



LUND UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences

Master Thesis (2 years) in Global Studies

Spring term 2011

Supervisor: Roger Sages

Globalization and closed countries

- The Iranian Diaspora and the Islamic Republic of Iran -

Jessica Bogus

Abstract

The aim of this research is to understand the impact of the global on the local -and vice-versa- on direct “products” of the phenomenon of Globalization; that is on individuals who left their homeland to settle in another country, another continent. Focusing on a specific country, a specific event and a specific Diaspora, I tried to uncover the motivations encouraging Dutch-Iranians to take part –from distance- to the internal struggles and social movement occurring in the Islamic Republic of Iran after the Presidential election of the 12 of June 2009. The phenomenological approach frames the whole research, from the ways I decided to pick this topic, lead the study, conduct the interviews, analyze the data and interpret the results, to the way I simply write – constantly using “I”.

Table of contents :

Preface

Introduction

I- The context

1) Historical background

- a. *The birth of the Islamic Republic of Iran*
- b. *2009: a turning point in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran?*
- c. *The Iranian Diaspora: worldwide and in the Netherlands*

2) Pre-comprehensions: Being Dutch-Iranian in the Netherlands

- a. *The dialogical self and identity*
- b. *The Us and “the Others”*
- c. *Past and Present*

II- The phenomenological approach in Psychology

III- Methodology

1) The participants

2) The interviews

3) Meaning Constitution Analysis: Minerva

IV-Analysis

1) Neda

- a. *Modalities the most represented*
- b. *Entities the most represented (the Participant’s world, the Iranian People and the Non Iranians)*

2) Arash

- a. *Modalities the most represented*
- b. *Entities the most represented (The Participant’s world, the emotional realm and the elections)*

3) Kouros

- a. *Modalities the most represented*
- b. *Entities the most represented (The Participant’s world and the expats)*

V- Conclusion

1) Results

2) Interpretations

Preface

Globalization is shaking the world up, affecting many areas. Thus, trying to understand this complex phenomenon is only possible if scrutinized through different lenses; such as economic, political, educative, cultural, social, psychological etc. ones. I concur, therefore, with the gestalt theory on the idea that “*nothing can be understood in isolated pieces*”. *So do Phenomenologists*. Thereby, I chose to conduct my research in a phenomenological approach, for which “*the world appears as a contextual unity, in which things affect each others.*”, as stated by its founder Edmund Husserl (1967).

The reason why I am presenting the way I perceive Science (that is, tightly linked to Phenomenology) before introducing my thesis’ topic, lies on the fact that *the former merely shapes the latter*. Thus, I strongly believe that *contextualizing* is the key to understanding a behavior/individual/phenomenon; and once we talk about something out of its context, we simply misunderstand. The term *context* encompasses many and diverse factors. In fact, the way one sees the world and behaves within this one is closely linked to *social, political, cultural, familial environments* that have been coloring his path from childhood - tackling those independently from each others would be an error too. Hence, the context is also expressed by this constant bond that lives in each of us, between *past and present* (OLIVIER, 2003). Likewise, the reason I am using “I” merely lies on the fact that “I” am here, always present, indwelled (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) in the research.

The nowadays globalized world is a world of contradictions, paradoxes and contrasts, where a panel of cultures, economical/educational/numerical gaps, political systems, coexist; challenging therefore the idea of globalization itself. Indeed, in the sight of the diversity of this world and its inhabitants, thinking globally seems sometimes wrong to me – and/or merely impossible. Thus, my thesis aims at understanding how this contradictory globalized world has been challenging its citizens’ identities; my problematic is thereby psychological, focused on the identity of individuals in a globalized context.

I chose to tackle the psychological concept of Identity by trying to understand the global-local bondage lying in individuals, while focusing on a specific social phenomenon. Thus, I decided to focus on a local social movement¹ occurring in a specific country (the mass

¹ “A large grouping of people who are organized to bring about, or to block, a change in the sociocultural system.” (Hank, 2009)

protests following the Presidential election in the Islamic Republic of Iran in June 2009) and its repercussion on its global window, i.e., its Diaspora (the Dutch-Iranians). Therefore, my thesis - interconnecting globalization, localization and identity- is to be viewed and approached within an interdisciplinary study; which merely goes hand in hand with phenomenology and the necessity of contextualizing.

« I often happened to recall a citation from Kafka, one of his mysterious quotes that I had read during my years of silence: “Far, far from you, is taking place the global History, the global History of your soul.” This sentence was destined for me, and for each of my students, and for you. We believe that our global history is taking place far from us, at every moment it seems that it is happening without us, and we finally realize that this History is our soul. What talks to me, during the sleepless night, and which I sometimes express during my lectures is exactly that: the global history of our souls. I did not only teach about the Second World War, but also about the lost humankind. [...] Because the extermination of Jewish was not a crime against humanity, it was a crime committed by the humanity –which, from then, could no longer be called humanity. Pretending that the extermination is a crime against humanity is sparing one part of the humanity; that is, to naively let this one a part from the crime. Yet, the whole humankind is involved because, with this crime, the humankind totally loses its character of humanity.»

Jan Karski (Haenel, 2009)

Introduction

What is globalization? Globalization is certainly a blurred and broad concept, one thing about it is certain though: “*more people across larger distances become connected in more and different ways*” (Lechner, Boli, 2008). One main consequence of Globalization is indeed the easier ability for human beings and information to move, both physically –*through migration waves, travel, educational exchange programs etc.* – and virtually – *via internet, telecommunications, Media etc.* Easier but not necessarily easy, though.

“I do believe that globalization represents a great opportunity for the whole human race. [...] But I always say in the next breath that at present the benefits of globalization are far from being equitably shared. There are many, many people in the

world who are not enjoying them, and one reason for that is that they do not live in well-organized states that are capable of managing the process.”

Kofi Annan (2002)

Indeed, globalization is undoubtedly a two-tier process, in terms of economy for instance with a growing gap between poor and rich, according to the OECD's report of 2008². Regarding the “*speed and ubiquity of modern communications*” (Annan, 2002), we can now be aware in a minute of what is happening in the world. Yet, what takes a minute, here, might take an hour, if not more, in some other places of the world. Communication is therefore becoming borderless; nonetheless a numerical fracture does exist. Moreover, it is surely more convenient for one to travel across the Globe today than never before, but does that count for each one of the *Citizens of the world*? We can't deny the emergence of “*a new geography; the one of customs, traditions, rituals and lifestyles*” (Audinet, 2008), though. The global picture, indeed, keeps evolving and boundaries seem to become culturally meaningless; but can we, like Mc Luhan (1962), really talk about a “*global village*”? If so, we cannot deny the abundance of its abandoned areas. As for the anti-globalists discourse regarding the emergence of a “*global culture*” (Lechner and Boli, 2008) leading to a homogenization of the world, such a debate seems dangerous to me as it does only refer to global “*cultural products*” (Friedman, 2000). Yet, in my opinion, culture refers to the way people perceive reality, interpret life, feel specific situations; that is the way individuals adapt to their environment in the vision of Ibn Khâldun (1958). By only focusing on the emergence of global icons and their spread across world, the implicit idea/message given is that we all tend to become the same. But, even though it is nowadays possible for two individuals from two totally different countries to eat the same food, to listen to the same music, and to wear the same clothes, *does it make them identical to each other in the way they behave in their respective lives*? It surely does not, for the sole and mere fact that any culture is deeper than its icons. Another characteristic of globalisation lies on the “*growth of a global consciousness*” (Lechner, Boli, 2008) gathering together members of feminist movements, trade unionists, ecologists, human rights fighters or merely *citizens of the world*. Yet, national, regional, local conflicts are omnipresent around the Globe.

² OECD. (2008). *Growing Unequal? Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries* (Rep. No. 9789264044180). Paris.

Hence, my thesis is entitled *Globalization and closed countries*; a title that merely reflects the nowadays globalized world, that is to say, a world of a contradictions, paradoxes and contrasts –as illustrated above. The Second World War shook the humankind up so organizations, such as the United Nations, were founded (1945) in order to “*maintain international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights.*”³. Wars, genocides, violations of human rights etc., are far from being eradicated though. As for me, I have been told since my childhood, about the *devoir de mémoire* (the duty of remembrance): that is the responsibility to remember the past in order not to reproduce this one, and thereby preventing other *crimes against the humanity*. But, looking at the state of the world nowadays, this barely makes sense to me – and does sound quite hypocritical. “*Already tested in Rwanda, indifference does work in Darfur too*”, here is what one can read on the website of the association *Sauvez le Darfour* (save Darfur)⁴.

Are we reproducing the past? Is the future condemned to be a long past?

We are today aware of the past and, thanks to globalization and modern communications, perfectly aware of the present too. Yet, where does this awareness lead? Aren't we reproducing the past anytime we just open a newspaper? We do, in a way; and it can truly feel powerless to know, to share, to tell, to denounce, to contest, to protest, to fight, (almost) in vain.

“When the Soviets imprisoned me, I jumped from a moving train. When Nazis tortured me, I escaped from a hospital. Any time, in the worst conditions, I managed to run away. But how can we escape from a sofa? While leaving the White House with the Ambassador, this night, I thought that from now on this sofa was going to rule the world. From now on, this violence, a diffuse and civilized violence, a violence so clean that in any circumstances the beautiful name of democracy would make it up, this violence would take the place of the violence of totalitarianism.”

Jan Karski (Haenel, 2009)

However, many are the ones who raise their voices so the faces and fates of many persecuted human beings are no longer neither unknown nor hidden to the rest of the world

³ United Nations. (1945). The United Nations at a Glance. *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/index.shtml/>

⁴ Sauvez Le Darfour. (2008). Sauvez le Darfour. *Sauver Le Darfour*. Retrieved from <http://www.sauverledarfour.eu/>

(e.g. Journalists, NGOs, etc.). This cross-border solidarity and the role of individuals all over the world to shed light on issues that would otherwise remain shadowed, truly interest me. Thus, I decided to try to understand the experiences, feelings, hopes, intents, of human beings who try “*to shake the international consciousness up*” (Haenel, 2009).

My thesis, therefore, takes place in a globalized world where the local still challenges the global, while the latter pretends to manage the former –on paper.

I decided to try to understand what it is to be Iranian abroad, at the time of heavy struggles within the left homeland. I decided to try to unveil the motivations for a Dutch-Iranian to be active towards his mother country after many years living abroad. I decided to try to understand how it feels to see and feel and share and contest, from abroad. I, too, wondered about which impact the Dutch-Iranian Diaspora thinks to have on the internal affairs of the I.R of Iran.

I- The context

My aim is to try to understand the hopes, experiences, feelings and intents of Iranians living in a European country. By doing so, I believe that it can lead us to a better understanding of refugees/immigrants in Europe, as well as to realize how they can help -and to which level- to open those closed countries, and ourselves.

The Iranian Diaspora encompasses many different and diverse singulars with their own life stories, political and religious views, migratory paths, social backgrounds etc; therefore, it would be wrong to talk about the Iranian Diaspora as a homogeneous entity and thus generalizing about this one from few or even hundreds of cases. Indeed, every individual, although supporting a same universal cause, might not have the same intentions directed towards similar acts. Then, trying to understand the way one person views a phenomenon can help to discover some new perspectives about the universal. In that sense what interests me is to tackle individuals as “*universal singulars*”, as defined by Sartre (1981):

"A man is never an individual, it would be more fitting to call him a universal singular. Summed up and for this reason universalized by his epoch, he in turn resumes it by reproducing himself in it as singularity. Universal by the singular universality of human history, singular by the universalizing singularity of his projects, he requires simultaneous examination from both ends."

In sum, the “*Universal only exists in the singular*” (Sages’ lecture, 2008). In the framework of my study, the latter are Dutch-Iranians, that is individuals “*who were born in Iran, or whose mother or father was born in Iran, and who are living in Holland*” (Van Den Bos, 2006). Their universality expressed itself louder during the last presidential election in the I.R of Iran, when the uprising of the Iranian People, within the boundaries of the Republic, was followed by many Iranians abroad, who supported, took part and thereby nourished the social movement beyond borders. The Dutch-Iranian community being particularly active since these events, I decided to focus on the Iranian Diaspora in The Netherlands; country that has been a significant migration target for Iranians (Van Den Bos, 2006). Indeed, the migration wave was essentially motivated by the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and thereby mostly composed of political refugees (Ghorashi, 2003). The participants of my study all moved to the Netherlands after the Revolution, and were for most of them very young at that time. They are nowadays still living in Holland, and active in political, social and/or cultural spheres about Iran.

Thus, contextualizing is merely essential so I chose to conduct my research in a *phenomenological approach*, for which “*the world appears as a contextual unity, in which things affect each others.*”, as stated by its founder Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Indeed, exploring the “*life-world*” (Karlsson, 1993) of the other from his/her own perspective, is in my opinion the most suitable approach for my research; as it does embrace the idea of the “*universal singular*”. My thesis will thereby aim at trying to understand the life-world (Husserl, 1936) of the Dutch-Iranians; that is their hopes, experiences, feelings, perceptions, intents and so on.

Basic knowledge about both the studied phenomenon and population are therefore crucial in order to frame the study and thereby being able to have a better understanding of the whole picture. Thus, first and foremost I am going to present historical events related to the Islamic Republic of Iran, later on I will present the Iranian Diaspora worldwide and in the Netherlands, before raising questions of Identities, and presenting the phenomenological approach as well as the methods used to analyse the collected data.

1) Historical background

a) The birth of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Islamic republic of Iran celebrated its 30th anniversary the 11st of February 2009. 30 years ago, indeed, the Monarchical regime in Iran was overthrown by the People, giving way to a new Theocratic regime.

The arrival of the *Shah* (King) Mohammad Reza Pahlavi on the Throne in 1941 led to the emergence of a phase of “*relative political freedom*”, where the “*civil society blossomed and various political parties and women’s groups came into existence*” (Ghorashi, 2003). This wave of political emancipation lasted a decade (Ghorashi, 2003) and enabled diverse ideologies - *mostly nationalist, Islamist and communist* - to concretize through diverse movements, organizations, parties. The following years, from 1953, tarnished this scent of political freedom. The political repression exerted by the Shah did not succeed in making the growing civil society quiet though; rather this one nourished the flame of revolt carried by the Iranian People for months, before it merely burned the Monarchical regime down. The Shah Mohammad Rezā Pahlavi was therefore no longer the Head of the country, a Religious figure, Ayatollah Khomeini was now taking his place. Many political activists, who fought against the Shah and yearned for other ideologies/ideas/views than the ones taking place in the new Islamic government, were forced to exile; nourishing thereby the post-revolutionary migration wave, mostly composed of political refugees (Bozormeghr & Sabagh, 1991).

Thus, on the 11st of February 2009, the government could barely congratulate itself for anything else but its 30 years survival. Indeed, taking a look at the current situation of Iran does not enable us to draw a bright portray of 30 years of the Islamic Republic reign, neither politically, economically, nor socially:

The inflation is about 30%; unemployment hits more than 20% of the population that is able to work, as well as 50% of the youths who arrive in the job market. Regarding the economy, this one has never been that dependent on oil incomes and the food dependence keeps increasing; Iran being since 2008 the biggest global importer of wheat. The phenomenon of brain-drain is remarkable too with about 150 000 departures per year.⁵

5 Institut Français des Relations Internationales. (2009). *Le programme spatial iranien* (Rep.). Retrieved from http://www.ifri.org/?page=detail-contribution&id=5295&id_provenance=97

As for human rights, Amnesty International drew an explicit and striking report of 2009⁶ too:

“The authorities maintained tight restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly. They cracked down on civil society activists, including women’s rights and other human rights defenders and minority rights advocates. Activists were arrested, detained and prosecuted, often in unfair trials, banned from travelling abroad, and had their meetings disrupted. Torture and other ill-treatment of detainees were common and committed with impunity. Sentences of flogging and amputation were reported. At least 346 people were known to have been executed, but the actual number was probably higher. Two men were executed by stoning. Those executed included eight juvenile offenders.”

Thus, 31 years ago Iranians were celebrating their liberation from the monarchical yoke; the Islamic Revolution of 1979 meant to guide the country towards Freedom and Democracy. Yet, 31 years later, those hopes and prospects for democracy are still present within the Iranian People. In other words, the Islamic Republic of Iran seems to have failed in satisfying what people were fighting for while protesting against the Shah; as well as what they thought to gain while welcoming Ayatollah Khomeini. Not only is the thirst of the Government for authoritarianism still existing in Iran, the one of the People for Democracy does remain too. The 9th Presidential election under the Islamic Regime, on the 12nd of June 2009, perfectly illustrated it. The election took the shape of a *counter-anniversary-celebration* indeed, revealing the discontentment of the People against its Government.

b) 2009: a turning point in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran?

The 12nd of June 2009 took place the 9th Presidential election within the Islamic Republic of Iran. With 63% of the votes Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the outgoing President, was re-elected. Judged as fraudulent by many Iranians the election sparked a chain of mass protests inside the Islamic Republic. Firstly asking for a re-election, “Where is my vote?”⁷ as well as the green color⁸ became the flagship symbols used by protesters during the days following the election. The uprising of the Iranian People was in the headlines of international media for days and

⁶ Amnesty International. (2009). *Human Rights in Islamic Republic of Iran* (Rep.). Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/iran/report-2009>

⁷ Alluding to the elections being rigged

⁸ Color picked up by Mousavi (the reformist candidate)’s supporters during the presidential campaign

thereby visible, revealed, to the whole world; but more than the claimed fraud itself, the repression exerted by the government from the very first day following the election, on both protestors and media (internal as well as external/international) was striking the international community. Despite the efforts of the Iranian government for making the voices of protestors quiet and the work of international journalists impossible inside the I.R of Iran⁹, the events shaking the Islamic Republic up were no longer hidden to the world. Protests and gatherings of supports, mostly organized by the Iranian Diaspora, were flourishing across the world too. Social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter for instance, appeared to be a crucial key for Iranians to communicate about what is going on within the country. Indeed, Iran is told to have the third largest blogosphere after the United States and China, with 2.5 million blogs, and 25 millions of Iranians have access to Internet (Habibinia, 2008). Thus, if the freedom of speech is sullied in Iran it does not prevent people to think and find ways to express themselves. The main role of the Iranian Diaspora was therefore to relay the information coming out from the country to the world. This war of communication established between the Government and its People was thereby only possible thanks to the communication between Iranians inside and outside the Republic.

Over the course of the following months, in reaction to the protestors being killed, arrested, tortured, and raped or the ones who “merely” disappeared, streets emptied out little by little inside the country. Yet, the fight did not stop; and what was, at first, a *rallying cry* around a claim for re-election turned to a *rebel yell* for broader concerns such as Democracy, respect of Human Rights and Freedom in Iran.

The tension between the Islamic government and its People (or at least, once again, significant part of this one) were palpable inside the country for several years already¹⁰. But, in Zola's (1898) words, “*quand on enferme la vérité sous terre, elle s'y amasse, elle y prend une force telle d'explosion, que le jour où elle éclate, elle fait tout sauter avec elle.*”.

“When truth is buried under the ground, it piles up, it gets as strong as an explosion, and when comes the day it explodes, it makes everything burst with it.”

The divorce between the Iranian Government and the Iranian People exploded this 12nd of June 2009. This part aimed at giving a light overview of significant historical facts of the I.R

⁹ No visa extension, foreign journalists ejected

¹⁰ The student protests of 1999

of Iran as well as a sum-up of the events that have been going lately in Iran; as contextualizing is simply essential before starting the actual research.

c) *The Iranian Diaspora: worldwide and in the Netherlands*

First and foremost I would like to define what “Diaspora” is. Indeed, despite the attempts of many scientists to give a clear and rigid definition of “Diaspora”, the global situation keeps evolving and so does the definition of the term “Diaspora”.

The latter -from the Greek “*scattering of the seeds*”- primarily referred to the dispersal of the Jews at the time of the forced exile to Babylonia¹¹ in the 6th Century BC. Therefore, *Diaspora* was at the very beginning referring to the Jewish communities living outside Palestine; *dispersed* across the world. In analogy, the term is now used to talk about the dispersion of other Peoples, ethnic groups, new exile communities, across the world. Hence, the Iranian Diaspora is comprised of Iranian émigrés and their families currently living outside of Iran.

The Persian history has always been colored by many different waves of emigration (Bozorgmehr and Sabagh, 1991).

The Arab conquest in 936 led to the escape of many Zoroastrians (Zoroastrianism being the former religion of Iran) to Western India. The mid-19th century was marked by the migration of Bahais (Baha'ism believers) to the Ottoman Empire, being persecuted in Iran. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, intellectuals were forced to exile because of their activism nourished by a thirst for reforms, during the pre-Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911. *But the pre and post Islamic revolutionary periods, undoubtedly, radicalized the migratory flows from Iran.*

In their study, Bozorgmehr and Sabagh (1991) made a clear distinction between the waves of immigration preceding and following the overthrow of the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The former was mostly composed of students and was a direct consequence of the industrialization of the country in the 1960s, requesting thereby many educated people; whereas the latter essentially referred to exiles or political refugees.

11 "Diaspora." *The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition*. 2008. Retrieved March 14, 2010 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-Diaspora.html>

The pre-revolutionary period merely explains therefore why the Iranian Diaspora is globally characterized by a high level of education (Spellman, 2004). Indeed, the Iranians who immigrated at that time often decided to settle abroad after the Revolution (Bozorgmehr and Sabagh 1991).

The trend of educated people migration is not only an old memory though. Indeed, Iran is nowadays the first country in the world which sends its “elite” abroad, according to the global statistics of international organizations; and those students rarely come back. The International Monetary Fund states that Iran has the highest rate of braindrain in the world¹². Therefore, this wave of immigration of educated people is a delicate issue for the current government – for several reasons such as the leak of educated and therefore fruitful students for the Nation, as well as the influence/impact/affect these students may have towards the Iranian regime from abroad.

“The situation is particularly serious among the best-educated young people. As many as four out of five (80 percent) who recently won awards in scientific fields have chosen to emigrate.”

Golnaz Esfandiari, 2004

The migration wave after the Revolution was more considerable, and although it is difficult to get reliable and precise statistics about the proportion of Iranians living abroad nowadays, the New Fars Agency estimates this one between three and six millions¹³.

As for the Iranian Diaspora in the Netherlands, as expressed already earlier, is defined as *Dutch-Iranian* anyone who was born in Iran, or whose mother or father was born in Iran, and who is living in Holland (Van Den Bos, 2006). The latest statistics about the Iranian Diaspora in Holland dates from January 2005 and states a population of 28 522 Dutch-Iranians (CBS StatLine database).

Unlike other Iranian communities, such as the one in Los Angeles for instance, there was not a strong Iranian community in the Netherlands (Ghorashi, 2003); the last presidential elections happened to shake the status quo up though. Gatherings of support, solidarity and protestation started to regulate the Dutch-Iranians’ life after the announcement of the re-

¹² Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. (2004, April 12). *Iran Report* (Rep. No. 14). Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1342682.html>

¹³ <http://www.topiranian.com/news/archives/002454.html>

election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Through some blogs, geared by Dutch-Iranians, the Iranian community of the Netherlands could communicate and get informed about the latest news coming from the I.R of Iran and, in reaction of those, how to support (or show support) from abroad.¹⁴ Indeed, the Internet is nowadays a crucial tool for the Iranian Diaspora (Spellman, 2004), and its role in connecting the reality of the Iranian People in the I.R of Iran with the Iranian Diaspora in the Netherlands has been clearly crucial, as well as for connecting the Dutch-Iranians together.

As for my study I am interested in Dutch-Iranians who are principally active in cultural, artistic, political spheres about Iran; such as human-rights fighters, journalists, writers, artists... The participants of my study all moved to the Netherlands after the Revolution, and were for most of them very young at that time, they are nowadays still living in Holland.

The situation being more than critical at the moment in Iran, it goes without saying that I will not mention neither the names, nor the activities of the persons I have interviewed; also, I do want to mention that I am extremely thankful to them for having allowed me to meet and/or discuss with them; thing that is not easy at a time of heavy repression and thereby high suspicion - both inside and outside Iran.

2) Pre-comprehensions about: Being Dutch-Iranian in the Netherlands

a) The dialogical self and Identity

When trying to understand the underlying reasons stimulating the Dutch-Iranians' activism for struggles happening in the left homeland, some interrogations inevitably crossed my mind: interrogations connected to the psychological concept of Identity. It is, indeed, almost impossible not to raise this question while tackling human beings with migratory paths, who have thereby encountered different cultural and social environments during their lifetime. My research, therefore, led me to wonder about the impact globalization has/might have on individual's identity. Yet, I do believe that human beings are too complex and rich to be confined within a strictly sole *identity*. Indeed, my view concurs with Foucault who

¹⁴ For safety reasons I do not mention precise websites' names

described Identity as a shifting, temporary construction (Gauntlett, 2002); therefore, I want to tackle the psychological concept of Identity (in singular) as the opposite of something fixed, rigid. In other words, I see Identity as something *moving* over time, encounters, journeys, readings, reflections etc.: as something moving over physical, spiritual, mental changes. I therefore share the view of Giddens (1991), who defined Identity as an evolving process that combines representations of the past while being active in the present and oriented toward the future. Yet, among the significant amount of theories about Identity, the closest one to the ways I have been conducting my research is founded on phenomenological principals: that is, the Dialogical Self Theory, advocating the psychological theory of a “*multi-voiced self*” (Hermans, Hermans-Konopka, 2010):

“In a world society that is increasingly interconnected and intensely involved in historical changes, dialogical relationships are required not only between individuals, groups and cultures, but also within the self of the one and the same individual.”

(Hermans, Hermans-Konopka, 2010)

Thus, such a dialogue is possible thanks to the multiplicity of voices –also called selves- existing in each of us; voices which are more or less silent depending on the situations we are in, the people we are with, the challenges we are taking, the struggles we are confronting to, and so on. In Hermans and Hermans-Konopka’s words (2010), “*People are always in a process of positioning and repositioning, not only in relation to other people but also in relation to themselves*”. Therefore, the favoritism from one toward a specific ethnic and/or cultural identity - rather than toward a true cosmopolitan one - might sound paradoxical in a globalized context and even seems to totally deviate from the idea of globalization itself. Yet, this tendency might seem absolutely coherent when observed through the Dialogical Self Theory’s lenses, as it enables us to look at individuals as “universal singular” (Sartre, 1981); that is singular individual embodied within as well as acting upon the universal.

Thus, I concur with the authors’ (2010) view that in order to understand the global-local bond lying in “Universal Singular” , a dialogical conception of the self and identity is required as “*different cultures come together and meet each other within the self of one and the same individual.*” (Hermans, Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Thus, that is why it has seemed

crucial to me to have an interdisciplinary approach along my research, for which contexts of each kind are merely part of ourselves and our selves.

b) *The Us and “the Others”*

Thus, the *paradoxical* image being reflected by the activism of Dutch-Iranians – *being direct “products” of globalization due to their multicultural profiles*- regarding a single country, that is their Homeland, led me to question about these individuals' identities. This world is, indeed, full of contradictions and the title of my thesis itself expresses one of them; that is the image of a world where everyone is more and more interconnected but which still does not prevent from letting some countries and Peoples behind, or I should say *outside*. Another contradiction is linked to the interest towards specific national issues at a time when global concerns as well as organizations, forums, policies, institutions, flourish across the world. *Where does the boundary between the international and the national start and end up? Is there any boundary at all? Is the national embodied within the international or does the former prevail over the latter? etc.*

“I am not an Athenian or a Greek, I am a citizen of the world” said Socrates. Montesquieu (1844) later stated *“I am an Human being before being French, because I am necessarily Human and I am only French by chance.”*

These two quotes illustrate the international character that a truly globalized world should nourish; yet, nowadays nationalist ideas are globally spreading. Indeed, at a time when societies are becoming more and more multicultural, social phenomena such as racism and *clannishness* (in French, *“communautarisme”*) are getting more and more frequent. Fredrickson (2002) even talked about the emergence of a “new racism”, that is:

“What has been called « the new racism » in the United States, Great Britain, and France is a way of thinking about difference that reifies and essentializes culture rather than genetic endowment, or in other words makes culture do the work of race.”

Therefore, multicultural countries just like the Netherlands, are nowadays characterized by a tendency of new racism; which of course is not explicitly expressed as such but is rather implicitly manifesting itself through diverse, common and trivialized ideas, acts, statements. Indeed, in the 1990s a new debate rose in Holland with Fritz Bolktestein, tightly linked to the question of national identity, (implicitly?) questioning about the Dutch tradition and history in

comparison with Muslim traditionalism (Hondius, 2004)¹⁵. Hand in hand with the upsurge of a new racism rises the phenomenon of *communautarisme* (clannishness), that is the tendency for immigrants, or citizens with different cultural backgrounds, to gather and stick together, forming cultural/religious communities/clans. These two phenomena result in the erection of barriers among the citizens of any multicultural societies, leading to the dichotomy of “us and ‘the others’” (Ghorashi, 2003).

Halleh Ghorashi (2003), a Dutch-Iranian woman who left her homeland for the Netherlands in 1988, at the age of 26, is nowadays a University professor in Amsterdam and has been publishing many articles in which the question of Dutch-Iranian women's identities was raised. In her study, based on “*the narratives of Iranian women in Exile*” regarding their identities, Ghorashi develops the *process of Othering*, which is the “*ways that images of ‘the other’ are constructed and acted upon*”:

“The first contacts of Iranian women with Dutch people were generally positive. [...] A practical sign of women's eagerness for a new start is that most of them learned Dutch in less than a year and went on to pursue studies in a variety of fields. This positive feeling toward Dutch society was eventually replaced with frustration. Despite their attempts to become part of the society, the women started to feel a kind of uprootedness. The disappointment began when they wanted to be accepted and treated as equals but, instead, continued to get treated as strangers. This experience of being excluded, of being made ‘the other’ was in many ways similar to those of other migrant women in the Netherlands (Essed 1995, Lutz and Moors 1989 and Lutz 1991).”

Her research reveals that both the temporary image of migration in the Netherlands - immigrants being seen as “guests workers” (Entzinger, 1998)- as well as the thick Dutch national identity - “*based on color, ‘roots’, and certain codes of behavior that exclude difference*” (Ghorashi, 2003)- fuel the process of *othering*.

15 Hondius, D. (2003). 'Become like us': the Dutch and racism. *Open Democracy*. Retrieved from http://www.opendemocracy.net/people-migrationeurope/article_1616.jsp

This leads to the mental construction of subgroups within the Dutch society, invoking the idea that not every Dutch citizens can be considered as such; the cultural background seems therefore to prevail over the citizenship itself.

Thus, this phenomenon of “us and ‘the others’” can lead to a situation of mutual exclusion; “the others” (here the Dutch-Iranian population), not feeling entirely included and accepted within the Dutch society, end up seeing the Dutch as “the others” too (Ghorashi, 2003). Tightly linked to the social identity theory developed in the work of Henri Tajfel (1982), the *process of othering* occurring in The Netherlands and described by Halleh Ghorashi, reflects the ingroup/outgroup dichotomy based on social identification and comparison. In the case of the Netherlands and Iranian women in Exile, Ghorashi's study is a perfect illustration of this specific social phenomenon (described above):

“Once Iranians become part of this process of othering, they contribute by seeing the Dutch as the others. They start to develop stereotypical ideas about the Dutch as being cold, distanced, and stingy. They also start to see the Netherlands as an undesirable country. The space these women enjoyed in order to improve themselves becomes marginalized once they start to stress negative images such as bad weather or the coldness of the Dutch. The more Iranians experience being othered, the more this stereotyping of the Dutch increases.”

Thus, individuals of both ingroup and outgroup are mutual actors in the process of othering, and thereby in the emergence of phenomena such as new racism *and* communautarisme; which appear to be interdependent phenomena. In other words, how “the others” see us might often lead us to conform to the representation both created and reflected by them to ourselves. The Sartrean philosophy advocates this same exact idea, *“L'important n'est pas ce qu'on fait de nous, mais ce que nous faisons nous-mêmes de ce qu'on a fait de nous.”* ; By saying so Sartre stated that we judge ourselves through the judgments others have made about ourselves and shared with ourselves too. This reveals the importance of a transcultural¹⁶ perception when trying to understand individuals, that is a perception which allows us to look at human beings as influenced by many cultures, environments, trends of thoughts and so on.

¹⁶ transcultural. (n.d.). In *Dictionary Definitions*. Retrieved May 22nd, 2011, from <http://www.yourdictionary.com/transcultural>

The study of Ghorashi (2003) brought another very clear illustration of what has been stated above. Indeed, the interviewed women of her study all end up to look for their roots in Iran after living in Holland for a while, which diverges from their “*transnational approach toward the homeland that they had before they entered the Netherlands*” (Ghorashi, 2003).

c) *Past and Present*

Then, the weight of the Past too plays a crucial role in one’s identities. The Past invokes specific contexts/environments that might - or not - reflect the Present; this is particularly true while referring to individuals who have lived in two different countries; just as the participants of my study. Therefore, the past path of each individual has to be taken into account while exploring the current life-world; as it merely shapes the identity.

“How the personal and public past can be drawn on in the formation of identity (whether personal or of the group) is clearly related to the issue of memory. Autobiographical and social memory take on considerable significance once we acknowledge their role in constituting persons and social collectivities.”

(Thomas, 1996)

As for my study, taking an interest in the Dutch-Iranians' identities, and the way those have shifted through the individuals' lived experiences, seems therefore important in order to understand why they are nowadays attached, from abroad, to both *cultural* and *political* issues that are related to their *archaeological memory*. The latter refers to the past, and even trans-generational, memories kept alive in one’s mind/life, that is to this “*heterogeneous time of the fusion between the present and the past*” (Olivier, 2003).

Whereas raising the question of identities might help in trying to understand the latter, *it might not to as well*. Nothing is told for certain, this part merely aimed at highlighting a probable explanation (a *pre-comprehension*, in the phenomenological language) but realities

are multiple and so are *universal singulars* (= individuals); moreover, the aim of phenomenology is not to confirm or refute an hypothesis but more to uncover, discover some.

Thus, in the framework of my study, I will not directly question the participants about their Identities; as any pre-comprehension has to be put asides when tackling a phenomenon. Moreover, the main point of Phenomenology is to *freely let the participant to express what he wants to in the way he wants to*; therefore, the issue of identity might be expressed by some participants, and avoided/unexpressed by some others. Yet, this part aimed at exposing some of my pre-comprehensions about Identities, as well as the necessity to study this psychological problem at the core of an interdisciplinary frame, where culture, history, education, economic and social lives are all mirrored in the “multi-voiced identity” (Hermans, Hermans-Konopka, 2010) of an Universal Singular. Those pre-comprehensions differ from the “hypothesis” carried out by the positivist approach, for instance, that are strictly defined at the beginning of any research and fixed until the end. That is, therefore, the peculiarity of the phenomenological approach, which goal is to free the real rather than study a “real” already predefined like in positivism. Thus, I am going to describe mire in depth the phenomenological approach in the following section.

II) The phenomenological approach in Psychology

First of all, one has to know that the phenomenological approach goes hand in hand with qualitative researches and therefore aims at *understanding* rather than explaining, *discovering/uncovering* rather than proving. In that sense, it totally challenges the whole idea of natural science (and thereby positivist approach) that is to establish universal laws; which makes Phenomenology a radical alternative to mainstream Psychology (Karlsson, 1993). Moreover, the phenomenological approach breaks many habits in the way to tackle social/psychological phenomena as well as individuals. The present part aims at highlighting the main postulates of Phenomenology.

Husserl (1859-1938) is the founder of the Phenomenological trend of thought; he, indeed, “*developed a philosophic system rooted in subjective openness*” that was at first highly criticized and laughed at (Moustakas, 1994) but which nowadays found its place among the core of Human Sciences. The Individual is thereby at the heart of the

phenomenological approach. Thus, the main role of Phenomenology is to *interpret* the world as it appears to human beings; which makes Phenomenology a science of interpretation. What is to interpret is nothing else but the “*experiencing person*” (Moustakas, 1994), that is, the individual in the way he interacts with his world, in the way he experiences the world. Phenomenologists, indeed, do think that not only do experiences tell us are our inner states “*but in knowing oneself one also comes to know about the external world and other people*” (Dithley, 1976).

- “*Human-as-instrument*” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and “*life-world*” (Karlsson, 1993)

The goal of Phenomenologists is to understand the meaning individuals give to their world, as one of the phenomenological approach's postulates is that *Reality is multiple and constructed* (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). In that sense, the object of study of Phenomenology is the Human - from where comes the expression “*human-as-instrument*”- in interaction with his world/with his way of experiencing the world, the “*life-world*”. The latter concurs with the Sartrian philosophy and the idea of *Universal Singular* as explained and defined earlier.

I do think that individuals are the source of any social changes, History shown it more than once; the nowadays world (tends to) underestimate the weight and power of human beings as such though. Many, indeed, are the ones who think that we only are the pawns of this world and fighting for changing it is merely a lost cause. I do reject this idea and like to think that “*it does not have to be so, it is possible anytime, anywhere; forces of the creative minds are unstoppable*” (Gogol Bordello, 2005¹⁷). Hence, that is why I feel close to Phenomenology as it approaches Human beings as active and singular individuals both *affecting* the Universal while *being rooted* in this one. In Mohamed Lahlou's words (lecture, 2008):

“Which makes human beings special is that they are acting in order to change the world, the culture. Human beings are not passive.”

- *Intentionality*; “*a return to the things themselves*”, Husserl

One singularity of Phenomenology lies on the concept of *intentionality*. That is to say, Phenomenologists argue that a) everything one does is directed towards something b) one is always conscious/aware of something; therefore, both our thoughts and acts have meanings.

¹⁷ Oh No! [Recorded by Gogol Bordello]. (2005). On *Gypsy Punk Under World Strike* [CD].

Husserl developed a concept in order to reflect about our intentionality (consciousness for the phenomenological approach); through this process, called *reduction*, one can trace out the structure/essence of a phenomenon as it appears for an Universal singular.

“Under the reduction, reflection can be geared towards either the object pole or the subject pole. These “poles” make up the most basic structure of consciousness, discovered with the aid of the phenomenological reduction. In Husserl's language, the subject pole is called noesis and the object pole noema. Noesis is, metaphorically speaking, the streaming of consciousness, and noema is the object as intended, as meant.”

Karlsson, 1993

Therefore, the main idea of phenomenology is that neither an object/phenomenon only exists in our mind/consciousness, nor does it only exist independently of this one: it is the interaction between both (*noesis* and *noema*) that enables us to disclose the patterns of meanings (Sages, 2008). That is, in order to understand the way one acts in the world, we firstly have to understand the meanings he gives to the world; which is reachable through reduction. The latter is possible via a focus/reflection on experiences, and on the way people express their experiences as they appear to them. Thus, we can say that according to phenomenologists, the reality is experimentally constructed and narratively expressed.

So when applying phenomenological philosophy to psychology, the emphasis is put on individuals' perceptions of the world in which they live as well as what this means to them: that is a focus on people's lived experiences (Langdrige, 2007).

- *The relation between the knower and the known*

Another postulate of the phenomenological approach is the interdependent relationship between the researcher and the subject (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994); that is between the *knower* and the *known*. According to Von Eckartsberg (1986), researchers and subjects are even seen as co-researchers. In that sense, the researcher must feel truly interested in the studied phenomenon as he is not merely looking at it from outside but lives within (= “*indwelling*” in Maykut and Morehouse's (1994) term).

This aspect of phenomenology really aroused my interest too as it totally appeared to me as being the sole and true path Psychology should follow when tackling social/psychological phenomena. Indeed, I do think that any research should result from an intense interest from both the researcher and the participants of the study. That way, a relation based on mutual confidence and respect is easier to build up when no one imposes himself as “the only one who knows” for instance. Rather, the phenomenological approach aims at bringing new understandings to both the knower and the known, which makes the relation enriching for both the researcher and the subject. Furthermore, due to the pre-comprehensions of the researcher (which will be developed later), it is theoretically impossible to separate this one from the studied phenomenon and/or individuals.

Moreover, this mutual relationship within the framework of the research is reinforced with the concept of “*human plurality*” developed by Arendt. The latter expresses the idea that, being all singular individuals, a) by understanding our equality with others we are able to access to their world, to their experiences, and b) our awareness of our differences cannot lead us to assume that our understanding of a phenomenon is the same as others'.

- “*The world appears as a contextual unity, in which things affect each others.*”, Husserl.

As already briefly expressed earlier already, Phenomenologists perceive individuals as being rooted in contexts. The notion of *context* is indeed crucial for the phenomenological approach (Lindén, 2003).

As for objectivity, for instance: for a researcher to be able to tell whether something is objective, the way that led him to the objectivity of a phenomenon has to be mentioned. That is, it is crucial to take the context into account when one wants to affirm he detains an objective view/representation/statement etc of a phenomenon.

In sum, one *always* has to make clear *from where* he is looking at a phenomenon/object. Therefore, in order to “strengthen” the objectivity of a statement towards a phenomenon it is important to try to look at this one through different lenses, perspectives; when impossible, an attempt to explain a phenomenon has to clearly refer to both a specific time and a specific space. Phenomenology, indeed, rejects the idea of generalization as approached in natural sciences.

Also, whereas some researchers try to avoid cultural, traditional, social, and political (etc.) backgrounds, Phenomenologists do not see those as barriers to understanding but rather as necessary tools for it (Sages, lecture 2008). In Langdridge's (2007) words, “*we never speak from nowhere*”; therefore our choices are, in my opinion, never neutral, innocent and/or insignificant. In that sense I do think that the phenomenological approach is truly humanistic, due to the fact that it does not place the researcher as someone neutral a part -or even beyond- the study but instead as a singular human being *indwelling* in the study with his own historical, cultural, social background.

- *The concept of pre-comprehensions*

Phenomenologists support the fact that everyone has *pre-comprehensions* about the Life and its components. Yet, one has to open himself to the world as much as possible and thereby leave his prejudices, pre-comprehensions, representations, besides while tackling a phenomenon. Therefore, that explains why a) there is not a rigid theoretical framework within the latter but why b) we do mention some theories/ideas/opinions/views though, as they merely reflect the pre-comprehensions of the researcher; guiding him in his study.

Thus, the phenomenological approach allows any changes during the research process. Indeed, the way of conducting the research is tightly linked to the phenomenological trend of thought which relies on “openness”. Openness to the others. Openness to the novelty. Openness to the differences. Openness to the way of tackling Sciences. *Simply openness*. That way, a clear theoretical framework is not needed. The main goal of phenomenology is, indeed, to uncover/discover/explore new horizons in order to come up with interpretations; and not to confirm or not previously established hypothesis, theories.

In sum, the phenomenological trend of thought refers to Husserl's will to “*return to the things themselves*”; that is to return to the analysis of what appears to the consciousness as well as the way it appears to consciousness. Phenomenological psychology, therefore, aims at describing/interpreting the psychological experiences (Langdridge, 2007), while trying to reach the mental structures (“essences”) of what a phenomenon is. These essences are possible to reach through the language, lying on the idea that reality is narratively constructed. This concurs with Heidegger's (1889-1976) idea that the truth is in the *da-sein* (“human being”) himself and the task of phenomenology is *to think this truth* while making this one

reach the language. In Husserl's (1953) words, « *c'est l'expérience, muette encore, qu'il s'agit d'amener à l'expression pure de son propre sens.* ».

III) Methodology

Embodied in the phenomenological school of thought, my study aims at *understanding* the essences (= structures) of thinking, those being reflected through the language. Thus, as mentioned earlier, one can say that according to phenomenology, *reality is narratively constructed*. Hence, I opted for the research method which is the most suitable regarding my way of approaching Science, i.e. **interviews**. While trying to understand the way one behaves, one has to, primarily, understand the way one *gives meaning* to both his internal and external worlds; that is, the *terms* he uses, the *thoughts* he has, the *environment* he lives in, the *relations* he builds, the *social phenomena* he encounters and so on. Individuals have, indeed, always pre-conceived ideas about something – “pre-comprehensions” -, while being constantly aware of something – “intentionality”- (Moustakas, 1994). Thus, the role of phenomenology is to analyze the personal narratives of the participants searching for the meanings they give to these ones; the researcher must therefore put his own pre-comprehensions besides (Moustakas, 1994).

A Meaning Constitution Analysis of the interviews will therefore be conducted in order to a) unveil the expressed ideas and intentions as well as b) analyze the ways they are expressed. Such a double analysis enables the researcher to reach an understanding of the individual's life-world, the software Minerva will enable me to analyse the written data.

1) **The participants**

Before starting my thesis I wanted to study the international Iranian Diaspora and its relation with Iran, but once I got more familiar with the former -through readings, researches and so- I realized how wrong it would be to talk about the Iranian Diaspora as a homogeneous entity. A panel of factors, indeed, –*such as social class, life while still in Iran, motivations driving the emigration path, age at the time of leaving Iran, status of the immigrant in the new country, the new country itself etc etc.*- makes the life stories of the individuals (encompassed within the term of Iranian Diaspora) truly disparate. Therefore, I decided to narrow down my population to the Iranian Diaspora in a specific country: the Netherlands.

Having previously cooperated with a Dutch-Persian website regarding an article that I wrote in June 2009, I already had some contacts with someone who matches the profile of the

needed participant for my research. Moreover, being interested in the post-electoral situation in Iran I was already aware of the Dutch-Iranian community activism, since the 12nd of June (and even before, during the presidential campaign). That is why I chose to focus on the Iranian Diaspora in Holland.

I primarily contacted this person with whom I already co-operated in the past, and his help turned out to be more than precious in connecting me with some other Dutch-Iranians; all more or less famous, more or less visibly active, more or less old, etc. yet all sharing thoughts and concerns –of all kinds- toward their homeland, that is Iran.

The phenomenological approach recommends to *maximise the differences* while choosing the participants of a study (Sages, 2003); which means selecting participants who satisfy, as much as possible, the differences among individuals. However, due to the current situation in Iran and the repression exerted on activists of any kinds, within and outside Iran, since the last elections, gathering testimonies from Dutch-Iranians was not an easy task in the first place. Nonetheless, thanks to my initial contact and his reputation, I benefitted from a certain “legitimacy”; which proved to be a significant aid to find individuals willing to participate in my thesis. Indeed, I did contact Iranians from Canada and France too but never got any answer, which is more likely due to the current atmosphere and situation in Iran, as well as my status of Student.

In a first time, I wrote to each one of the contacts I got in order to introduce myself, express my wish to write my thesis about Iran and the Iranian Diaspora, and thereby my need for gathering testimonies from Dutch-Iranians. I did so about three months before actually starting to write my thesis, just so I could have an idea about whether it would be possible to find individuals ready to participate in my research. I quickly received positive answers and it motivated me to stick with a topic related to Iran, being reassured to be able to meet and discuss with Dutch-Iranians in spite of the peculiarity of the ongoing situation shaking the I.R of Iran up. Yet, at the time of beginning my thesis, some contacts no longer answered, others backed away, and I finally was able to count on four candidates. I did not want to give up with my topic though. Firstly, the high interest I had in this one did not decrease due to the several difficulties I could encounter, and secondly the latter were significant for my thesis too, as expressed by Kohn (1993) “*one can learn a great deal about social and psychological phenomena by examining the problems one encounters in trying to study them*”. For these reasons, I decided to pursue my thesis with the contribution of these four candidates. Thus,

after several exchanges of e-mails, I sent my project description and we agreed about meeting, either face to face or through internet (via Skype), in order to conduct interviews.

2) The interviews

Free interviews were therefore performed in order to collect the necessary data. All of them started in the same way; that is, with an open question encouraging the participant to introduce and talk about himself – such as, “please tell me about yourself”; then followed a discussion between me and the participant. The latter was not trapped within defined and rigid questions; rather he was encouraged to pursue the talk thanks to some interrogative comments bouncing over the narrative story, aiming at dynamising the discussion. Indeed, the researcher is present to encourage the participant to freely talk about his own lived experiences with his own words and expressions. This concurs with the idea of a co-operation between the researcher and the subject (Eckartsberg, 1986), as the researcher is merely here to both *receive from* and *share with* the participant - his lived experiences (old and/or ongoing ones).

Thus, the necessary data forming part of my study are resulting from daily life experiences; and once again, those were liberally communicated by the participants. Therefore, the discussions really diverge from one participant to another, from the length to the topics mentioned, emotions involved etc. Phenomenology, perceived as the *science of interpretation*, aims at interpreting the gathered data (here the narratives of the participants), so the researcher can reach the meanings constituted by the different individuals. This is only possible through a Meaning Constitution Analysis.

3) Meaning Constitution Analysis: Minerva

The reason for using the meaning constitution analysis (MCA) lies on the need for the researcher to reach a “pure vision as free as possible from any preconceptions” (Sages, Jakobsdottir), that is, in Husserl’s words the Epoché (1925). The Minerva software enables us to go beyond what is explicitly asked/questioned by the researcher as well as expressed by the participant. It does not only provide us answers but gives us keys to interpret the hopes and feelings of the candidates, to understand their world.

In order to be analysed the narrative stories have to be transcribed into text documents (.doc). Then, thanks to the software Minerva, adequate tools are provided to inspect the data. The analysis process goes through different steps: 1) the texts are divided into meaning codes, that is to say the smallest segments of texts expressing a concept, thought, feeling, experience

or intent (Sages, 2003), 2) those are assigned with different types of values, so-called modalities/entities/predicates, 3) by combining them the researcher can, later on, get the necessary elements to interpret the texts.

Due to time restriction mostly, as well as the considerable length of the interviews (varying from 2 to 11 pages), I decided to extract specific parts of each interview for the MCA. Although the interviews were all relatively different in their contents, similar questions were asked to each of the participants. Thus, I selected three questions and combined the answers of the participant for each of them, so I could get dense paragraph ready to be analyzed with the software Minerva.

The questions I selected, although different in the way they were formed from one interview to another, were all similar in their *intentions*, and related to the participant's 1) activism, 2) hopes (if any), 3) ideas about how to help the country from outside (if possible).

Once the selection was made, I started the analyses following the different and specific steps characterizing the MCA. Also, the interviews are analyzed independently of each others. The first interview will serve us for example to illustrate the different steps of the MCA. Therefore, the analysis will be as detailed as possible for the reader to understand the way that leads the researcher to the final interpretations. Phenomenology is indeed the Science of *Interpretations*, yet those result from a meticulous meaning constitution analysis, only possible thanks to the software Minerva. The following analysis of the first participant's interview will present the different steps enabling us to reach the phenomenological analysis of the participant's life- world (Karlsson, 1993).

IV) Analysis

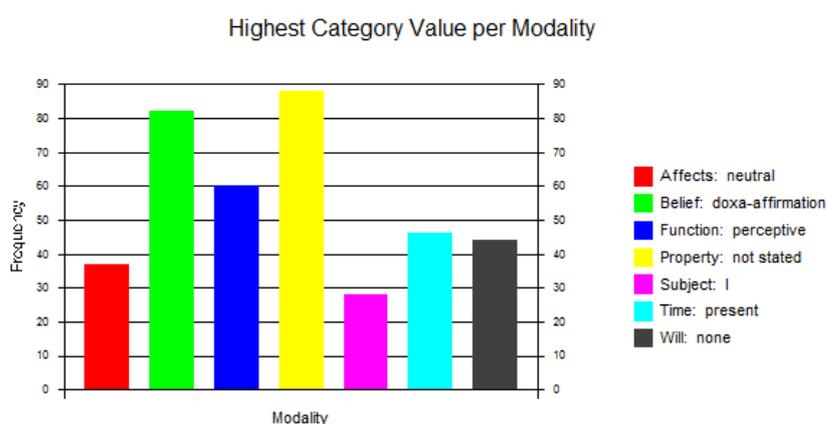
1) Neda

The first participant is Neda¹⁸, she is about 20 years old and have spent her early childhood in Iran before moving to the Netherlands with her parents. Since then, she has always been trying to go back to Iran as frequently as she could, for short or long terms, depending on her free time.

a) modalities the most represented

¹⁸ All names have been changed to preserve anonymity

The written text is divided by the researcher into meaning units; those are relatively short as they correspond to each meaningful segment a sentence contains. Once the text is broken up into meaning units, the role of the researcher is to attribute modalities to the latter. Modalities are diverse and aim at describing, for instance, the times used, the subjects mentioned, the degrees of belief (e.g. doxa-affirmation, doxa-negation, probability, question, the function etc.) and so on.



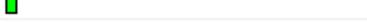
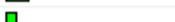
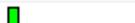
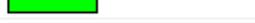
The first participant, Neda, mostly (82,22%) expresses herself in the *Belief* “doxa-affirmation”; which indicates that, overall, she generally affirms something rather than questioning, or expressing a possibility, probability etc.

The dominant *Function* is the “perceptive” one, in 60% of the meaning units. Unlike the “signitive” function -which can express the subjectivity of the participant- the perceptive function reveals a factual description, that is to say the participant uses concrete terms to describe her opinions, emotions, intents, feelings etc. Indeed, when talking about her activism since the last elections Neda does put tangible words on her actions, “since protesting, I tried to spread the news around”, “if there were gatherings, going to gatherings” etc. Also, she is pretty precise when she mentions her opinion about both the problem and solution of Iran nowadays, “I think there’s.. the biggest problem of Iran is the economy”, “but because of the international sanctions”, “companies can’t grow there”, “young people who are jobless”, “there has to be a way to create more job for them” etc. Yet, some statements remain vague, and although they tell us about the general emotional state of the participant, they do let room for further interrogations: “not in a way that I’m hopeful”, “but I’m also very concerned”, “because I don’t know if it will be a good change”. The *Function* modality could thereby

reveal a certain inhibition when Neda talks about her personal feelings, whereas she uses the perceptive form when describing her behaviors or thoughts about the situation in Iran.

The *Will* modality is “undefined” in about 44,5% of the meaning units, therefore it is interesting to have a closer look at the other categories and their percentages. 33,33% of the meaning units are expressed in the will modality “engagement”, which means that the participant is engaged in the things she is describing. The dominant time is the present (46,67%), yet 26,67% of the meaning units are expressed in the past time, and 15,56% in a pres-past modality category (when the participant refers to the past but described the entity in present). Thus, those two last percentages can be combined (about 43%) as they both express a bond with the past. Regarding the *Affects* modality, although the participant mostly expresses the meaning units in a neutral way (37,78%), 22,22% and 24,44% of the meaning units are respectively expressed in a “negative retrospective” and “positive retrospective” ways. Therefore, if we take a look at both the *affects* and *time* modalities together, we can observe that Neda often expresses herself in both present and past, but the affects are mostly directed towards the past. Indeed, Neda’s speech is taking place between three distinct periods, that is the pre-electoral era, the post-electoral one and today. Those three eras appear quite clearly when she talks about both herself and her Dutch friends: “since last election I have friends who are very interested because they saw it on TV”, “before I was really, I was always explaining the situation”, “but they didn’t understand”, “but now they saw it with their own eyes” etc. She always states the time framework, which appears to be embodied within a continuum between past events and the situation at the time of discussing. This explains the dominance of both present and past times in the way she expresses herself. We can also notice a small percentage (4,44%) of the use of the future time, which can communicate a lack of prospect for the future in Iran from the participant; this can also be expressed by the 2,22% of meaning units expressing a positive wish (in the *will* modality), as well as the total absence of negative wish. Moreover, we can notice the lack of imaginative *function* (only used once), which also reflects an absence of intents, prospects about the future in general.

As for the *Subject* modality, no subjects were mentioned in 28,89% of the cases, the same percentage also refers to the pronoun “I”, which is thereby the dominant entity in the text. Moreover, 17,78% of the meaning units are related to the Iranian people. The frequent use of the pronoun “I” (28,89%) can reveal us that the participant feels connected with what she is describing.

Modality	Category	Meaning Unit	Freq	R Freq
Affects	negative-prospective		3	6,67%
	negative-retrospective		10	22,22%
	neutral		17	37,78%
	positive-prospective		4	8,89%
	positive-retrospective		11	24,44%
Belief	doxa-affirmation		37	82,22%
	doxa-negation		6	13,33%
	possibility		2	4,44%
Function	imaginative		1	2,22%
	perceptive		27	60,00%
	signitive		17	37,78%
Property	not stated		40	88,89%
	our		1	2,22%
	their		2	4,44%
	your		1	2,22%
Subject	Dutch		9	20,00%
	I		13	28,89%
Subject	Iranian People		8	17,78%
	one-all		2	4,44%
	unspecified		13	28,89%
	always-recurrent		1	2,22%
Time	empty		1	2,22%
	future		2	4,44%
	past		12	26,67%
	pres -> fut		1	2,22%
	pres -> pas		7	15,56%
	present		21	46,67%
	aspiration		6	13,33%
	engagement		15	33,33%
Will	none		20	44,44%
	unengagement		3	6,67%
	wish-positive		1	2,22%

The text extracted from the interview of Neda encompasses the answers of interrogations directed toward three different themes (as shown earlier). The answers corresponding to these questions have been put together in order to obtain a dense text being able to be analyzed with the Minerva software.

The reasons why I decided to focus on these three different topics lies on the fact that they all refer to the interests of my study:

“to understand what it is to be Iranian abroad, at the time of heavy struggles within the left homeland; to unveil the motivations for a Dutch-Iranian to be active towards his mother country after many years living abroad; to understand how it feels to see and feel and share

and contest, from abroad; to discover which impact the Dutch-Iranian Diaspora think to have on the internal affairs of the I.R of Iran.”

b) entities the most represented

The second step of the MCA is the intentional analysis, which aims at uncovering the most important themes expressed in the narratives of the participant. Therefore, this is possible through an analysis of the frequency of the different *entities and their predicates*, which will enable us to distinguish the main themes living within the participant’s narrative. By doing so, we will later be able to approach the life- world (Karlsson, 1993) of the individual, and thereby try to understand the way he gives meaning to his experiences –of any kind. Logically, due to the singularity of each participant, the entities will probably differ from one to another.

As for Neda, the entity “I” is the most recurrent one, before the entities referring to the Iranian People (“they”=40, “People”=20, “the People”=6, “young men”=4, “Iran”=3, “young people”=1 and “Iranians”=1, have been grouped together), and finally the ones describing Non Iranians (“they”, “friends”, “non Iranians”, “world”).

- *The participant’s world*

The entity “I” is mentioned 59 times, the table below shows some of the results from the intentional analysis; that is the step of the analysis where “every partial intention must be derived from the pure meaning obtained by the *epoché* and be illuminated as concisely as possible in all its general and individual aspects.”. (REFERENCE)

I	Who exists
I	Who thinks
I	Who is active regarding Iran
I	Who tries to spread the news around
I	Who goes to gathering
I	Who talks with people about it
I	Who is not hopeful in a way
I	Who thinks that change is coming
I	Who is very concerned
I	Who doesn’t know if it will be a good change
I	Who thought at first that the problem was the culture
I	Who thinks differently now

I	Who thinks the biggest problem in Iran is the economy
I	Who thinks that the solution is over there
I	Who has friends who are interested
I	Who was always explaining the situation before
I	Who knows people who are not Iranians
I	Who is glad they saw that

The table is a glimpse of the different ways the participant uses the pronoun “I” while talking. This one enables us to notice some striking tendencies: such as the implication of the participant, both physically and mentally, in the uprising of the Iranian People since last June, as well as in the different actualities connected to Iran: “I was always explaining the situation before”. Thus, Neda appears to be physically involved in the issue; which can be illustrated by the fact that she “is active”, “goes to gathering”, “talks with people”, “explains the situation”. We can also observe an intentional¹⁹ involvement from the participant; this one is essentially highlighted by the use of the verb “think” in several statements. Therefore, not does Neda merely exist and/or act, but she also expresses personal opinions about the situation in Iran: she “thinks the biggest problem in Iran is the economy”, “that the solution is over there” etc. All of those intentional statements are expressed as Engagement and Wish-positive, in the Will modality.

On the other hand, we can easily notice that the participant barely talks about her emotions. Few meaning units with the entity “I” are actually reflecting the participant’s emotions, however one of them is explicit: “I was glad they saw that”. Here, we learn about the way Neda feels about the fact that her non Iranians friends “saw” what has been happening in the I.R of Iran since the last Presidential election. Besides that, another meaning unit that can reveal an emotion is when the participant states that she “is very concerned”; yet this is expressed in abstract term (signitive function) and does not tell us much about what Neda means by being “concerned”. Finally, “I who is not hopeful in a way” has to be analyzed within the whole sentence, that is:

¹⁹ Intentional : pertaining to an appearance, phenomenon, representation in the mind ;representational (intentional. (n.d.). *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Retrieved July 30, 2010, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/intentional>)

MU7	Not in a way that I am hopeful
MU8	That I think change is coming,
MU9	But I'm also very concerned
MU10	Because I don't know if it will be a good change,
MU11	If it will turn good for the People.

While looking at the successive UM we can see that the participant does not clearly state whether she is “hopeful” or not (UM7= doxa negation – signitive), but thanks to the following UM we can observe that her feelings are simply mixed. Indeed, the UM8 (doxa-affirmation – engagement), by itself, shows us that she thinks that change is coming; yet, combined with the UM7, we can notice that she is not hopeful in a way that she thinks that change is coming. Hence, later on (UM10) she expresses the idea of “change” once again, but does doubt about whether it “will be a good change”, or/and even “if it will turn good for the people”. These five segments reveal a difficulty for the participant to clearly express her hopes and more specifically her prospects for Iran. Although her way of expressing herself seems in contradiction from one statement to another, we still can observe that: a) if she is not totally “hopeful”, she still is in a way, and b) if she seems to be uncertain about the fact that “change is coming” (UM7-8), she does mentions right after the probability of a “change”; and that she is “concerned” (UM9) about whether it will be a “good change” (UM10-11) or not. This can reveal that, although remaining vague and/or confused, she does dare to believe things are changing in Iran.

To sum up, the entity “I” shows that the subject (Neda) is clearly expressing the fact that she is active regarding Iran. Moreover, she gives examples of how her activism takes shape. Most of the segments referring to her activism are indeed expressed in the modalities “doxa affirmation” belief and “perceptive” function. In the same way, the recurrent use of the verb “think” shows that the participant is engaged and has clear ideas about what has been happening in Iran. On the other hand, Neda remains vague when tackling her real emotions, she does mention that she is “concerned”, “glad” as well as “hopeful in a way”, but those emotional statements remain more abstract than the ones concerning her actions and opinions.

- *The Iranian People*

The second analysis does not only focus on one specific entity but different ones, all referring to the *Iranian People*; the table below exposes the different entities, and some of their predicates.

People	Who exist
People	Who one can talk with
People	Who are young
People	Who have to find a job
People	Who can be killed by someone
People	Who can be killed by them
People	Who something can be good for
People	Who can see something
The People	Which exists
The People	Which can be in the streets
The People	Which can be the majority
Iran	Which exists
Iran	Which one can be active about
Iran	Where something is happening
Young people	Who can be jobless
Young men	Who exist
Young men	Who have the IQ of a scientist
Young men	Who can be taxi drivers
Iranians	Who exist
They	Who exist
They	Who are totally frustrated

The set of chosen predicates presented above helps us to interpret how Neda gives meaning to the Iranian People, how she perceives this People with who she, emotionally and physically –as presented in the previous part-, shares both concerns and actions. Thanks to the Minerva, we can see that the entity “People” appears 20 times, and “The People” 6 times; which is the highest frequency of entity after “I”. Thus, this led me to create a general category entitled “The Iranian People”, encompassing a panel of entities all targeting the

Iranian People; as it appears to be the second most significant category within Neda’s discourse.

Thanks to the Minerva software, we can observe some common characteristics among the use of the different entities/predicates. For instance, most of the predicates are expressed in “doxa-affirmation” Belief. Moreover, the “perceptive” Function is highly dominant among the selected entities. Thus, Neda’s description of the Iranian People is not blurred or vague, she has a certain and clear perception of this one. Yet, we can notice the single-use of the subject “we”; indeed Neda only mentions herself in harmony/relation with the Iranian People once: the predicate for the “we” entity is “who can be pressured by the government”, in the MU41 “They really saw that we are also being pressured by the government”.

Furthermore, she only talks about the Iranian People in a descriptive way. She both describes the characteristics of the Iranian People (“who are young”, “who can be jobless”, “who are totally frustrated”), and the life experiences of this one (“who can be killed by someone”, “which can be in the streets”, “who have to find a job”, etc.). Regarding the Time modality, the Present is highly dominant, as well as the “pres-past” (that is, actions taking place in the past but still existing in the present, and thereby expressed in present). The participant is describing experiences and/or characteristics of the Iranian People mostly in the present time, but some descriptions refer to a bond between past and present:

MU17	hum.. people, like young man who are 30 years old
MU18	who have the IQ of a scientist
MU19	but who are taxi drivers for years
MU21	Those are the People that you would see in the streets

A striking observation is the absence of projection in the future. Neda expresses her opinion in the future time only once: “if it will be good for the People”. Hence, this statement is also the only one expressed in the Will “aspiration” and the Affect “possibility”, and not doxa-affirmation. Therefore, we can notice that: although the participant is able to talk without any hesitation about the ongoing psychological, social and political conditions of the Iranian People, she is quite silent about the future and when she mentions it, does remain very mysterious and vague about her opinions.

This absence of prospects for change in Iran can be explained by the fact that, at the time of interviewing (as well as writing), the situation in Iran was/is still uncertain; and this,

after almost a year²⁰ of continuing protests, struggles, strikes etc., and an important number of lost lives.

- *The Non Iranians*

The third and last analysis of the entities/predicates also includes different entities: “they” (38 times), “Non Iranians” (5 times) and “friends” (5 times); all of them refer to Non Iranians, hence the name of the following category.

Non Iranians	Who exist
Non Iranians	Who can know
Non Iranians	Who know about what is happening
Non Iranians	Who know about what’s happening, what’s wrong
Friends	Who exist
Friends	Who are mine
Friends	Who are interested
Friends	Who can see it on TV since last election
Friends	Who are interested because they see it on TV since last election
They	Who exist
They	Who can know about what is wrong
They	Who can see
They	Who didn’t understand
They	Who can see it now
They	Who saw with their eyes
They	Who were convinced about something in Iran
They	Who could see something after the elections
They	Who felt our pressure
They	Who can really see
They	Who can really see that something is happening
They	Who really saw that we are being pressured by the government
They	Who could see that

Once again we can notice that the participant is using the “doxa-affirmation” Belief while talking about Non Iranians; therefore, neither does she question anything nor does she seem unsure about what she says. None of the entities/predicates are analyzed as using the Future time, yet past, present and “pres-past” times are employed; which illustrates the

²⁰ Interviews being conducted in the 28, 29, 30 april 2009

constant bond between past events and current situations, omnipresent in Neda's discourse (as already analyzed in the first step of the analysis).

The predicates corresponding to the entity "non Iranians" express "positive-prospective" ("who can know, "who know about what's happening") affects - in Present time -, which differs from the descriptions related to the "Iranian People". Neda is also talking about her friends ("who are mine"), and the predicates related to them are expressed in the "pres-past" Time modality, and express "positive-retrospective" affects; "who are interested", "who are interested because they saw it on TV since last election". Thus, both examples can be interpreted as reflecting a change in the *perception* of "Non Iranians" (and more precisely "Dutch"= as shown in the Subject modality) "since the last election"; something has happened (Time=past), something is still happening (Time=present), and Neda's friends have been "interested" (Time=pres-past; Affect= positive-retrospective) in it and "know" today (Time=present; Affect= positive prospective).

The entity "they", expressed 40 times in total, does not always refer to "Non Iranians" - as we already analyzed the same entity with predicates characterizing "the Iranian People". Therefore, as presented in the table, the entity "they" refers to several predicates linked to Non Iranians (Subject= Dutch). Here again the narrative of the participant mirrors a continuum between past and present, and again both negative-retrospective ("who didn't understand") and positive-prospective ("who can see it now") affects are expressed in the predicates related to the entity "they" (subject= Dutch).

The participant is talking about Non Iranians in a descriptive way; she indeed mostly describes their interests, concerns and perceptions – focusing essentially on her Dutch friends – about the Iranian People, and the situation in Iran. We observed that the discourse is taking place between two precise periods, "since the last election" and "now". Neda is expressing a change in the way her friends, and "non Iranians" got more aware during this period; which she is "glad" about (as observed in the analysis of the entity "I").

In brief the whole analysis reveals us that, although Neda does not express any clear prospect of change for Iran/the Iranian People, she does mention a change in the perception of Non Iranians towards the Iranian People. This change makes her "glad"; which appeared to be the only explicit personal emotion she revealed while referring to her own feelings (entity= I).

2) Arash

Arash was born in Isfahan few years after the Revolution. After the death of his dad, Arash's mother "decided" they "had no future in Iran", and thereby took the decision to leave with her son to the Netherlands where some of their family's members were already settled down. Arash arrived in the Netherlands after having spent six years in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

a) modalities

Arash's discourse is mostly conducted in a doxa-affirmation belief (95,24%), moreover the perceptive function is highly dominant (61,90%). These two statistics show that the participant is sure of what he is stating; he mostly affirms things and almost only uses concrete words when describing. Yet, if dominances are important to notice, absences too are crucial to be noticed and analyzed. Therefore, the total absence of both the imaginative function and the future time in Arash's story can reveal a lack of expectations from the participant –the dominant time being the Past (40,48%). The "pres-fut" time modality (when a statement refers to the future but is expressed in present time) appears in two meaning units though. The latter, "and Iran is never going to be the same" and "and we hope that hope prevails", are indeed the only statements expressing prospects for Iran in Arash's narration. It seems important to me to mention that these two meaning units are the ones bringing Arash's discourse to a close, and thereby end this one with a positive tone. This can actually reflect the situation at the time of interviewing, characterized by a continuing fight (to diverse degrees and forms) from a part of the Iranian People against the regime - which does not move back but rather has been reinforcing its repressive image. Thus, the discourse of Arash, although lacking from clear prospective representations, ends up with a "positive-wish", as the fight is still going on at the time of talking (and writing). Yet, the few prospective statements express an uncertainty about the nature of the change, because in Arash's perception, things already changed, "and Iran is never going to be the same". As for the other modalities, in 52,38% of the text the Subject is unspecified -the most recurrent subject is therefore "I" with 19,05%. The participant does not express any will in 61,90% of the time, the little percentage for the will "engagement" (26,19%) shows that he remains quite neutral in the way he expresses himself.

b) entities/predicates the most represented

The most recurrent entity in Arash’s narration is “I”, appearing 34 times in total. Thus, one grouping has been made, entitled *the participant’s world*, which encompasses different entities referring to Arash (we=11, us=3). Minerva showed that, out of the 114 different entities analyzed, the second highest frequency corresponds to the entity “elections”, mentioned 9 times in total. Following the same logic than for the first grouping, I put together all entities related to *the elections*; as it appeared to be a major axis in the discourse of Arash. Being used 5 times, the entity “emotions” revealed another grouping including entities linked to emotions; such as, “pains”, “hope”, and “sadness”, “nostalgia”, “cry”. The last category concerns *the Iranian People*: “they” (6 times) and “People” (5 times).

- *The participant’s world*

Unit	Entity	Predicate
23	I	who exists
25	I	could remember
28	I	who exists
29	I	who could come from somewhere
30	I	who could remember where I came from
106	I	who exists
108	I	who must say
110	I	who must say that despite the horror
111	I	who exists
116	I	who is still excited
117	I	who exists
119	I	who one can go
126	I	who can go to the protests in Amsterdam and the Hague and NY
127	I	who immediately went to protests in A. and the Hague and NY after the elections
128	I	who exists
132	I	who can change his PHD proposal
133	I	who changed his PHD proposal
136	I	who change his phd proposal to a political subject
137	I	who changed his phd proposal to a more political subject
167	I	who exists
172	I	who deals with her way of thinking daily
184	I	who exists
185	I	who saw something one time
188	I	who saw the movie Offside one time
194	I	who exists
196	I	who can think
197	I	who exist
199	I	who could be
201	I	who thinks he was about 21
213	I	who exists
215	I	who could see
220	I	who could see Halleh and others crying
113	I	who is still
115	I	who still can be excited

The most frequent entity used by Arash is “I”. Looking closely at the different predicates does not enable us to disclose one main significant and/or general interpretative

trend. Yet, the predicates of the entity “I” are mostly expressed in the past time and/or referring to the past (pres-past); two different periods are stated though, when the participant “was about 21” and “after the election”. Arash mentions both his emotional state since the last election and the way this one has been affecting his behaviours/actions. Indeed, he immediately took part in protests in different cities after the election (units 126-127), and changed his research proposal too (unit 136-137). Therefore, we can interpret that the last election - as Arash does set the time framework from “after the election” (unit 127) - seemed to have reinforced the participant’s interests and concerns about Iran; which is expressed as a “positive retrospective” affect. Other positive-retrospective affects (referring to the post-presidential election era) are connected to the personal feelings of Arash, who could “remember” where he came from; which thereby might explain his revival of interest and activism in Iran. Few predicates are expressed in the present time; they reflect both the subject’s emotional state and perception of the ongoing situation in the I.R of Iran. The former is indicative of positive affects (“who is still excited”), whereas the whole situation is perceived as horrible (“despite the horror”) and thereby expressing negative affects. These paradoxical emotions might mirror the current situation at the time of discussing (as interpreted earlier already, in the modalities’ analysis); characterized by both a continuing fight from a part of the Iranian People and a repressive treatment by the Government. Then, both excitement and horror remain at the time of meeting.

We can also observe that Arash talks about some of his Iranian acquaintances/friends; hence those predicates teach us about the fact that Arash has constantly been confronted to the “the way of thinking” (unit 172), as well as to the way of feeling of other Iranians; in the past (“when I was 21”, “who could see H. and others crying”) and still now on “daily” basis (“who deals with her way of thinking daily”= always-recurrent).

Unit	Entity	Predicate
36	us	that exists
37	us	that something can return to
38	us	to who the pains of the past can return
Unit	Entity	Predicate
40	we	who exists
43	we	who could be conscious
46	we	who can be conscious and sedated
55	we	who exists
58	we	who could be very sad
86	we	who exist
89	we	who were very excited
91	we	when we could be very excited
247	we	who exists
249	we	who can hope
253	we	who hope that hope prevails

The entities “us” and “we” lead us to a better understanding of how Arash perceives himself in relation with the Iranian People. Before all, by using “we” and “us” he merely blends himself with Iranians, and thereby brings together the Diaspora and the Iranians living in the I.R of Iran. Yet, this blending is only expressed, in Arash’s discourse, at the emotional level. Indeed, the predicates corresponding to the entity “we” are only expressed with affective/psychological terms such as “conscious”, “sedated”, “very sad”, “very excited”. As for the entity “us”, the predicate “to whom the pains of the past can return” also unveils the idea that Arash shares the sensations/emotions of Iranians. In other words, we can say that Arash feels one with Iranians, when it comes to *sense*.

- *The emotional realm*

The second main theme that emerges from the intentional analysis is the world of “emotions”. Every relevant entities – that is, linked to the emotional realm- and their predicates have therefore been grouped together: “pains”, “sedated”, “sad”, “sadness”, “cry”, “excited”, “emotions”, “nostalgia”, “hope”.

The entities linked to the emotions in Arash’ narration are diverse and refer to both concrete actions (“cry”= perceptive function) and subjective emotional states (“sedated”, “nostalgic”, “sadness” etc.). Also, Arash barely talks about his personal emotions; in fact, he describes some of his experiences (past and present) when being confronted to some of his friends’ emotional manifestations:

MU 26	Parvane is the daughter of A.G
MU 27	So I deal daily with her way of thinking,
MU 28	Which is sad and troubling

MU 30	So one time I saw the movie “Offside”
MU 31	And Arya was sitting next to me
MU 32	I think I was about 21
MU 35	And I suddenly saw Arya and others crying

We can therefore clearly notice that Arash has been confronted to the sadness, pains and/or merely different emotions of other Iranians on several occasions during his life.

As for the first participant, we can observe that Arash makes a distinction between the pre and post presidential election eras; this one is clearly noticeable when looking at the entity “emotions” and its predicates for instance. The participant declares that the “emotions” have always been present; which is illustrated by the modality time “always-recurrent”. By saying so he states that emotions never disappeared among Iranians; what he means by “emotions” remains highly vague though (function= signitive). The meaning unit 182 tells us about Arash’s perception of the “emotions” before the elections (time= past/ affects= negative-retrospective); when, according to him, those were “more nostalgic”. Therefore, the predicates reattached to the emotional realm reveal a change in the nature of the emotions of Iranians, according to Arash; although those were always present, they used to be “more nostalgic” before the last election. The entity “sedated” (“that one can be”) also refers to the mental state of Iranians (subject= “we”) before the uprisings of June 2009, which also changed after these ones, according to the participant – as expressed in the next unit “the election protests just woke everybody up”. Both entities “nostalgia” and “sadness” also reveal a change in the way Arash perceives the emotional realm of Iranians since June 2009. They have to be analyzed with their surrounding entities/predicates though (as presented in the enclosed table).

Unit	Entity	Predicate
221	emotions	which exists
222	be	that something could always
223	emotions	that could always be there
224	now	when something is different
225	it	which exists
226	it	which is not
227	nostalgia	which exists
228	sadness	which exists
229	it	which is not only nostalgia or sadness now
230	it	which exists
231	connect	that something can be
232	it	that can be connected
233	present	that exists
234	present	to which something can be more connected
235	it	which is more connected to the present

Thus, both entities are, in Arash’s perception, tied to the past feelings. Arash also mentions about “the pains of the past”, yet his description remains abstract (function= signitive), and his statement leaves room for further interrogations; the related predicate “that can return to us”, reveals us that Arash felt “pain” sometime in his life (time= past) and some events (that we can assume being the last elections) woke the old pains up. Just as for the People (as seen earlier).

Two entities are expressed in the present and pres-future times, and enable us to unveil some prospects for future in Arash’s narration. The entities “excited” and “hope” are

respectively expressing positive-prospective affect and wish-positive will; yet, their predicates do not express concrete prospects, intents or wishes (function= signitive). The entity “excited” and its predicate, “that one still can be” refers to Arash’s excitement nowadays; which tells us that despite the uncertainty of the future he still feel excited about what has been happening in Iran lately. Regarding the entity “hope”, its predicate reveals that Arash is willing for a positive-wish, and, once again, despite the chaotic situation that has been shaking the I.R of Iran up for months, “hope” remains: “we hope that hope prevails”.

The emotional realm, significant in Arash’s discourse (as revealed by the intentional analysis), helps us to understand the impact that his relational environment might have had on Arash’s own life experiences.

- *The elections*

The third important intentional axis analyzed in the narration of Arash is related to *the elections* (frequency= 9); therefore, every entities referring to this topic were grouped together (“the election”, “protests”, “writing”, “protesting”, “last year”, “gatherings”). Some of these entities directly/explicitly refer to *the elections* themselves while others concern actions/events resulting from the former.

The entities relating to the elections (“elections”, “the election”, “after the election”) also enable us to clearly distinguish two different periods in the perception of Arash: the pre and post electoral ones. The following predicates and their Affects modality show how these two periods are experiences by Arash:

elections	
Affects	
negative-retrospective	that exist
negative-retrospective	that something happened before
positive-retrospective	which exist
positive-retrospective	that something happens after
positive-retrospective	that something happens suddenly after
positive-retrospective	after which everything suddenly changed
positive-retrospective	that exist

Even though the participant does not explicitly explain what “happens” (function= signitive) “before” and “after” the elections, the modalities of the different predicates lead us to some interpretations. Thus, whatever happened “before” the elections is generating “negative” affects for Arash, whereas the predicates referring to the post-electoral era express positive affects - retrospective in both cases though, as related to the past. According to Arash, the

“change” was sudden (elections/after which everything suddenly changed) and positive (affect= positive-retrospective). The other entities related to the elections do only express positive-retrospective too, they all bring the idea of a change; either for the whole situation (“last year/when something happened” – “the elections/after which everything suddenly changed), either for the People (“the election protests/that wake everybody up”). This predicate does refer to Iranians, blending therefore both the Iranians inside the I.R of Iran and the Diaspora. We mentioned earlier that Arash does not bring any detailed explanation of “what happened” after the elections; yet some entities/predicates (function= perceptive) highlight the way he perceives the change since “last year”. Thus, Arash’s discourse tells us what “people can do” since last elections: “write”, “protest”, go to “protests”/“gatherings”. Those entities/predicates are also only expressing positive affects for Arash.

3) Kouros

a) modalities

The predominant affect emerging from Kouros’s discourse is the “positive prospective” one. Indeed, 33,33% of the meaning units express something positive, referring either to a prospect/hope or to something currently happening. Therefore, the modality Affect has to be viewed in relation with the modality Time in order to reach clearer interpretations. The MCA reveals a total absence of the future time in the narration of Kouros, as well as a weak percentage (7,58%) of the “pres->fut” time (that is, MU expressed in present but referring to the future), whereas the present time is highly prevailing in the whole dialogue (53,03%). Therefore, we can precise that the positive prospective affects articulating Kouros’s discourse are not expressing positive hopes/prospects for the future, but rather positive feelings about the current situation at the time of talking.

As for the two former participants, Kouros affirms things most of the time when discussing (Belief - doxa-affirmation: 84,85%), and only both questions and/or expresses a possibility once. Moreover, the modality Function reveals that 68,18% of his statements are formulated with concrete terms, showing an exactitude in the things he describe, and 51,52% of the MU show that he is engaged in what he states (Will – engagement). Those three modalities combined reveal that the participant is concerned and interested what he talks about.

Overall, the analysis of modalities shows us that Kouros does not clearly/explicitly mention any prospects, thoughts, feelings about the future, or what could/would/will happen in a near future; yet, his discourse discloses an optimistic feeling about the situation at the time of discussing.

b) entities/predicates the most represented

The analysis of the entities for the discourse of Kourosch results in two major groupings: the participant and the Dutch-Iranians' worlds (qualified by the term of "expatriates" by Kourosch). The former is mainly defined by the entity "I" (appearing 42 times), combined with the entity "me". As for the Dutch-Iranians' world, the entities "expats" (9 times), "Iranians" (10 times, actually referring to Dutch-Iranian after analyzing the predicates), "they" (appearing 48 times, hence 20 referring to the "expatriates") as well as "we", enabled me to come up with this group. Kourosch also mentions several times his "Dutch friends" as well as "Iranians in Iran" but the amount of entities for both populations was not significant enough to create specific groupings; instead, we will tackle these two populations within the analysis of the defined groups, as they happen to be interconnected.

The participant's world

The meaning constitution analysis revealed that the entity "I" appeared 42 times, which enabled us to disclose an important theme in Kourosch's discourse: his own world, perceptions, feelings, thoughts. Thanks to the "working table" (Minerva), it is possible to have an general view of modalities, entities and predicates; which is the essential and final step of the MCA, and enables us to interpret the text.

The modality "affects" is quite striking in the analysis of the entity I, as most of the predicates express a positive prospective affect (as shown in the table below).

Category	Predicate
I	
Affects	
neutral	who exists
neutral	that
neutral	who thinks that before the election
neutral	who exists
neutral	who can be the co-founder of (wesbite)
positive-prospective	who exists
positive-prospective	that can be
positive-prospective	who can be active
positive-prospective	who exists
positive-prospective	who can be
positive-prospective	who can be very hopeful
positive-prospective	who is very hopeful in a couple of areas
positive-prospective	who exists
positive-prospective	who can be hopeful
positive-prospective	who can be hopeful in this sense
positive-prospective	who exist
positive-prospective	who can be
positive-prospective	who can be positive
positive-prospective	who exist
positive-prospective	who can be
positive-prospective	who can be optimistic
positive-prospective	who exists
positive-prospective	who can see
positive-prospective	who can see a lot of people
positive-prospective	who can see a lot of people realizing
positive-prospective	who can see a lot of people realizing that this regime can be controlled and get rid of
positive-prospective	who exists
positive-prospective	who can be
positive-prospective	who can be very positive
positive-prospective	who exists
positive-prospective	who can see
positive-prospective	who exists
positive-prospective	who can think
positive-prospective	who can think that the change should come from Iran
negative-prospective	who exists
negative-prospective	who can think
negative-prospective	who thinks that expats cannot change anything in iran

By looking more closely at the predicates, we can notice that those unveiling a positive-prospective affect are directly expressing the participant's a) feelings: "who is very hopeful in a couple of areas", "who can be positive", "who can be optimistic"; b) points of view about the situation in Iran: "who can see a lot of people realizing that this regime can be controlled and get rid of", "who can think that the change should come from Iran". On the other hand, the predicate disclosing a negative-prospective affect is the only one referring to the role of Dutch-Iranians, and in his words "the expats": "who thinks that expats cannot change a thing in Iran". Therefore, the analysis of the modality affects for the entity "I" shows us that Kourosh is "positive", "optimistic" and "hopeful" regarding what is happening in Iran –and what could happen in Iran–, but although being active himself ("who can be active") his positivism does not encompass the role and activism of "expats". Yet, if Kourosh expresses the possibility of a change in Iran, and says being hopeful, he does not give concrete examples about what this change should and/or could be; which is revealed by the signitive function for those two predicates "who is very hopeful" and "who can think that the change should come

from Iran”. Also, most of the predicates are stated in the present time, while the future is not mentioned a single time. This too concurs with what has just been interpreted, that is Kourosh’s feelings and prospects regarding the situation in Iran are positive, but those are never explicitly described, neither directly referring to the future.

The analysis also shows that all the predicates are assigned to the will engagement, and the belief doxa-affirmation, which proves how involved the participant in the things he expresses. The entity “me” is also significant of the participant’s world, and its predicate cannot be analyzed and interpreted on its own, as we need to put this one into context: “that respect is for”. To do so, the Minerva software enables us to see what are the meaning units related to this predicate:

MU 57	My Dutch football team
MU 58	They have a lot more respect for me since the election.
MU 59	They knew, most of them are journalists, or working in ngos...

We can therefore notice that Kourosh refers to his Dutch friends. Indeed, the entity/predicate “me/that respect is for” unveils a positive-prospective affect too, this time directed towards Kourosh. The participant affirms once again something (belief doxa-affirmation), here he affirms a change in the way his “dutch football team” perceives him since the election. Thus, he settled a time framework “before and after the election”, and as for the interpretations above, what has been occurring since then is seen as positive for Kourosh. Yet, this statement is the only one expressing an explicit change, and not only hopes or prospects.

The expats

An important part of the participant’s discourse is centered around “the expats”; the meaning constitution analysis unveiled dominant entities which enabled us to define this group. Some entities were already significant by themselves, such as “expats” and/or “Iranians outside Iran”; the rest of the grouping has been set thanks to the Minerva software and the study of the predicates, revealing an importance of the entities “we” and “they”.

Here is a glimpse of some relevant predicates I used for this interpretation:

Expats	Who cannot change anything in Iran
We	Who could realize that the election would be important
We	Who were totally right

We	Who have been very very active since the last election
We	Who can only concentrate on getting the message out of Iran
We	Who can also get back to Iran through the Internet
We	Who can also say that you guys are not alone
We	Who are having a long struggle
We	Who wonder where we are going
They	Who can help
They	Who have to realize that you cannot reach everything in the first year
They	Who are thinking with you guys
They	Who are trying to prevent them to be tortured, raped and put in jail
Iranians	Who are outside Iran

One main trend disclosed thanks to the Minerva software was the predominance of positive-prospective affects about the activism of the expats; revealed by the analysis of the entity “we”. Indeed, all the predicates related to “we” refer to the expats and their activism since last election, and even before (“who could realize that these election would be very important”, “who were totally right”). Some of them describe what their activism consist of, or what this one results in: “Who can only concentrate on getting the message out of Iran”, “Who can also say that you guys are not alone”.

All the predicates unveil positive prospective affects, which can be interpreted as a positive perception of the participant about the activism of the expats. We can connect this with the predicates for the entity “they” which also express the activism of the Dutch-Iranians: “who can help”, “who are thinking with you guys” and “who are trying to prevent them to be tortured, raped and put in jail”. Besides three predicates, all of the ones related to the expatriates/Dutch-Iranians uncover positive-prospective affects about the way their activism takes form, and expresses itself.

Yet, the three predicates unveiling a negative-prospective affect are quite significant too as they express three different issues encountered by Kourosch, and we can interpret those as painful. Indeed, the entity/predicate “we/who are having a long struggle” is actually one of the two statements in Kourosch’s narration that gathers together Iranians living in Iran and Dutch-Iranians (or at least, Kourosch). The situation in Iran is felt and perceived as a “long struggle” for Kourosch, which is therefore not only located within the boundaries of the I.R of Iran but wherever he is. Another predicate that reveals a negative-prospective affect is the only one

actually unveiling which impact Kourosh thinks the expats can have on the internal problems in Iran, which appears to be truly explicit (function expressive) as well as frank: “the expats/who cannot change anything in Iran”. Looking back at the predicates revealing positive-prospective affects, we realize that they tell us about what are the actions led by the expats but they also tell us about the supportive role that those aim at having: “who are thinking with you guys”, “who can also say that you guys are not alone”.

The last predicate with a negative-prospective affect reveals, combined with the total absence of meaning units in future time, a total incapacity for Kourosh to project himself, as well as Iranians, expats, the situation in Iran etc. in prospect: “MU 56: but where are we going?”. This uncertainty too encompasses Iranians living in Iran, and Dutch-Iranians, as the “we” does not make any distinction here.

Thus, the role of the expats occupies a significant part in Kourosh’s discourse, and thereby in his life- world (Karlsson, 1993). Although he happens to describe their actions as a positive thing, and reveal their supportive goal for “Iranians living in Iran”, he clearly says that the actions taken outside the country won’t change anything in Iran (according to him) –yet, “they can help”-. Moreover, he does not exclude the idea of a “change”, but never stands for clear explanation about what this one should or could be, just that “MU 54: Iranians in Iran are the ones facing all this torture, all these things/ MU 55: so they should be the ones making the decision.”, as well as “MU 39: I think that the change should come from Iran”. The lack of expectations or prospects for the future (and the total absence of the future time in his discourse) reveals a clear inability for him to position himself, although he says to be “optimistic”, “hopeful in a couple of areas” and “positive”.

V) Conclusion

My thesis aimed at trying to uncover the motivations encouraging some Dutch-Iranians to be concerned and/or active towards the internal struggles occurring in the left homeland; and this, after living in a different country for years. Thus, the local-global bond lying in individuals with migratory paths was at the core of my research; the dialogical self theory helped me in tackling this bond. The latter advocates the existence of a multi-voiced self, those voices being more or less loud depending to the situation, depending to the context. I thereby tried to understand the psychological identities of my participants by trying to unveil the different voices interconnecting within themselves; that is, their dialogical self. Therefore,

the concept of contextualizing simply *followed* me from the beginning of my thesis until the very end; as it merely structured my whole research, hence in a phenomenological way. Indeed, Phenomenology does not seek at providing a “truth” about a studied phenomenon, rather truths are to be explained, presented and interpreted, and so within their specific contexts. Those can be sociological, psychological, historical, educative, economic, religious, and so on; that is why an interdisciplinary approach was merely essential for my research.

Phenomenology requires the researcher to “freely let the participant expresses himself”; that is why I did not anticipate any possible outcomes by exposing hypotheses about what were the motivations of my participants, as pointing at specific questions could lead me to miss the whole point of phenomenology, that is to unveil, uncover and discover understandings. Therefore, I conducted open interviews and tried to guide the participants as little as possible in order not to influence on what they wanted to tell me, on what they wanted to share with me. Thus, the Meaning Constitution Analysis and the Minerva software enabled me to go beyond what was explicitly questioned to the participants as well as expressed by those ones; those were keys to interpret the motivations, hopes, intents of the candidates, to understand their life-world.

The upcoming session will present the main trends revealed by the Meaning Constitution Analysis performed on the three interviews.

1) Results

The Meaning Constitution Analysis enabled me to disclose important themes in the participants’ discourses, which enabled us to target the main interests and/or concerns expressed by the participant without having been directly asked about. Thus, as shown in the analysis part, the themes diverge from one participant to another, but one tendency is shared by everyone: the predominance of their own life-world. Neda, Arash and Kourosch all mostly use the pronoun “I” in their narrative and therefore invite us to their own life-world while talking. This can be interpreted as revealing a tight bond between the participants and the topic they were to discuss, in this case the Islamic Republic of Iran. The doxa-affirmation is highly dominant among the three discourses and this too shows how close the participants are with their discussed topics, as they mostly affirms things and barely question or leave rooms for further interrogations.

Neda's life-world mirrors her activism; she is indeed very concrete while talking about what she does regarding the internal problems in the I.R of Iran. On the other hand the MCA disclosed an incapacity for her to express her feelings, as she remains really abstract about these ones. Unlike her, Arash's life-world is mainly nourished by his emotions; his concerns and activism towards Iran occupy a significant part too, and he explains how the last election actually reinforced both his concerns and activism. Kourosh's life-world is related to his feelings, points of view as well as activism about the situation in Iran, it also reflects concerns about the role of the expats. Besides their own life-world, different themes stand out from each of the participants' narratives: Neda's one discloses two important populations, "the Iranian People" and the "Non Iranians", Arash's discourse reveals special concerns related to his "emotional realm" and "the elections", as for Kourosh, "the expats" happen to be the most significant subject of his discourse. Thus, we can see that whether the three participants express being active and concerned regarding the situation in Iran, the latter inspires different sources of interests, motivations, ideas from one participant to another; which can only be discovered thanks to a phenomenological approach when no rigid questions are asked and individuals are free to mention what they feel like.

Thus, the dominant themes in the participants' discourses are crucial tools for trying to understand what interests us here, that is trying to uncover what the motivations of my participants for being active towards the left homeland are. Therefore, I will now present three short conclusive interpretative paragraphs showing the results of the MCA for each participant, further on will be showed and interpreted general trends found by combining the three interviews.

Neda

The two main themes standing out from Neda's discourse are related to two different populations, the "Iranian People" and the "Non Iranians". The MCA disclosed a descriptive approach of the Iranian People from Neda; she indeed has a clear perception (significant use of the perceptive function) of this one, talking about the characteristics of young Iranians as well as their lives in Iran.

"The biggest problem of Iran is the economy, young people who are jobless, hum.. people, like young man who are 30 years old who have the IQ of a scientist but who are taxi drivers for years, they are totally frustrated, those are the people that you would see in the streets."

On the other hand she does not express any explicit (neither implicit) prospects for the future of the Iranian People; the future time is scarcely used in her discourse (4,4%). Yet, she does not neglect the possibility of a change as she says *“I am very concerned because I don’t know if it will be a good change, if it will turn out good for the People”*. Therefore, we can notice an incapacity for Neda to pronounce on the evolution of the situation in Iran, but the mere fact of talking about a “change” tells us that she dares believing things are moving.

The second population taking an important place in Neda’s speech is linked to the “Non Iranians”, in this case Dutch. This part of the narrative reveals positive-prospective affects as it expresses a positive change since the last election in the way Non-Iranians have been perceiving Iran and the Iranian People.

Neda remains very vague about her feelings, but she ends her speech with a very positive and explicit comment about how she feels about the fact that her Dutch friends, as well as Dutch people in general *“saw with their own eyes”* the situation in Iran; that *“they felt our pressure, they really saw that we are also being pressure by the gvt, it’s not that they’re only threatening the world they’re also threatening and killing their own people.”*. Therefore, she concludes by saying that she is *“glad”* that they (Non Iranians) realized that.

Arash

Arash tackles two different themes in his discourse, his “emotional realm” and “the elections”. As for Neda, his discourse takes place in a specific time-framework which goes from the pre-electoral period to the post-electoral period, till today. Thus, the last elections reinforced Arash’s concerns and activism towards the internal struggles in the I.R of Iran, in his words: *“finally something was happening”*. And what was happening woke old feelings up inside Arash: *“I remembered more sharply where I came from, and the pains of the past returned to many of us, it’s like we were consciouss but also sedated the election protests just woke everybody up”*. The MCA revealed that Arash has often been confronted to the sadness, pains and/or different emotions of other Iranians, on several occasions, during his life; this helps us to understand the impact that his relational environment might have had on Arash’s own life experiences.

Thus, the presidential election of 2009 appears to have been very important for both Arash’s life and Iran: *“immediately after the elections, I went to protests in amsterdam and the hague and then New York I even changed my PhD dissertation proposal to a more*

political subject". The MCA disclosed that before the elections the story of Arash expressed negative affects, whereas the post electoral period shows statements with positive affects. Yet, he does not express any clear change, neither prospects of change for Iran or the Iranian People, but his discourse ends with a "positive wish" ton: *"even very pessimistic people like myself feel like something big has happened and iran is never going to be the same and we hope that that hope prevails."*

Kourosch

As for the two previous participants, Kourosch's discourses is set up within a specific time-framework: before and after the elections. His story differs from the two previous ones as only two grouping have been made: the participant's world and the expats. As shown earlier, the life-world of Kourosch mostly mirrors his feelings and points of view about the situation in Iran, which nourishes positive affects since last election. Yet, no concrete explanations or expectations are exposed concerning the future of Iran, which shows an uncertainty about prospects of change for Iran at the time of talking; this is reinforced by the total absence of the future time. On the other hand, although neutral about it Kourosch does not exclude the possibility of a change: *"I think that the change should come from Iran with, the connection, with the help of Iranians outside iran, I think that expats cannot change anything in Iran, they can help."* This statement brings us to the perception of Kourosch about the role of the expats, as summed up with the previous quote "they can help". Indeed, in Kourosch's view, the actions taking from abroad have a supportive purpose: *"you guys are not alone, there are a lot of people who are thinking with you guys"*. The only concrete change expressed by Kourosch is related to his Dutch football team, which showed him *"more respect"* after the elections.

2) Interpretations

Overall, the most striking discovery revealed by the MCA is the significant lack (and sometimes total absence) of the future time in the three texts. This shows an inability for Neda, Arash and Kourosch to take a stand about what will happen for the Iranian People, the I.R of Iran, the government as well as themselves. This tendency is even stronger when combined with the identical time-framework –narratively- set by the three Dutch-Iranians, which goes from the pre-electoral period to the post-electoral period/today. This absence of prospects, hopes, intents and/or expectations contrasts with the way the three candidates actually hold their speech, that is in an affirmative way (doxa-affirmation). Indeed, they show

a real confidence while discussing their activism, the situation in Iran before and after the presidential election, but this affirmative tone just fades away while mentioning a possible future change.

Thus, the last elections have woken up both the Iranian People and its global window (diaspora), it indeed reinforced the concerns and activism of the latter. Yet, none of the participants truly believes that this help is crucial for the Iranian People, neither Iran, as the common thought is that help should come from inside Iran. Rather they see their activism as having a supportive goal.

The only change expressed is related to the Dutch population and the way their perception of Iran and Iranians changed since the last elections; and this even from the people who know about the situation in Iran. As Neda and Kourosh respectively explain: “Since last election I have friends who are really interested because they saw it on TV but before not, before I was really, I was always explaining the situation but they didn’t understand, but now they saw it with their own eyes.”, “my Dutch football team, they have a lot more respect for me, since the elections. They knew, most of them are journalists, or working in newspapers or in ngos, and actually they have publically said, one time, in a party that we had, comparing their lives with my life, they said, “oh you’re fighting for something and we are not doing anything”, that is something that is very very honest and very direct way to show that they respect people.”.

This may uncover the biggest motivation for those individuals to spread words about the situation in the I.R. of Iran; that is, the need for the Dutch to realize where they come from, that is who they are. Indeed, we also noticed a constant bond between the past and the present, which shows the weight of the past life in the current identity of the participants. Yet, their Dutch voice does express itself too, as the participants appear to be moved by the positive comments of their Dutch friends, or acquaintances, since the last election.

This leads us to question about the necessity of educating the citizens of multicultural societies such as the Netherlands, about the minorities residing within the same land; in fields such as culture and/or history and/or religion. Indeed, at the time when boundaries come culturally meaningless and extremist ideas explode, it appears crucial to highlight the concept of multiculturalism rather than talking about national identity; as we saw that identities are multi-voiced, and this can only be perceived as a problem if we make it a problem.

To conclude, I would like to use a quote of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945), a french Philosopher, highlighting the weight of the past in the construction of the future:

“If one day Humans have to be Humans, and the links of conscioussnesses become transparent – if Universality has to be realized -, it will be in a society where the trauma of the past would have been liquefied and where the conditions of an effective freedom would have first been realized. Until then, the social life will remain these dialogue and fight of ghosts where we suddenly see real tears and real blood flowing.”

References :

- Amnesty International. (2009). *Human Rights in Islamic Republic of Iran* (Rep.). Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/iran/report-2009>
- Annan, K. (2002). The State in the age of globalization. In Lechner, F. J., & Boli, J. (2008). *The globalization reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Audinet, J. (2007). *Le visage de la mondialisation*, Paris : Editions Ouvrières
- Bozorgmehr, M., & Sabagh, G. (1991). Iranian Exiles and Immigrants in Los Angeles. In A. Fathi (Author), *Iranian refugees and exiles since Khomeini* (pp. 121-144). Costa Mesa, Calif., U.S.A.: Mazda.
- Davenac, R., & Nardon, L. (2009, March). *Le programme spatial iranien* (Issue brief). Retrieved from http://www.ifri.org/?page=detail-contribution&id=5295&id_provenance=97
- Dilthey, W. (1976). *Selected writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ, Press.
- Eckartsberg, V. (1986). *Life-world experience: existential-phenomenological research approaches in psychology*. [Pittsburgh, Pa.]: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology.
- Esfandiari, G. (2004). Iran: Coping With The World's Highest Rate Of Brain Drain. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1051803.html>
- Fredrickson, G. M. (2002). *Racism: a short history*. Carlton North, Vic.: Scribe Publications.
- Friedman, T. L. (2000). *The Lexus and the olive tree: Understanding Globalization*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Ghorashi, H. (2003). *Ways to survive, battles to win: Iranian women exiles in the Netherlands and the United States*. New York: Nova Science Publ.
- Ghorashi, H. (2003). *Ways to survive, battles to win: Iranian women exiles in the Netherlands and the United States*. New York: Nova Science Publ.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: self and society i the late modern age*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press.
- Habibinia, O. (2008, July 24). Death Penalty for Iranian Bloggers. *Omid Habibinia, Journalist and Media Researcher*. Retrieved from <http://www.omidhabibinia.com/>
- Haenel, Y. (2009). *Jan Karski*. [Paris], France: Gallimard.
- Hermans, H. J., & Hermans-Konopka, A. (2010). *Dialogical self theory: positioning and counter-positioning in a globalizing society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Hondius, D. (2003). 'Become like us': the Dutch and racism. *Open Democracy*. Retrieved from http://www.opendemocracy.net/people-migrationeurope/article_1616.jsp
- Husserl, E. (1967). *Ideas : General introduction to pure phenomenology* (W. R. B. Gibson, Trans.) New York: Humanities Press. (Original work published in 1913)
- Husserl, E., Peiffer, G., & Lévinas, E. (1953). *Meditations cartésiennes: introduction a la phenomenologie*.
- Ibn, K. (1958). *The Muqaddimah; an introduction to history*,. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Institut Français des Relations Internationales. (2009). *Le programme spatial iranien* (Rep.). Retrieved from http://www.ifri.org/?page=detail-contribution&id=5295&id_provenance=97
- Karlsson, G. (1993). *Psychological qualitative research from a phenomenological perspective*. Stockh.: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
- Kohn, M.L. (1993). Doing social research under conditions of radical social change: The biography of an ongoing research project. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 56, 4-20.
- Lahlou, M. (2008). *Cross-cultural Psychology*. Lecture, Lund.
- Langdrige, D. (2007). *Phenomenological psychology: theory, research and method*. Harlow, England: Pearson Education.
- Lechner, F. J., & Boli, J. (2008). *The globalization reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, Calif. [u.a.: Sage Publ.
- Lindén, J. (2003). Validation in the context of discovery and the context of justification in psychological research. In J. Lindén & P. Szybek (Eds.), *Validation of Knowledge Claims in Human Science* (pp. 51-80). Lyon Limonest: L'Interdisciplinaire.
- Maykut, P. S., & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning qualitative research: a philosophic and practical guide*. London: Falmer Press.
- McLuhan, M. (1962). *The Gutenberg galaxy; the making of typographic man*. [Toronto]: University of Toronto Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945). La guerre a eu lieu. In Merleau-Ponty, M., & Lefort, C. (2010). *Œuvres*. [Paris]: Gallimard.
- Montesquieu, C. D. (1844). *Pensees diverses de Montesquieu*. Paris: Firmin-Didot.
- Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- OECD. (2008). *Growing Unequal? Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries* (Rep. No. 9789264044180). Paris.

