participants had good knowledge about technology and communication tools, and were able to use it, when it was affordable and available. Nonetheless, some of the participating asylum seekers had very limited knowledge about technologies including Phone, Mobile, Computer and Fax.

Moreover, the authors mentioned that “asylum seekers and refugees who knew little about communication technologies and did not feel confident talking about them may have been less inclined to participate in the research” (Leung et al., 2009)

2.1.2 Use of Skype in data collecting

In connection with the point above, another study conducted in the United Kingdom (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013), examined the experiences of two researchers’ of using Skype as data collecting method. The study showed that Skype interviews are cost efficient and facilitate the data collecting process more than the traditional face-to-face interviews. However, a drawback was presented the possibility of putting off interviewees who have no knowledge on using Skype. Moreover, the study pointed out a very important and critical ethical issue that may arise in such types of interviews, that is, a part of the conversation or the whole session may be in risk of becoming recorded as an audio or on a video. Hence that may lower the trust of the
interviewees regarding the confidentiality of the interviews or they might not participate at all in such type of interview.

2.1.3 The working alliance in online vs. face-to-face therapy

In terms of face-to-face interviewing method compared to the online interviewing methods, a comparative study conducted at the USA, (Cook & Doyle, 2002). The study examined the practice of the working alliance in online therapy compared to face-to-face therapy. The study was made from the clients’ perspective. The results showed that there were no significant differences between the two methods. the participants were satisfied with the online therapy especially in terms of their freedom to express, less fear and stress than in a face-to-face where they indicated that ‘‘for the first time, they were able to be completely honest and open with a therapist’’ (Cook & Doyle, 2002, p. 67). Moreover, the results showed more advantages of online therapy in terms of cost and travel, where participants were pleased with the affordability.

2.2 Previous research related to Face-to-face method

As this study investigates how asylum seekers perceive different types of interviews, two quite similar interview methods within the area of face-to-face interviews are presented below. These studies present two different areas and perspectives.

2.2.1 Face to face vs. telephone in data collecting

A qualitative comparative study was conducted in the USA, (Sturges & Kathleen, 2004) examined the face-to-face interviewing vs. the telephone interviewing in a qualitative study as data collecting method. The authors used a comparison literature reviewing method in their study to investigate the differences and similarities of the two interviewing methods in term of the access to hard-to-reach respondent groups, interviewer safety, sensitive topics, and cost. As an example: interviewing criminal people who have conflicts with the law, either, they are followed or surrounded with risk and dangers or even in prisons. The result of study showed that in this term they avoided the risk and the travel process to a county jail and prison, and were also insuring the safety of the authors. The authors suggests telephone interviews in qualitative studies as it is cost efficient and facilitate the data collecting process. The authors have
mentioned a drop out point regarding the quality, as they questioned “the central question is whether telephone interviews can ‘stand in’ for face-to-face interviews without reducing data quality?” (Sturges & Kathleen, 2004).

2.2.2 Face-to-face vs. three different interviewing methods

A study conducted in Netherlands (Opdenakker, 2006), examined the advantages and disadvantages of four interview methods used for data collecting in qualitative research. The study examined face-face interviews, telephone interviews, MSN messenger interviews, and e-mail interviews. The author used these various communication tools and the face-to-face interviews in the data collection, to facilitate the data collecting and examine the advantages and disadvantages. The results showed that the use of the face-to-face interviews is much preferred, when ‘social cues’ of the interviewee are very important information sources for the interviewer, the interviewer has enough budget and time for travelling, and standardization of the interview situation is important (Opdenakker, 2006).

The author concluded, that the use of face-to-face for collecting information is preferred, when social cues of the interviewee are very important, and that other four methods are appropriate for use when social cues are less or not important information sources interviewer.

2.2.2 Face to face vs. online in learning

A study made by (Peterson & Bond, 2014) in the USA, examined the online method of interviewing compared to face-to-face in teacher preparation for learning. The study was built on a previous study that had compared and examined the effectiveness of online and face-to-face learning. In the study both face-to-face interviews and online surveys were used as data collecting methods. The study examined the area of problem-based learning, as the study was taken from a post-graduates student’s perspective. Moreover, the results showed no significant differences between groups in term of asynchronous, distance online and face-to-face environments in demonstration of inquiry, whereby it support previous research, which shows that online learning can meet common course instructional objectives. However, the results identified an advantage of face-to-face environments for learning instructional planning and for developing interpersonal skills for teaching, additional to that authors stated that “the lacking
face-to-face contact, may have put more effort into becoming known to their profession’’ which can be seen as an advantage of the face to face method.

2.3 Reflections of previous research

Although that all mentioned previous research have covered and examined the online interviewing methods vs. the face to face method, and the advantages of using online and video conference interviews as a global data collecting method, as well the face-to-face vs. telephone in data collecting, etc.

However, the previous research have not covered the use of the communication tools neither face-to-face methods in relation to the area of asylum investigation interviews. Moreover, in term of that the asylum seekers investigation interviews may differ from the data collection interviews, where the asylum seeker lack the right to choose their preferences regarding the interview methods, Although that it is significant matter in the asylum seekers life’s and the upcoming future. Hence, this study will examine and cover the dropped points of the presented previous research above, and investigate how asylum seekers perceive different types of interviews used in the asylum investigation.

2.3.1 Database search

According to the best knowledge of the author, the presented studies are the most relevant peer reviewed and online sources articles been found in the similar area to aim of the study. The study search process used keywords: asylum seekers interviews, asylum seekers vs technology, different interview techniques, face-to-face and communication tools in interviewing. Moreover, the study used Google Search Engine, Sega database and University of Gävle library database due to the accessibility and availability.
3. Methodology:

This chapter presents the chosen method used in this study in order to fulfill the aim of the study, and find out advantages and disadvantages with the different methods of interviews form the asylum seekers perspectives.

According to the nature of the study, and to avoid a bias to own and personal ideas and believes, an inductive qualitative study has been chosen for this study, as it is a very applicable approach for such topic. Consequently, the study method is significantly influenced by the grounded theory approach.

“Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves.” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 62).

The influence of the grounded theory approach comes in the process of data analysis and creating of codes, concepts and categories from the empirical data in accordance to Strauss and Corbin (1990) "The process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 91).

Hence, in this study the use of the grounded theory approach influenced form the point that that the study has as high level of novelty, mainly due what mentioned above that this study is sort of fresh and not tied to preexisting theories, but not in terms of emerging a theory out of the result.

3.1: Data collection

The data collection method used was semi-structured interviews, which has been chosen in order to guide the focus of the investigation within the specific aim and areas of the study and to generate or discover a theory. According to Bjørnholt and Farstad "a semi-structured interview can result in "the production of rich data, including observational data." (Bjørnholt & Farstad, 2012).

Moreover, the research has been carried out in four cities in Sweden, Malmö, Sundsvall, Umeå and Gävle.
3.2 Interviews

Interviews have been conducted with six asylum seekers in the four mentioned cities above as representatives for the asylum seekers community. The selection of the interviewees has been done through snowball sampling, where I have approached the nearest Swedish Migration Board accommodations in the city of Gävle where I recruited one participant. That participant recommended two more potential participants in Malmö city. Those participants then recommended another two participants in Umea, as well recommended the last participant in the city of Sundsvall.

The informants were presented verbally before the interviews, where the aim of the study was explained clearly to the interviewees. Moreover, the interviewees have signed an official form of consent to the interview (Appendix 2), followed by self-presentation and provided contact information, in case anyone of the interviewees wanted to withdraw at any time during the study.

The interviewees were divided into two groups, Group I: three interviewees who had face-to-face investigation interviews, where “Interviewee F1” was a 26 years old man, “Interviewee F2” was a 40 years old a man, and Interviewee F3” was a 26 years old woman.

Group II: the second group where three interviewees who had an investigation interview through a communication tool, there were “Interviewee C1” was a 48 year old man, “Interviewee C2” was a 68 years old woman, and “Interviewee C3” was a 25 years old woman. The interviews were about 30-40 minutes for each interview. Some interview questions were formulated differently for the two groups of interviewees, which will be display at the end of this study (Appendix 3) and (Appendix 4).

The study did not reveal the native countries of the participants due to their request. The mentioned ages are the real ages of the participated interviewees. All interviews have been carried out in “Arabic” language as it’s the mother tongue of both the six participants and the author.
The interviews have been recorded by mobile phone. The transcription was written literally and word by word and later translated to English after the interview, also additional notes and observations were taken, as extra information, for example: facial expressions, reactions towards some questions. Additional follow up questions were asked during the interviews to ensure the understanding, in order not to miss any essential information. All interviews took place at the city library (Stadsbiblioteket) of each city; the interviews were carried out in different times during daytime that ensured a quiet and comfortable atmosphere for the interviewees.

3.3 Analysis method

The comparison method to analyze and create codes from the empirical material of the conducted interviews. A thematic analysis was used in order to create themes associated to the research questions. I used qualitative thematic analysis to analysis the collected data and be able to answer and to create themes associated to the research questions. Moreover, Braun and Clarke have described thematic analysis as “identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail ” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79).

Analysis has been done in several steps, where finding theoretical coding, by looking at the interrelationships crosswise different types of open coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) open coding has been extracted out of the transcript of the interviews by labeling words and phrases that highlight an issue of importance or same repeated word in different answers from different interviewees as presented in “Bold font” of the quotations further below (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Codes created from both data of the face-to-face and communication tools due to the importance of the meanings. Thus, by extracting codes I was able to compare, examine and conceptualize the collected data.

The second step was conceptualizing data into themes, by analyzing codes, and then combining common codes with similar issue of importance and meaning and relating them to the research questions. The presented quotations have been extracted from the data to clarify the link to the themes (Allan, 2003).
Themes found from the process of combining concepts in relation to questions, by using the constant comparison and thematic analysis methods I was able to check and see if the data support the emerging of themes.

Moreover, themes developed as a frame to similar and related concepts, where each theme includes concepts related to each other in terms of meaning, which conclude the accurate view of the interviewees.

3.4 Creditability

3.4.1 Validity

The idea of validity refers to the accuracy, quality and truthfulness of the study (Denscombe, 2009). In a qualitative study the validity meant with whether the method of the study has achieved what was intended to be measured, if that been proved, then we can state that the study is accurate concerning validity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The interview questions were formulated in direct and clear way, in order to produce the accurate and beneficial answers of the interviews, as according to Grinnell “validity also increase when clear and understandable questions are used during the interview” (Grinnell 2001, p.189). Also I have been going back and forth through the study questions and aim to ensure not losing the main focus of the study.

Face-to-face interviews have enhanced the validity of the study to, whereby the interviewees were able to express themselves and their emotions verbally and with body language and facial expressions, which makes the researcher able to come to an understanding of the collected data. Moreover, the language used in the interviews has a significant role in increasing the validity of the study, where all the interviews conducted in “Arabic” which is in fact the interviewees’ mother tongue, and without a use of interpreter. Translating the data from Arabic language to English, may somehow decrease the validity level, but as both interviews and the translation been done by the same person (author), thus, this can lower the chances of misunderstanding and enhance the validity level. Moreover, all translated transcript been checked with the interviewees before and after the translation to ensure the truthful and quality of meaning (Ibid).
The presented quotes from the interviews are used in order to show the relationship between the data and themes. The study checked and matched the aim of the study with the empirical data collected throughout the whole study process to check the answers of the questions of the research.

My personal experience of the same situation as I sought asylum in Sweden may somehow decrease the validity level, therefore I was aware of the importance of do not mention or share any personal opinions and views with the interviewees or within the analysis.

3.4.2 Reliability

The notion of the reliability refers to the truthfulness and consistency of the research results (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Although this study was done by me as a single author, I have maintained consistency and stability throughout the study, where I have put a lot of emphasis and effort to ensure credibility and neutrality through this study, and to avoid been bias to personal values and ideas. I have explained and described all stages of the data collection the interviews, the analysis, and so on, and I have been very careful not to exclude any part of the data weather it is with or against my opinion and values. By describing the stages and the process of each stage in the study, it gives the reader a better understanding and transparency to the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Also, I have gone through the data several times in different days and moods to ensure the reliability and avoid influencing the analysis and biasness or misunderstanding of the data. Moreover, all interviews were held in Arabic language, the data been transcript and translated by me and re-read , checked and reviewed data and transcript a couple of times, and also check transcripts and translation with the interviewees themselves to ensure right understanding and translations of meanings and terms. Furthermore, the main focus within the whole study process was laid on the aim of the study to avoid influencing the data to my own emotions and ideas.

3.4.3 Generalizability

Considering the nature of the conducted study and the few numbers of the participants, is not possible to generalize the results (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, Golafshani (2003) argues that reliability and validity in a qualitative study generates generalizability. What emerged
in the study can be something that many asylums seekers might feel again, if they are experiencing the same situation. (Golafshani, 2003)

3.5 Limitation of the study

The limitation of the study lay on the following:

3.5.1 Accessibility and availability limitation

The data collection and interviews are in general costly in terms of time and expenses, where the interviewees are spread all over Sweden which results in a limitation of accessibility. Moreover, not all asylum seekers were willing to cooperate and participate in the study, whereby, some asylum seekers I approached didn’t want to take part in the study, as they did not feel comfortable talking about their experience.

Due to the high number of asylum applications being processed by the Swedish Migration Board and the workloads among case officers during the period of the study has resulted in an unavailability of case officers. Hence, it was not feasible to conduct interviews with the case officers and therefore the professional’s point of view is not covered in the study. Interviewing Swedish Migration Board case officers and to get their views regarding the different methods of the interviews would have been interesting and would properly give the study a deeper understanding about the different interview methods, but from the opposite perspective.

3.5.2 Communication limitation

The different native languages of asylum seekers have limited the possibilities of conducting interviews with many of the asylum seekers speaking different languages than Arabic. As Arabic is the native language of the author and therefore the communication in the interviews was more convenient for the asylum seekers. Moreover, conducting interviews with an aid of an interpreter would add more expenses and difficulties in obtaining the intended response and meaning from the interviewee.
3.6 Preliminary understanding

As the area of the study is concerning Swedish Migration Board investigation methods and asylum seekers role and view about the used method the preliminary understanding emerged from the ongoing debate about the topic. The main understanding was that the Swedish Migration Board turned to the use of new methods in order to reduce the expenses and to facilitate higher number of interviews in order to manage the recent increase of asylum applications.

3.6.1 Preconceptions

The preconceptions of the subject asylum seekers and the different interview methods are the basic information that comes from ongoing debates in asylum seekers community and the media. The rising focus in the Swedish society has given some reflections about problems and a deeper understanding of the situations of the asylum seekers. Moreover, my personal experience of the situation of asylum seekers as I sought asylum in Sweden in 2010.

3.7 Ethical considerations:

Since this a qualitative study, the ethical considerations lay out on information: where the aim of the study been explained clearly to the interviewees, followed by self-presentation and provide contact info in case needed. Anonymity and confidentiality; where all documents, records, transcriptions and all the information kept confidential and accessible only by the author, moreover all the information will be annihilated immediately when the analysis completed. Anonymity is important in this study due to sensitivity of the situation of the asylum seekers, and their vulnerable position, where some of the participants in the study still have their asylums application’s still under processing. Therefore, I created sample cover letters to represent interviewees as F1, F2, F3, etc. to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees.
4. Theoretical points of departure

In this chapter ‘the role theory’ will be presented in relation to the asylum seekers individual’s different behavior towards the different interview methods of asylum investigations. The role theory has been found useful while the study is investigating a sociological impact and influences among asylum seeker in two different situations. The asylum seekers as individuals have responded differently to the same social position. Thus, role theory can be suitable as an applicable theory to use in order to fulfill the aim of the study.

4.1 Background to Role Theory

Although the term ‘role’ has been used and practiced as a sociological concept since many centuries ago in most of the languages in Europe, however, ‘role’ have only been illuminated lately at the beginning of the last century as a term of sociological discourse. In around the 1920s and 1930s the theoretical work “the mind and the self” was the fundamental emerged of the role theory by Mead, Moreno, Parsons, and Linton (Hindin, 2007).

According to Robert L Barker, the role theory has been defined as "a group of concepts, based on sociocultural and anthropological investigations, which pertain to the way people are influenced in their behaviors by the variety of social positions they hold and the expectations that accompany those positions”(Barker, 1999). However, there is no universal definition of the role theory; thus, there have been debates in relation to the meaning of the ‘role’.

From a social-psychological perspective role theory is concerned with the everyday activity which is considered to be a set of socially defined categories such as doctor, father, teacher, etc. For each category, there are certain rights, responsibilities and expectations in terms of behaviors and norms that a person face and achieve. Basically, this model is based on the expectations of the individual’s behavior in certain ways in accordance to a certain social position and context (Michener, 1999).

There has been a debate among social psychologists regarding the meaning of the term ‘role’ within the theory. In a general sense ‘role’ means the link between the behavior and the social position. For example: a doctor should behave in a certain way in accordance to his/her presence
in the hospital. Some theorists have another view regarding the role as it refers to how individuals actually behave in a given situation or social position, (Coser, 1975). According to Goffman, the role is rather flexible and negotiable between different individuals, and it cannot be described, fixed or tied entirely (Goffman, 1959).
5. Results and Analysis

In this chapter the result and the analysis are presented. From the results three different themes have emerged, identified as; the expressions of the feelings, possibilities to expressions and possibilities and difficulties.

Interviewees F1, F2, F3 present the asylum seekers who experienced face-to-face interviews, while interviewees C1, C2, C3 are the asylum seekers who experienced communication tools interviews. The presented quotation below presents the interviewees views in this study.

5.1 Theme 1: The expressions of the feelings

Face-to-face interviews

The results indicated that the expressions of the feelings of the asylum seekers lay on their psychological status during the interview. There are two factors that mainly seem to have affected the psychological status of the asylum seekers: the asylum seekers background problems and the worries regarding the asylum decision.

The background problems such as escaping from their countries, the experiences of long and dangerous journeys and war, risk, and many other factors. Thus, the asylum seekers already have a lot to deal with beside the psychological stress during the interview, and that may effect how asylum seekers express their feelings, as (interviewee F2) stated:

- “I already had many things to think about in my head, my wife and my kids, the situation in my country, and many things took my thinking away…” (Interviewee F2)

This may affect negatively on the asylum seekers status during the interview, where if the asylum seekers are not mind present during the interview, this can cause an issue of misunderstanding or loss of concentration and effect the response by the asylum seeker, as captured from (interviewee F1):

- “I was so nervous, it was hard to remember the date I came to Sweden for example small details happened 3 month ago in details during the interview…” (Interviewee F1):
The worries of the decision and the fear of deportation or not receive a permit to stay in the country, plays a huge role on the asylum seeker psychological status. Whereby, their future is depending on this few hours of the interview. They have only two chances either to reserve a permit to stay or get a negative decision where they will be asked to leave the country or be deported to back to their country of origin, (interviewee F1) stated:

- “I was worried, they don’t give you any sign to know if they will give you a permit or not…” (Interviewee F1)

Even if the asylum seekers have strong reasons behind their asylum case, they can’t be sure about the decision, as they don’t get any feedback from the case officer regarding the interview, (interviewee F3) stated:

- “I was not confident about the meeting and I was so worried about the result of the interview” (Interviewee F3)

**Communication tools interviews**

The results indicated that the worries regarding asylum decision and the background problems may influence the expression of feelings of the asylum seekers who had communication tools interviews, as they have the same roles and responsibility during the interview, as quoted:

- “I was afraid of being alone in the interview room…” (Interviewee C2).

As mentioned above, if the asylum seeker has not been not fully present minded during the interview, this may effect the response of the asylum. And therefore a negative result could be largely influenced by to their unstable psychological status.

The asylum seekers’ unfamiliarity to technology can affect the asylum seekers psychological status and therefore influence their expression of their feelings. Some of the asylum seekers have not used such devices or may have limited knowledge about technology in general. As quoted:

- “I didn’t know what should I do, I never experienced such situation before…” (Interviewee C1):
The results indicated that asylum seekers who had ordinary face to face interviews were able to express their feelings much better than the ones who had interviews through communication tools. The actual present and the eye-to-eye contact seems to be preferred by them than a distance contact, especially if the asylum seekers are less connected or have limited knowledge about technology.

5.2 Theme 2: Possibilities to expressions

The results indicated that the interview method may influence the asylum seekers possibility to express themselves during the interview. That seems to be influenced by the asylum seekers, interpretation issues and the distance effect.

Face-to-face interviews

The asylum seekers who had face to face interviews were satisfied with the expression and the communication of the interview, were the actual presences for all of the parties at the interview room increase their possibility to expression and make the communication much easier for the asylum seekers. However, the interview method seemed to influence their possibility to expressions as the following:

The quality of interpretations plays a significant role for the asylum seekers possibility to expression. For Interviewee F2 the communication between him and the case officer was basically built on body and sign language in order to ensure the understanding or the meaning, as stated:

- “sometimes I may say many sentences, and the interpreter translated it in one sentence only, so I had to use my hands and signs to describe everything to the case officer...”

Another example is that the nationality of the interpreter and the asylum seeker can lead to misunderstanding of some or of the whole meaning, where different accents or pronunciations effect the asylum seekers possibility to expression, as quoted:

- “I had to speak in original Arabic language, just to be sure” (Interviewee F1)
**Communication tools interviews**

The asylum seekers, who were interviewed by communication tools, were less satisfied with interviews method in terms of interpretations compared to those asylum seekers who had face-to-face interviews, due to both the interpretations issue and the distance.

Interviewee C2 was not satisfied with the communication and expressions during the interview, as she mentioned some interpretations issues regarding age and health aspects, as hearing can be affected by aging. Thus, she perceived that the interpreter didn’t have that in consideration, where it effected on her possibility to expression as she stated:

- “*during the discussion, I was not understanding the interpreter properly and had difficulty hearing him properly,*” (Interviewee C2)

Moreover, another example of interpretation issue is taken from interviewee C3, where she preferred the actual presence of interpreter at the interview room, as stated:

- “*I had hard times with the interpreter, it could have been better if he was in the same room...*” (Interviewee C3)

Moreover, the result indicated that the distance and lacking of the eye to eye contact between the asylum seeker and the case officers can influence the communication and possibility to expressions. Interviewee C2 linked the effect of the distance to his ability of expression and communication, as stated:

- “*I was not able express myself good, this was the first time I went through this experience...I communicated much better in the appeal court*”
  (Interviewee C2)

Moreover, the distance seemed to influence the communication and the expressions in terms of individual differences and the asylum seekers preferences, as (Interviewee C1) stated:

- “*If I have options, I will not choose to do the interview through distance... I am much better in personal meetings ...*” (Interviewee C1)
The result indicated that interpretation may influence the possibility to expressions during the interview in both interview methods. Whereby, distance effect factor seemed to influence the asylum seekers who were interviewed by communication tools only.

### 5.3 Theme 3: Possibilities and difficulties

The results of this study showed that that those asylum seekers who had ordinary face-to-face interviews often faced fewer difficulties than the ones who had interviews through communication tools.

**Face-to-face interviews**

The results showed that the asylum seekers in this study had to travel for quite long distances to conduct the face-to-face interview. Accordingly, the face-to-face method provide more possibilities, hence the difficulties here lay on the physical comfortability and psychological stress of the asylum seekers caused by traveling.

In order to avoid consequences of long travels, communication tools can be motivated in some interviews. As Interviewee F1 stated:

- “**I traveled for 12 hours for the interview. If I only can be sure about that secrecy, I guess, I would do it on video, if it was possible...**” (Interviewee F1).

Moreover, the results showed that the asylum seekers in this study seemed to be more comfortable with the face-to-face methods in terms of security, where the actual presence of the parties in the same room enhanced the comfortability for the asylum seekers, which provided more possibilities as quoted:

- “**In terms of secrecy and privacy I think face-to-face will always be the best form of communication,**” (Interviewee F1)

Those asylum seekers who had ordinary face-to-face interviews seemed to face fewer difficulties with regard to the interview method.
**Communication tools interviews**

The difficulties here seemed to lay on comfortability during the interview, where the unfamiliarity to technology is an important factor that should be considered in communication tools interview. Some asylum seekers have not used such devices or have limited knowledge about technology in general, thus, that can cause comfortability issues, whereby, it effect on their possibility to expression, as (Interviewee C1) stated:

- **“I was not comfortable with the interview, I didn’t know what should I do, I never experienced such situation before...”** (Interviewee C1):

But that may differ from one individual to another, where some may not face comfortability issues because they are much familiar to technology and communication tools:

- **“I use ‘Skype’ almost every day... it is not a problem for me, I was very comfortable with the communication tools overall...”** (Interviewee C3)

Another aspect linked to comfortability is the atmosphere of the interview. Interviewee C1 has interpreted the situation as he felt lack of seriousness from the Migration Board from the overall atmosphere of the interview:

- **“it was strange to sit by myself and talk to a screen...why they can't be with me in the same room if no one will use this room for few hours, they are not taking us seriously ....”** (Interviewee C1)

The results showed that the asylum seekers who had communication tools interviews expressed more difficulties with regard to the interview method, whereby the unfamiliarity to technology plays significant role in that.
5.4 Analysis

Basically, the role is concerned in the area of norms and behaviors from a social-psychological perspective. Thus, in relation to the study asylum seekers are like any other individuals and have responsibilities and behavior toward their actual given social position, where each asylum seeker behave in a certain way in accordance to his/her situation.

There are two different types of interviews which have been examined in this study; the asylum seekers face different situations as their response are different because of the atmosphere and the communications methods. This may lead to the creation of different roles to the same individuals. As the actual role of the asylum seeker may not be the same, if the interview methods is changed. Thus, different asylum seekers may behave differently in the same situation. Hence, they do not have the same responsibilities due the different social positions. Furthermore, the different methods of interviewing create different social positions, thus, as mentioned in the results of the study, that different types of interviews seem to influence asylum seekers differently. For example, the asylum seekers in face-to-face interviews may face more or less difficulties than those having interviews by communication tools. The social position can influence the asylum seekers social behavior and role towards the actual social position in the interview. The roles of individuals may differ while using two different methods of interviews, as each individual responds differently regarding the same methods and the situation.

In a given situation or in a social position, the asylum seekers as individuals are expected to behave according to their actual role which is ’’asylum seeker role’’, in addition, that due asylum seekers social position and the background problems and other factors effecting asylum seekers psychological status during the interview, it is possible that asylum seekers might have a unstable or unbalance states, where a ‘psychological unbalanced role’’ is created as well besides the ‘’asylum seeker role’’. In different interview methods there are possibilities for the asylum seeker to obtain different roles during the interview, this might lead to what is known as ‘’role conflict’’, where the combination of different roles would be difficult (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

In communication tools interviews, the asylum seekers are expected to be familiar with technology in order to cope with the situation, thus, asylum seekers can have different possible
roles such as ‘‘technology skilled role’’ where asylum seeker is familiar to technology and handling the situation, or ‘‘technology challenged role’’ where asylum seekers is unfamiliar to technology, thus, behave differently in the same social position.

Hence, role conflict can occur in such a situation, where an asylum seeker plays different roles within the same time and within the same social position. Moreover, the method of the interview may influence the role of asylum seekers and their behavior in relation to their actual social position and the overall situation. Whereby, the asylum seekers might also need to play out the ‘‘apprehensive role’’ during the interview, as they might not be psychologically balanced due to many reasons such as fear, nervousness, worries regarding the decision, and other background problems, whereby it may risk or cause miscommunication regarding the actual purpose of the meeting. The asylum seeker interviewed by communication tools may have to play more roles in comparison to face-to-face interviews, where are they ‘‘technology skilled role’’ or ‘‘technology challenged role’’ hence, these role are not possible to play in face-to-face interviews.
6. Discussion:

This chapter presents the interpretation of the asylum seekers views and experiences from different types of interviews.

Most of the previous research earlier in chapter 2 have showed that communication tools can be more efficient as data collecting method in terms of time and cost, where data can be collected globally and in a wider range then the face-to-face method. Moreover, previous research have dropped out the points that may cause significant differences in the comparison, these points are the area of use of the methods, the interviewee’s performance and the interviewee’s pre-knowledge about the situation. In relation to that, the study have covered the dropped out points of previous research, where the result covered the area of using different methods in asylum investigations, and the role of asylum seekers in different methods of interviews.

The results of this study showed that while both interviews methods were described as having their advantages and disadvantages, each one seemed to influence the interviews and the asylum seekers in many ways.

The asylum seekers in this study often preferred the actual and physical presence of the case officer and the interpreter at the interview, especially in cases where they were not familiar to technology and communication tools, as it seemed to be the best way to communicate while they can use body language and facial expression for more explanation of the meanings. However, some asylum seekers might not feel the same way within the same situation, where the actual and physical presence of the case officer can cause much stress and make them even nervous. Moreover, the issues of interpretation seem to influence the interviews performed by using communication tools, in way of the losing some of the meaning and lacking of eye contact, where in face-to-face interviews body language, can cover up that gap of communication.

Moreover, the lacking of pre information to the asylum seeker about the type of the method that will be used for the interview, and the asylum seekers different age, educational and cultural backgrounds are major aspects that can influence the successfulness of the interview. I believe that the asylum seeker preferences can increase the quality level of the interview, if asylum seekers can choose the methods of the interview. When the asylum seeker preference is not an
option, it can be seen as inequality in term of the psychological status of the asylum seekers, as individuals have different ability to adapt to certain situations and of handling fear and stress and so on.

The asylum seekers psychological status can influence the communication and the flow of the interview. The asylum seekers have already an unstable status, due to many factors that make them so vulnerable. Of course, the results showed that contrast of the influences might differ from each individual to another, where coping with the situation can differ, due to their ability of adaptation to a certain behavior, attitude toward new experiences, ages, educational background and many other factors.

In accordance to that, the importance of enhancing comfortability and stability for the asylum seekers psychological status comes in terms of that the permit decision is related to the outcome of the interview, where the asylum seeker should feel comfortable and psychologically balanced to be able to express and explain reasons that led him/her seek asylum, during and through the few hours of interview. Thus, if the asylum seekers feel nervous or afraid, this might lead to miss-communication, where it may affect or influence the asylum decisions.
7. Conclusion:

In summary, regarding to the asylum seekers views and experiences from different types of interviews, in this study no significant differences emerged between the two methods, even though not every applicant can be a good fit for the communication tools interview. These interviews put a heavy burden on the asylum seeker and their impact can be a life changing outcome. Moreover, interviews performed by communication tools can be more efficient as a data collecting method in research and study purposes, where participants in the interviews mostly are volunteers and their preference can be considered. In addition, in face to face interviews, asylum seekers have limited or fewer roles to play out during the interview, where in communication tools may lead to create many roles for the asylum seekers. Ultimately, from a social worker perspective, I believe that in such interviews that concern vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers, the considerations of the interviews should rely on the dignity and worth of the person, more than facilitating the process in term of time, reducing the expenses or the workloads.

7.1 Reflections about the method:

As distinctly the study is influenced by the grounded theory methods, the study gained in depth knowledge about the two different methods of interviewing and the asylum seekers views about the two interview methods. Moreover, the use of grounded theory in terms of guidance to allow the author find out the possible roles of the asylum seeker in the two interview methods in accordance to the results, whereby fulfill the aim of the study.

7.2 Suggestion for further studies:

Suggestion for further studies in relation to this study lay on the uncovered perspectives of the professionals of the Swedish Migration Board, greatly help further researches and answer the follow question: *what are the norms of choosing different interview methods?* Moreover, conducting more interviews may have brought up more influences and difficulties with the results, as the asylum seekers from different countries might have different experiences toward the interviews.
8. References

Books and articles:


9: Appendices:

Appendix1

(Migrationsverket, 2015)
Consent

I have had information about the study and I know that I can terminate my involvement in the interview at any time. I approve that both students have access to the information gained from the interview. I also give permission for this interview to be recorded.

Date
____________________

Signature interviewee  Clarification of signature
____________________  ________________________

Signature responsible interviewer  Clarification of signature
____________________  ________________________
Appendix 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-face Interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Background info.: 

Age: Country of origin: Education level:

Main questions:

- When and where did you have your main interview?
- Did the Migration Board inform you about the interview type?
- Can you explain /describe how the interview was? The office, which were there? How long it was?
- How were you feelings during the interview?
- Were you able to express yourself and emotion at the interview?
- Have you faced any difficulties during the interview? Give examples
- Do you think there will be some changes if you had communication tool interview (video)?
- Do you think the atmosphere of the interview has affected on you? If yes, how? In what way?
- Where you comfortable with the security and confidentiality in the interview?
- From your opinion what do you think about the type of the interview?

- If you had an option to choose, would you choose a video or a face-to-face meeting? And why?
- Where you satisfied from the result of the interview? And why?
- Do you other comments regarding the interview?
Appendix 4

Interview Questions
Communication tools Interviews

Background info.:
Age: Country of origin: Education level:

Main questions:
- When and where did you have your main interview?
- Did the Migration Board inform you about the interview type?
- Can you explain/describe how the interview was? The office, which were there? How long it was?
- How was the video and audio setting? Was it clear?
- How were you feelings during the interview?
- Are you familiar to technology and video devices?
- Were you able to express yourself and emotion at the interview?
- Have you faced any difficulties during the interview? Give examples
- Do you think there will be some changes if you had communication tool interview (face-to-face)?
- What were your feelings about the "Video" Interview? As in way of confidentiality, comfortability, security and transparency...?
- Do you think the atmosphere of the interview has affected on you? If yes, how? In what way?
- Where you comfortable with the security and confidentiality in the interview?
- From your opinion what do think about the type of the interview?
- From your opinion, what is the main difficulty you faced during the session? And what have done to solve this issue?
- If you had an option to choose, would you choose a video or a face-to-face meeting? And why?
- Where you satisfied from the result of the interview? And why?
- Do you other comments regarding the interview?